

The Mystery of Godliness

Eddy Lanz

Great indeed,
we confess,
is the mystery
of godliness:

The Mystery of Godliness.

Christian Theology is Theology in Christ.

Eddy Lanz

Rawalpindi

Eved Adonai - Is 53:11

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Preface

The great statement of the apostle Paul in 1 Timothy 3:16 about the mystery of godliness touches in one way or the other the major areas of systematic theology:

Great indeed, we confess, is the mystery of godliness:
He was manifested in the flesh,
vindicated by the Spirit,
seen by angels,
proclaimed among the nations,
believed on in the world,
taken up in glory.¹

"He" is God (theology proper, trinity) who was manifested (the self-revelation of God) in the flesh (christology), vindicated (soteriology) by the Spirit (pneumatology), seen by angels (creation: angels), proclaimed (soteriology, missiology, ekklesiology, inspiration and the Bible) among the nations (creation: anthropology),

1. καὶ ὁμολογουμένως μέγα ἐστὶν τὸ τῆς εὐσεβείας μυστήριον· Ὃς ἐφανερώθη ἐν σαρκί, ἐδικαιώθη ἐν πνεύματι, ὤφθη ἀγγέλοις, ἐκηρύχθη ἐν ἔθνεσιν, ἐπιστεύθη ἐν κόσμῳ, ἀνελήμφθη ἐν δόξῃ.

believed on in the world (soteriology, missiology, ekklesiology, creation: anthropology), taken up in glory (christology, eschatology).

Christian theology is theology in Christ. He is the climax of salvation history and the key to know the Father and to gain the Holy Spirit. He is the great gift of God to mankind.

The Mystery of Godliness is a blog-book which might still grow or change in some areas. Therefore the exact date is given on the title page to distinguish the different versions.

For me it was a great joy to teach systematic theology at the Zarephath Bible Seminary in Rawalpindi, Pakistan for a few years. The interaction with the students and our shared joy of the greatness and glory of Christ shall stay with me for years to come. We have a great God, a wonderful redeemer. Great indeed, we confess, is the mystery of godliness.

Eddy Lanz,
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Chapter 1

Theology under the Word of God

1.1 What is Theology?

The English word "Theology" comes from the Greek "theologia" (f.) and was already used by Plato in his "Republic" (379a) in the 4th century B.C. in the sense of "science of things divine".¹ From the Greek it entered Latin and from there into English.

1. According to Henry George Liddell and Robert Scott, A Greek-English Lexicon, revised and augmented throughout by Sir Henry Stuart Jones, with the assistance of Roderick McKenzie., [accessed September 7, 2012] (Oxford: Clarendon Press., 1940), <http://www.perseus.tufts.edu/hopper/>, entry *θεολογία* , ἡ.

1.2 **What is Christian Theology?**

In Christian Theology the term "theology" is used both in a wider and in a narrower sense. The latter is "theology proper", the teaching or reasoning about God, especially the triune God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit. The former is the description of the field of theology where many subjects are discussed which relate to the Bible, man, sin, salvation, the church, the future, life after death, salvation history, church history, practical church work etc.

1.3 **Different ways to study Theology**

There are different ways to study theology or to pursue theological questions. Each way sees things from a different perspective. Different approaches are complementary and help each other to more balanced insights into the whole of the truth.

1.3.1 **Biblical Theology**

In biblical theology the idea of a progressive self-revelation of God throughout salvation history is important. There is a certain focus on the Old Testament in its various parts as a preparation to God's revelation in Christ in the New Testament. A variety of themes is followed through Old Testament epochs leading to the New Testament counterparts. Examples are the covenants of God, sacrifices, his dwelling places and human mediators of revelation or salvation.

1.3.2 **Historical Theology - the place of the historical Creeds and Confessions**

Historical theology follows major themes and discussions throughout church history. It is interesting to see that certain subjects were very important in their times. Christology, for example, was of utmost importance in the first five centuries of church history; and it is still important today. It was always crucial, but that was the time when the church thought through lots of questions which nowadays are only repeated. During the period of the Reformation a crucial question was how the sinner can be justified before a holy and righteous God. Historical theology uses the vast treasures of the experiences of the church to answer the crucial questions asked throughout church history giving us today access to two thousand years of wisdom. At the same time of course we hope to avoid the follies of the past. When those above mentioned discussions were going on, certain key terms were used or coined to be more precise in the argument. Creeds were put forward to affirm the truths of the faith and to reject errors of heresies. The creeds often put the essential results of much thought and discussion into clear statements. They are worth thinking about even today.

1.3.3 **Systematic Theology**

Systematic theology is also called Dogmatics. All biblical, historical and philosophical knowledge is utilized to sum up everything in a theological system. Systematic theology is like a queen within the different fields of theology. The main subjects of systematic theology are theology proper (teaching about God), christology (teaching about Christ), pneumatology (teaching about the Holy Spirit), angelology (teaching about angels), bibliology (teaching about the

Holy Scriptures), soteriology (teaching about salvation), anthropology (teaching about man), ecclesiology (teaching about the church) and eschatology (teaching about the last things or end times).

1.3.4 **Practical (or Applied) Theology**

Practical theology adds the practical side of theology to the other fields we have already talked about. Evangelism and missions, homiletics, pastoral theology and administration can all be seen as subfields of practical theology.

1.3.5 **Contextual Theology**

Contextual theology puts an emphasis on the fact that the church has always had to live and witness in a certain time, a certain place and in a certain culture. This is the context in which the church lives out its theology. So necessarily theology has to be contextual. What language is used in the service, what songs are sung, what Bible translation is used? How does the church reach out to those without Christ? How can the truths of the Bible from another time and another culture be presented to the target audience (with their own culture) in such a way that they will understand and by the power of the Holy Spirit accept the truth?

1.4 **The difference between Systematic Theology and Biblical Theology**

After this overview it is profitable to make the difference between systematic theology and biblical theology even clearer. Each have distinct functions. Biblical theology has to unfold the subjects from within the Bible, with the biblical languages of Hebrew, Aramaic

1.4. SYSTEMATIC THEOLOGY AND BIBLICAL THEOLOGY⁵

and Greek, and with every text looked at within its biblical context of Old or New Testaments. But systematic theology differs from that in several aspects.

1.4.1 **Doctrinal dimension**

Systematic theology looks at any given subject from a doctrinal dimension and tries to place this subject within an organized whole, within a system. The whole of the Bible is used for this, but also the whole of church history, especially historical theology. In addition to this it can often be discerned that certain important philosophical presuppositions of any given epoch had an enormous influence on a way the discussion of a subject was unfolding. Certainly in the church, the Bible was always looked upon as decisive within any given discussion, but the way the Bible was perceived was normally influenced by the *Zeitgeist* or spirit of the times. While systematic theology has to start with the Bible, it has also to include these historical and philosophical dimensions in presenting a system of truth.

1.4.2 **Language not found in the Bible**

Another aspect of this difference between systematic and biblical theology is that different languages were used throughout the history of the church in the relevant discussions. In the first five centuries Greek remained very important for christological and trinitarian discussions. Church scholars especially in the eastern part of the Roman Empire often had a firm grip on Greek. But the western part of the Roman Empire used more and more Latin as it became the dominant church and scientific language of western Europe up to the Reformation and beyond. But even during the first five cen-

turies when the discussion was often in Greek, certain words were used which were not found in the Bible, not even in the Greek New Testament.

The background of those words was more in the scientific language of the times, especially as influenced by Greek philosophy. Or some Latin-writing scholar like Tertullian² could influence further discussions by coining the term "trinity" in Latin (*trinitas*) and by being a prolific and much-read writer.

1.4.3 **Contextually determined issues**

This leads us directly to contextually determined issues which do not have their origin in the Bible, but in the context of contemporary developments. The christological discussion was going on in the Greek speaking areas of the Roman Empire and in the Latin speaking areas. It was important in Greece and in Egypt, in other parts of North Africa, in Spain, Italy and in France. There were quite a few differences between these areas. Everyone partaking in the discussion brought his own background and context into it.

Somehow it was a question of the times, so important that not only bishops and theologians discussed it, but also normal people in Alexandria on the streets and in the market places. So it was during the Reformation. It was no coincidence that it started with Luther in Germany, but in its ongoing development other players came into it from Switzerland and France, England and the Netherlands. Much of the ongoing discussions can only be understood from the early sixteenth century western European background of the times. They used the Holy Scriptures, of course, but the perspective of

2. According to K. Heussi, *Kompendium der Kirchengeschichte*, edition no. 16 (Tübingen: Mohr/Siebeck, 1981), p 65, Tertullian lived from about 150 or 155 until after 222-3 C.E.

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the questions they put forward to the Scriptures was determined by their context.

For example, the humanist Renaissance movement with the slogan "Back to the sources!" was crucial to pave the way for Luther's translation of the Holy Scriptures into the German vernacular. Gutenberg's invention of mechanical movable type printing in Germany around 1440 had prepared the way for both movements to spread widely, the back-to-the-sources-movement and the Reformation. Often things happen in history which prepare the stage for something new. A new context, a new paradigm is created. People who trust their God can often realize God's hand even in secular developments to prepare the church for the next stage of world missions.

Systematic theologians then have the task to digest the challenges of the new context, internalize the questions of the times and give profound answers to them under the guidance of the Holy Spirit with the Holy Scriptures in hand and heart, having the community of the world wide church in mind.

1.4.4 **Beyond strict 'biblical theology'**

This all shows that biblical theology is greatly needed and systematic theology as well. The church needs gifted systematic theologians who will use the Bible, church history, philosophical knowledge and their analytic and systematic skills to present a truthful and current system of theology to the present church in need of it. This will often go hand in hand with apologetic skills in refuting heresies and affirming attacked truths of God's revelation.

A great example for this will always be the apostle Paul. He had a great love for Christ and the gospel and at the same time the ability to realize when the gospel was being attacked. He was a deep theological thinker with great analysis. Today we can be

grateful for many difficulties in various local churches. Often their difficulties became a source of blessings to us. Take for example the church in Colossae. There were some doctrinal problems in the church which resulted in Christ no longer being the center of their attention and trust. We do not know the details because we only have Paul's letter to them. Paul tackles their problems in a way that he writes a magnificent letter presenting a cosmological Christology so powerful that its influence goes down through the centuries and enters every christological debate.

1.4.5 **Unified truth**

Coming to the end of stating the difference between biblical and systematic theology, we can say that systematic theology tries to present a deep core of interconnected, unified truth concerning God and our relationship with him. It is an ongoing process for the church to affirm this truth in every generation. At the same time the theologians can reach back to get help from almost 2000 years of church history and wisdom.

Every area of systematic theology is somehow interconnected with the other areas. For example the christological debates of the first five centuries were strongly related to soteriology. If we recognize Christ, we believe in him as our Savior. This has also a bearing on the discussions of the Reformation, how God can give me his grace and justify me, the sinner. Without the christological results of the first five centuries the Reformation would be unthinkable. At the same time the view of the Bible, bibliology, was crucial in triggering the Reformation. It was indeed the rediscovery of the Bible and handing it over translated to the common man that was the strength of the Reformation. The basic reason for all this is that truth and reality can not be divided. If something is true in one area

of theology it is somehow related to the whole of truth, to unified truth, to the whole of reality. Paul touches this when he speaks about Christ, "in whom are hidden all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge" (Col 2:3).

1.5 Why study Theology?

We could ask ourselves, "Why should I study theology? What is it good for?"

1.5.1 Knowledge about God leads to knowledge of God.

When we study theology and so gain knowledge about God, the ultimate blessing is that we may start to know him personally. We can enter into a relationship with him. Jesus said (John 17:3):

And this is eternal life, that they know you the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom you have sent.³

Knowing God and having eternal life is identical. It is the greatest blessing a human being can receive. God has given us the Holy Scriptures so that we may know him and have true life. And he has given the church teachers over the centuries to help the body of Christ grow, every single member and the whole body (Eph 4:11). So the study of the Bible and theology can lead to enormous spiritual blessings and a changed life.

3. If not noted otherwise, the English quotations are from the Good News Publishers, ed., English Standard Version, [Accessed May 9, 2011], 2001, <http://www.crosswire.org/sword/modules/ModInfo.jsp?modName=ESV>.

1.5.2 **Knowledge about God leads to appropriate worship of God.**

According to Gen 1:26 God has created man in his own divine image. This sets man apart from the rest of the creatures on earth. Having received this honor all of mankind is called to glorify God and worship him (Ps 96; Is 43:21; 1 Pt 2:9). How should man glorify God without true knowledge of him? The ten commandments (Ex 20:2-17; Dt 5:6-21) do not give us permission to make our own images of God, to follow our own ideas about God. Quite the contrary, we need God's grace that he may reveal himself to us through his own perfect image Jesus Christ (Col 1:15). That he may write onto the tablets of our heart so that we can contemplate his glory (2 Cor 3:3-18). Theology well done is an act of worshiping God.

1.5.3 **Right doctrine enables us to understand our faith better.**

Right doctrine is not only useful when it leads to knowing God better. Every true believer will enjoy it when he understands his faith better. When there are questions and doubts about certain areas of our beliefs, we are troubled. When questions are answered and doubts are supplanted by insight and confidence we are much more satisfied. Studying theology can be a joy, laying firm foundations for the house of our faith.

1.5.4 **Right doctrine enables us to safeguard the deposit of the Gospel, especially in the face of influences from the surrounding culture.**

When we have started to cherish the gospel as our treasure, then we want to keep it safe. Right doctrine is helpful in this, and helps us to

own our beliefs. Insight into the truth of something taught lets this teaching sink deep into our hearts. The roots of the acknowledged truth grow so deep into our inmost being that the tree of our faith grows strong and bears much fruit. Storms coming from without will shake the tree, but will not break it. It will grow even stronger by the challenge. And we will be able to share the truth helping others around us to grow strong.

1.5.5 **Right doctrine enables us to refute heresy and false teaching.**

In his parable of the sower Jesus says (Mt 13:19):

When anyone hears the word of the kingdom and does not understand it, the evil one comes and snatches away what has been sown in his heart. This is what was sown along the path.

If someone does not understand the preached word of God, it is lost again. The devil, the evil one comes and snatches it away. Only if the word is understood and well-rooted in a heart will it be secure. In the same chapter Jesus mentions another activity of the enemy (Mt 13:24-26.37-39):

24 He put another parable before them, saying, "The kingdom of heaven may be compared to a man who sowed good seed in his field, 25 but while his men were sleeping, his enemy came and sowed weeds among the wheat and went away. 26 So when the plants came up and bore grain, then the weeds appeared also...37 He answered, "The one who sows the good seed is the Son of Man. 38 The field is the world,

and the good seed is the children of the kingdom. The weeds are the sons of the evil one, 39 and the enemy who sowed them is the devil. The harvest is the close of the age, and the reapers are angels.

Wherever there is revival, the word of God preached and accepted and bringing fruit, there will be a certain amount of activity of the devil sowing bad seed among the good seed. We see this from the start of the church. This also means that the spiritual work begun by God has to be protected against the sometimes similar looking work of a very different origin. Right doctrine enables us to refute heresy and false teaching. We will not be able to stop the spreading of heresy or false teaching, but we will be able to help the believers to see the difference and to keep to sound teaching, thus safeguarding their spiritual growth.

1.6 Revelation

In this section we talk about revelation. Revelation is the act of God by which he reveals to man what he wants known and recognized. It is the broader term describing all kinds of revelations of God to mankind. The more specific term of inspiration is used especially for the inspiration of the Bible. It is related to the special revelation of God in the Bible.

1.6.1 General revelation - natural theology

General revelation is the revelation of God given to all mankind through creation. Psalm 19 is famous in combining the idea of general revelation (Ps 19:1-6) with the idea of special revelation (Ps 19:7-11) in one piece of poetry. Let us hear the general revelation part:

1 The heavens declare the glory of God,
and the sky above proclaims his handiwork.
2 Day to day pours out speech,
and night to night reveals knowledge.
3 There is no speech, nor are there words,
whose voice is not heard.
4 Their measuring line goes out through all the earth,
and their words to the end of the world.
In them he has set a tent for the sun,
5 which comes out like a bridegroom leaving his chamber,
and, like a strong man, runs its course with joy.
6 Its rising is from the end of the heavens,
and its circuit to the end of them,
and there is nothing hidden from its heat.

The heavens declare the glory of God without words to the human eye. To the eyes of those who see, the artistic beauty of creation is a pointer to the greatness of the artist. Of course this Psalm of David was written by a man who was inspired by the Holy Spirit because the prophet Samuel had anointed him (1 Sm 16:13). But here the inspired David points us to creation as a means of God revealing his greatness and glory everywhere to all mankind.

Within the New Testament the classic section about general revelation is written by the apostle Paul in Rom 1:18-21:

18 For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who by their unrighteousness suppress the truth. 19 For what can be known about God is plain to them, because God has shown it to them. 20 For his invisible attributes, namely, his eternal power and divine nature, have been clearly perceived, ever since the creation of the world, in the things that have been made. So they are without excuse. 21 For although they knew God, they did not honor him as God or give thanks to him, but they became futile in their thinking, and their foolish hearts were darkened. 22 Claiming to be wise, they became fools, 23 and exchanged the glory of the immortal God for images resembling mortal man and birds and animals and reptiles.

Paul speaks about the aspect of God's general self-revelation through creation in 1:19-20. We have quoted the verses before and after as well to understand our verses within their context. Paul agrees with Ps 19 that God's glory has been revealed through creation. But Paul talks about this in the context of God's wrath revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and idolatry. God's wrath and judgment is

justified because Gentile idolaters (1:23) have no excuse (1:20). They have not really learned their lesson from creation, but their sinful inclination has let them astray. Paul had just explained in a kind of summary that the Gospel of Christ is God's way to justify the sinner by faith and give him eternal life, to the Jew first and also to the Greek (1:16-17). In his first major argument of the letter (1:18-3:20 Paul will show that all of mankind is under sin, Jews and Greeks alike. They deserve the wrath of God and to be condemned. In the second major argument of the letter (3:21-5:21) Paul shows the revelation of God's righteousness in Jesus Christ's death on the cross. The sinner is justified by God's grace and through faith in Jesus Christ (3:21-28). Because of this line of argument Paul's use of the general revelation in Rom 1:19-20 is more negative. He wants to show that all need faith in Jesus Christ's blood (Rom 3:25) to get saved. He only uses the general revelation to prove that the Gentiles are without excuse in God's judgment. Nobody can say that they did not know, even though they did not have the law of Moses or the prophets.

When it comes to natural theology, one of the most important texts is Rom 2:14-16 used in favor of it. Natural theology is a theology based not on some kind of special revelation (holy scriptures) but on arguments more along philosophical lines guided by human reason alone. It can be combined with general revelation because the access of human beings to it is by human reason. Some understand that Rom 2:14-16 speak of some kind of general revelation of God by writing on the tablets of the hearts. They understand this to be God's work in the consciences of Gentile people all over the world. This would be an important idea. But is this what Paul wanted to say in the context? So let us look at this text within its context (2:12-23):

12 For all who have sinned without the law will also perish without the law, and all who have sinned under the law will be judged by the law. 13 For it is not the hearers of the law who are righteous before God, but the doers of the law who will be justified. 14 For when Gentiles, who do not have the law, by nature do what the law requires, they are a law to themselves, even though they do not have the law. 15 They show that the work of the law is written on their hearts, while their conscience also bears witness, and their conflicting thoughts accuse or even excuse them 16 on that day when, according to my gospel, God judges the secrets of men by Christ Jesus. 17 But if you call yourself a Jew and rely on the law and boast in God 18 and know his will and approve what is excellent, because you are instructed from the law; 19 and if you are sure that you yourself are a guide to the blind, a light to those who are in darkness, 20 an instructor of the foolish, a teacher of children, having in the law the embodiment of knowledge and truth— 21 you then who teach others, do you not teach yourself? While you preach against stealing, do you steal? 22 You who say that one must not commit adultery, do you commit adultery? You who abhor idols, do you rob temples? 23 You who boast in the law dishonor God by breaking the law. 24 For, as it is written, “The name of God is blasphemed among the Gentiles because of you.”

The context clearly shows that the argument before 2:14-16 and afterwards is more negative, against human nature, against human

pride, especially Jewish pride. As Paul proves the guilt of all nations in Rom 1:18-32, he wants to show in 2:1-3:20 that all Jews are guilty as well (see 3:9.19-20). He starts very cleverly in Rom 2:1-11 without mentioning whom he is attacking now. So we read in 2:1:

Therefore you have no excuse, O man, every one of you who judges. For in passing judgment on another you condemn yourself, because you, the judge, practice the very same things.

While reading this, you could think that he is just talking about everybody, Jews and the rest of the nations. But with the ongoing argument, it becomes clear that judging others was especially something the Jews tended to do. Therefore in 2:12-13 Paul already prepares to show the guilt of his fellow-countrymen:

12 For all who have sinned without the law will also perish without the law, and all who have sinned under the law will be judged by the law. 13 For it is not the hearers of the law who are righteous before God, but the doers of the law who will be justified.

Those who have sinned without the law are the non-Jewish nations. Those who have sinned under the law are the Jews. They will be judged and condemned by the law as Paul is going to prove after 2:14-16 in 2:17-24. Paul's key idea is that the Jews are proud that they have God's own law as a light, but their guilt is that they break it (2:21-24):

21 You then who teach others, do you not teach yourself? While you preach against stealing, do you

steal? 22 You who say that one must not commit adultery, do you commit adultery? You who abhor idols, do you rob temples? 23 You who boast in the law dishonor God by breaking the law. 24 For, as it is written, “The name of God is blasphemed among the Gentiles because of you.

In agreement with this development of thought Paul sums up his own argument of 1:18-3:8 with the statement in 3:9:

What then? Are we Jews any better off? No, not at all. For we have already charged that all, both Jews and Greeks, are under sin.

This then is followed by a long list of Old Testament quotes in 3:10-18 proclaiming that all men are sinners. 3:19-20 completes the argument by stating that the prime target audience of those quotes were the Israelites so that at last the whole world stands condemned before God. If Paul wants to prove this, what then is his use of our text 2:14-16 in this line of argument? St. Augustine sees the importance of the question and handles it very ably:

Now we must see in what sense it is that the apostle says, “For when the Gentiles, which have not the law, do by nature the things contained in the law, these, having not the law, are a law unto themselves, which show the work of the law written in their hearts,” lest there should seem to be no certain difference in the new testament, in that the Lord promised that He would write His laws in the hearts of His people, inasmuch as the Gentiles have this done for them naturally. This question therefore has to be sifted, arising as it does

as one of no inconsiderable importance. For some one may say, "If God distinguishes the new testament from the old by this circumstance, that in the old He wrote His law on tables, but in the new He wrote them on men's hearts, by what are the faithful of the new testament discriminated from the Gentiles, which have the work of the law written on their hearts, whereby they do by nature the things of the law, as if, forsooth, they were better than the ancient people, which received the law on tables, and before the new people, which has that conferred on it by the new testament which nature has already bestowed on them?" ... Has the apostle perhaps mentioned those Gentiles as having the law written in their hearts who belong to the new testament?⁴

He then goes on in his argument and tries to prove exactly this: Rom 2:14 speaks of Gentile Christians with changed hearts. I agree that Paul uses Gentile Christians in Rom 2:14-16 to put the Jews to shame if they have the law but do not do it while the Gentile Christians by nature do not have the law but do it, because of a new heart and guided by the Holy Spirit. One interesting thing about Rom 2:14 is that the understanding of this verse depends on where you put the comma. Please compare the two versions in English⁵. Version one:

4. According to Philip Schaff, NPNF1-05. St. Augustin: Anti-Pelagian Writings, Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers (Grand Rapids, MI: Christian Classics Ethereal Library, 1886), <http://www.ccel.org/ccel/schaff/npnf105.html>, p. 228.

5. The Greek reads: ὅταν γὰρ ἔθνη τὰ μὴ νόμον ἔχοντα φύσει τὰ τοῦ νόμου ποιῶσιν, οὗτοι νόμον μὴ ἔχοντες ἑαυτοῖς εἰσιν νόμος•

For when Gentiles, who do not have the law, by nature do what the law requires, they are a law to themselves, even though they do not have the law.

Version two:

For when Gentiles, who do not have the law by nature, do what the law requires, they are a law to themselves, even though they do not have the law.

The difference between the two versions is whether the Gentiles "by nature do what the law requires" (version one)⁶ or whether the Gentiles "do not have the law by nature" (version two)⁷. How can we decide what Paul meant? The good thing is that Paul uses the same word "nature"⁸ in other texts as well.⁹ Paul's use of "nature" in the following texts is closest to our section: Rom 2:27; 11:21.24 and Gal 2:15. In all these verses Paul compares Jews and Gentiles in the context. In Gal 2:15 one is a Jew "by nature" or as it is translated here "by birth". In Rom 11:21 and 24 Paul talks about a wild

6. Here φύσει is understood as an adverbial phrase "by nature" explaining what follows in Greek τὰ τοῦ νόμου ποιῶσιν.

7. Here φύσει is understood as an adverbial phrase "by nature" explaining what goes before in Greek τὰ μὴ νόμον ἔχοντα.

8. ἡ φύσις

9. Rom 1:26 their women exchanged natural relations for those that are contrary to nature; 2:27 he who is physically uncircumcised; 11:21 the natural branches; 11:24 for if you were cut from what is by nature a wild olive tree, and grafted, contrary to nature, into a cultivated olive tree, how much more will these, the natural branches, be grafted back into their own olive tree; 1 Cor 11:14 does not nature itself teach you that if a man wears long hair it is a disgrace for him; Gal 2:15 we ourselves are Jews by birth and not Gentile sinners; 4:8 formerly, when you did not know God, you were enslaved to those that by nature are not gods; Eph 2:3 we were by nature children of wrath, like the rest of mankind.

olive tree and a cultivated olive tree, but what he really means is the difference between Gentiles and Jews again. The same is true for the close parallel in 2:27 according to its context and use (it is the same chapter as 2:14). Let us look at it within the context (2:25-29):

25 For circumcision indeed is of value if you obey the law, but if you break the law, your circumcision becomes uncircumcision. 26 So, if a man who is uncircumcised keeps the precepts of the law, will not his uncircumcision be regarded as circumcision? 27 Then he who is physically uncircumcised but keeps the law will condemn you who have the written code and circumcision but break the law.¹⁰ 28 For no one is a Jew who is merely one outwardly, nor is circumcision outward and physical. 29 But a Jew is one inwardly, and circumcision is a matter of the heart, by the Spirit, not by the letter. His praise is not from man but from God.

Verse 25 tells the Jews that their circumcision is only of value if they obey the law. Otherwise they are circumcised in the body, but uncircumcised in heart. Verse 26 shows the alternative that a Gentile who is uncircumcised in the body may live in a way keeping the law so that he will be regarded as spiritually circumcised and saved. Then follows our verse 27 with calling this Gentile person "he who is physically uncircumcised"¹¹. This uncircumcised Gentile condemns the circumcised Jew. Why? "For no one is a

10. 27 καὶ κρινεῖ ἡ ἐκ φύσεως ἀκροβυστία τὸν νόμον τελοῦσα σὲ τὸν διὰ γράμματος καὶ περιτομῆς παραβάτην νόμου.

11. Compare this ἡ ἐκ φύσεως ἀκροβυστία with ἔθνη τὰ μὴ νόμον ἔχοντα φύσει in 2:14!

Jew who is merely one outwardly, nor is circumcision outward and physical. But a Jew is one inwardly, and circumcision is a matter of the heart, by the Spirit, not by the letter. His praise is not from man but from God." According to the general usage of Paul's language in his letters¹² "a person with a circumcised heart by the Spirit, not by the letter" is a born again Christian. The same is true for 2:27 and for 2:14-16. The Gentile person without the law in these verses is someone who has the law written on his heart. This again is according to the use of Paul in his letters a sign of being born again (2 Cor 3:3-6 in combination with Jer 31:31-34). I see the parallel statements of Paul in 2:14 and 2:27 as a strong argument in favor of the above version 2: "For when Gentiles, who do not have the law by nature, do what the law requires, they are a law to themselves, even though they do not have the law." Paul does not open a door for natural theology in 2:14-16 according to which people could come to a saving knowledge of God without the gospel, but he shuts the door for those Jews who think that having the law and being circumcised in the body is enough to get saved. On judgment day (2:16.29) they will realize that their error was immense. By understanding 2:14-16 within its context in this way the argument of Paul in Rom 1:18-3:20 fits again. He wants to show that all, Jews and Gentiles, are guilty and condemned. There is only one way of salvation, only one way of God's righteousness for sinners, which he then explains in Rom 3:21-5:21.

1.6.2 Special revelation - Scripture

In contrast to general revelation which is for all mankind and perceived through creation special revelation is given to people cho-

12. See Rom 7:5-6; 2 Cor 3:1-6; Col 2:11; Phil 3:3

sen by God like Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Moses and the prophets. Special revelation can happen through an audible voice, a vision, a dream, through personal inspiration by the Holy Spirit, through an angel of God, through the work of the priests and the prophets. The main target audience of God's special revelation in the Holy Scriptures is Israel, including the ancestors of this nation. In addition to these single divine actions of revelation through the generations there is the phenomenon of the growth of the Holy Scriptures. According to the testimony of the Bible God guided people to write books which then were recognized as holy books growing to what we know as the Holy Scriptures of the Old and New Testament.

1.6.3 **Progressive revelation**

The growth of the number of the Holy Scriptures until the collection was complete is in itself a progressive revelation of God. But progressive revelation also includes the idea that God had a plan of salvation from the beginning and that he revealed this plan progressively throughout salvation history. Later revelation gives fuller insight in comparison to earlier revelations. The climax is seen with the coming of Jesus Christ in the New Testament.

1.6.4 **Understanding revelation in other religions**

In the Bible there are two different sorts of texts when it comes to the question of revelation in other religions. Some texts are very critical of what is going on in other religions (for example 1 Cor 10:20; Eph 2:11-12). Some texts seem to suppose that people outside of the line of the chosen families of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob can have a relationship with God the most High, as Melchizedek had (Gen 14:18-20) or can receive special guidance from God (Gen

20:3-8; 41:25). Sometimes in the Old Testament God could use the means the Gentiles employed for divine guidance to let them go the way he wanted them to go (see for example Ez 21:21-23). Proverbs 21:1 speaks of God's guidance of rulers. Rv 17:17 presupposes that God even rules within the hearts of the greatest enemies of God. It will be good to use the Holy Bible as our rule of faith and with this light in our hands and hearts to look into other religions.

1.7 The Bible as the Word of God through Men

1.7.1 The Old Testament witness to the Old Testament Scriptures

Related to the Torah

The main person receiving God's revelation in the Torah or the Pentateuch is the prophet Moses. His calling is reported in Ex 3-4. Moses is said to have written the book of the covenant (Ex 20-23; see 24:4). Much of the content of Exodus, Leviticus and Numbers is introduced with sentences like "The Lord said to Moses..." or "And the Lord spoke to Moses, saying..." The idea is that God had spoken to Moses and Moses delivered this to Israel. Most chapters of Deuteronomy are a fare-well sermon or instruction of Moses (Dt 1:1) who knew that he was going to die and wanted to prepare Israel for future tasks after his death. Therefore much of Exodus to Deuteronomy presents itself as God's word through Moses to Israel. In Numbers 33:1-2 Moses is said to have written a summary of the way through the desert. We learn from Dt 31:9-13:

9 Then Moses wrote this law and gave it to the priests, the sons of Levi, who carried the ark of the covenant of the Lord, and to all the elders of Israel.

10 And Moses commanded them, "At the end of every seven years, at the set time in the year of release, at the Feast of Booths, 11 when all Israel comes to appear before the Lord your God at the place that he will choose, you shall read this law before all Israel in their hearing. 12 Assemble the people, men, women, and little ones, and the sojourner within your towns, that they may hear and learn to fear the Lord your God, and be careful to do all the words of this law, 13 and that their children, who have not known it, may hear and learn to fear the Lord your God, as long as you live in the land that you are going over the Jordan to possess."

According to Dt 31:24-26 a copy of the law was to be kept by the side of the ark of the covenant. Another copy should be given to the future king (Dt 17:18). The books following the Pentateuch in the Bible presuppose the existence of the law of God as a law given through Moses (Jo 1:8; 8:32-35; 2 Kgs 2:3; 2 Chr 17:9; Ezra 3:2; 7:6.10).

Related to the Prophets

The prophets as a class in Israel were spokesmen of God. They had to preach a teaching in agreement with the covenant of God (Dt 13:1-11). Otherwise they should get the death penalty as false prophets. Their predictions had to be fulfilled (Dt 18:15-22). Otherwise they were proven to be false prophets. All writing prophets point to their own books as the "Word of God" or a "Vision" from

God in their introductory verses and in between.¹³

There are some instances where we get testimonies about sources of the historical prophetic writings as well: About David (1 Chr 29:29 Samuel, Nathan, Gad); Solomon (2 Chr 9:29 Nathan, Ahijah, Iddo), Rehoboam (2 Chr 12:15 Shemaiah, Iddo); Abijah (2 Chr 13:22 Iddo); Jehoshaphat (2 Chr 20:34 Jehu the son of Hanani); Jehoram (2 Chr 21:12 Elijah); Uzziah (2 Chr 26:22 Isaiah the son of Amoz); Hezekiah (2 Chr 32:32 in the vision of Isaiah the prophet the son of Amoz, in the Book of the Kings of Judah and Israel); Manasseh (2 Chr 33:18-19 Chronicles of the Seers).

There are some instances where we have a witness of fulfillment regarding predictions of some prophets: Joshua 21:43-45 and 23:14 about promises in the Torah; 1 Sm 3:19-21 about Samuel; 1 Kgs 2:27 about 1 Sm 2:27-36; 1 Kgs 16:34 about the curse in Jo 6:26; 2 Kgs 23:16 about 1 Kgs 13:2; 2 Chr 36:21-22 about Jeremiah (Jer 25:11-13; 29:10). In Jer 26:18 people remember Micah 3:12 and say it is not necessary to kill Jeremiah because he said Jerusalem will be destroyed because Micah prophesied the same. The answer of Hezekiah and Judah was not to kill Micah but to pray and ask God for mercy. In addition to the mentioned testimonies of prophecies fulfilled in later generations we see quite often in the stories of the prophets that they had supernatural knowledge from God and that this became evident in their life-time putting a seal on their prophet-hood.

13. Is 1:1; Jer 1:1-3; Ez 1:1-3; Hos 1:1; Joel 1:1; Amos 1:1; Ob 1:1; Jon 1:1; Mi 1:1; Na 1:1; Heb 1:1; Zep 1:1; Hg 1:1; Zec 1:1; Mal 1:1

Related to the Writings

Together with the "Torah" and the "Prophets" the Jews have a third part of their canon which they call the "Writings". Some of their writings have also a kind of witness within the Old Testament. The biggest and most important book within this section of the Old Testament canon is the book of the Psalms. Many Psalms have an information about the author or connecting the Psalm with a prophetic figure. The name of David is above many of them who is a known man of God, king and prophet with the Holy Spirit on him (1 Sm 16:13. We learn from 1 Chr 25:1:

David and the chiefs of the service also set apart for the service the sons of Asaph, and of Heman, and of Jeduthun,¹⁴ who prophesied with lyres, with harps, and with cymbals.

David is named as author in the titles of many Psalms.¹⁵ Asaph comes second.¹⁶ It is not always clear whether it is as author or representing the priestly singer group he is head of (see 1 Chr 25:1-8). The sons of Korah¹⁷ are also mentioned and Heman¹⁸ and

14. Jeduthun is mentioned in titles, not as author but additionally 39; 62; 77.

15. David in Book 1 (1-41): Ps 3; 4; 5; 6; 7; 8; 9; 11; 12; 13; 14; 15; 16; 17; 18; 19; 20; 21; 22; 23; 24; 25; 26; 27; 28; 29; 30; 31; 32; 34; 35; 36; 37; 38; 39; 40; 41. Book 2 (42-72): 51; 52; 53; 54; 55; 56; 57; 58; 59; 60; 61; 62; 63; 64; 65; 68; 69; 70; 72:20! Book 3 (73-89): 78:70; 86. Book 4 (90-106): 101; 103. Book 5 (107-150) 108; 109; 110; 122; 124; 131; 133; 138; 139; 140; 141; 142; 143; 144; 145.

16. Asaph in Ps 50; 73; 74; 75; 76; 77; 78; 79; 80; 81; 82; 83.

17. The sons of Korah in Ps 42; 44; 45; 46; 47; 48; 49; 84; 85; 87; 88.

18. Heman in Ps 88.

Ethan¹⁹; also Moses²⁰ and Solomon²¹. Some Psalms have no hint to any author or are not connected with any name. The result of this overview is that most Psalms have a prophetic person mentioned in the title in a way which could be understood that he is the inspired author of the Psalm. This is a way to canonize the whole book.

The situation with Proverbs is similar. There are seven titles in Proverbs dividing the book into seven parts.²² Most chapters of Proverbs are thus ascribed to Solomon, a man of God-given wisdom (1 Kgs 3:28). The book "Song of Songs" gives its name in 1:1: "The Song of Songs, which is Solomon's". Because Ecclesiastes is according to 1:1 "The words of the Preacher, the son of David, king in Jerusalem", it has been often identified as another book related to the king Solomon. At the end of the book we are informed:

The words of the wise are like goads, and like nails
firmly fixed are the collected sayings; they are given
by one Shepherd.

If the Shepherd here is identified with God, the idea is that all true wisdom comes from God. The book is a book of wisdom and so claims at the end to come from God. According to Neh 1:1 the title of the book is "The words of Nehemiah the son of Hacaliah". The closure of the book is a personal prayer of Nehemiah: "Remember

19. Ethan in Ps 89.

20. Moses in Ps 90

21. Solomon in Ps 72

22. (1. 1:1-9:18 The proverbs of Solomon, son of David, king of Israel. 2. 10:1-22:16 The proverbs of Solomon. 3. 22:17-24:22 Incline your ear, and hear the words of the wise, and apply your heart to my knowledge. 4. 24:23-34 These also are sayings of the wise. 5. 25:1-29:27 These also are proverbs of Solomon which the men of Hezekiah king of Judah copied. 6. 30:1-33 The words of Agur son of Jakeh. The oracle. 7. 31:1-31 The words of King Lemuel. An oracle that his mother taught him.

1.7. THE BIBLE AS THE WORD OF GOD THROUGH MEN 29

me, O my God, for good." The book seems to be an account of what God has done through the service of Nehemiah, especially the rebuilding of the defense system of Jerusalem. According to Esther 9:20-21 "Mordecai recorded these things and sent letters to all the Jews who were in all the provinces of King Ahasuerus, both near and far, obliging them to keep the fourteenth day of the month Adar and also the fifteenth day of the same, year by year". The book of Esther is related to the origin of the Purim feast. Esther 9:20-21 does not claim that Mordecai is the author of this book but that he wrote about the same events we have in this book. He is given at least as a source, if not clearly as the author. The main human figure in the book of Daniel is the exiled Jew and prophet of the same name. Dan 7 is presented as written by Daniel in 7:1. Daniel speaks himself in Dan 7-12. In 12:4 he is told:

But you, Daniel, shut up the words and seal the book, until the time of the end. Many shall run to and fro, and knowledge shall increase.

So the book itself tells us that Daniel had to write a sealed book so that people later could read it and gain increased knowledge. The books Ruth, Ezra, Job, Lamentations and Chronicles do not give any information about the author.

1.7.2 The New Testament witness to the Old Testament Scriptures

It is written.

In Greek this is *gēgraptai*.²³ The idea of this passive Greek verb form (perfect tense) is that something has been written in the past

23. γέγραπται

but with the present ongoing effect that it is now readable as something written. This phrase is used most often in the New Testament for the Holy Scriptures of the Old Testament in the sense of a divine passive: The passive form is used so that the name of God should not be mentioned, but He is the understood author of the "Scriptures". In these verses it denotes OT Scriptures: Matthew 2:5; 4:4; 4:6; 4:7; 4:10; 11:10; 21:13; 26:24; 26:31; Mark 1:2; 7:6; 9:12; 9:13; 11:17; 14:21; 14:27; Luke 2:23; 3:4; 4:4; 4:8; 4:10; 7:27; 10:26; 19:46; 24:46; John 8:17; Acts 1:20; 7:42; 13:33; 15:15; 23:5; Romans 1:17; 2:24; 3:4; 3:10; 4:17; 8:36; 9:13; 9:33; 10:15; 11:8; 11:26; 12:19; 14:11; 15:3; 15:9; 15:21; 1 Corinthians 1:19; 1:31; 2:9; 3:19; 4:6; 9:9; 10:7; 14:21; 15:45; 2 Corinthians 8:15; 9:9; Galatians 3:10; 3:13; 4:22; 4:27; 1 Peter 1:16.

There are some places where the "It is written" does not point to Old Testament Scripture: In Hebrews 10:7 it is written (gēgraptai) about Christ in a book we can not further identify. In Rev 13:8 and 17:8 the names are written in the book of life, which belongs to Christ. And in John 20:31 John uses the "it is written" with regard to his own book, that has life-giving qualities through faith in Jesus Christ.

The Scripture or the Scriptures

The Scripture is in Greek "hē graphē"²⁴. The Scriptures are in Greek "hai graphai"²⁵. In most cases where the words "the scripture" or "the scriptures" are used in the New Testament, they denote "the Holy Scripture(s)" of the Old Testament, like in these verses: Matthew 21:42; 22:29; 26:54; 26:56; Mark 12:10; 12:24; 14:49;

24. ἡ γραφή

25. αἱ γραφαί

Luke 4:21; 24:27; 24:32; 24:45; John 2:22; 5:39; 7:38 (probably a combination of different passages from the prophet Isaiah); 7:42; 10:35; 13:18; 17:12; 19:24; 19:28; 19:36; 19:37; 20:9; Acts 1:16; 8:32; 8:35; 17:2; 17:11; 18:24; 18:28; Romans 1:2; 4:3; 9:17; 10:11; 11:2; 15:4; 16:26; 1 Corinthians 15:3.4; Galatians 3:8.22; 4:30; 1 Timothy 5:18; 2 Timothy 3:16; James 2:8; 2:23; 4:5 (what passage?); 1 Peter 2:6; 2 Peter 1:20; 3:16.

The fulfillment of the Scriptures

There is a special emphasis in the New Testament on the necessary fulfillment of the Holy Scriptures of the Old Testament, normally as being fulfilled in Jesus Christ: See the formula in Matthew 1:22 "... to fulfill what was spoken by the Lord through the prophet"²⁶ which is also used very similarly in Matt 2:15; 2:17; 2:23; 4:14; 8:17; 12:17; 13:35; 21:4; ; 27:9. These ten formulas in Matthew are special. But there are other references in Matthew and other New Testament books presenting the idea that the Scriptures or the words of God must be fulfilled or are fulfilled: Matthew 5:17; 26:54; 26:56; Mark 14:49; Luke 1:20 (the words of God through the angel Gabriel); 4:21; 22:16 (the Passover will be fulfilled in the kingdom of God); 24:44; John 12:38; 13:18; 15:25; 17:12; 19:24; 19:36; Acts 1:16; 3:18; 13:27; James 2:23.

There is also a use of "to fulfill" meaning to fulfill what is ordered in the word of God, see for example: Matthew 5:17 includes both, Christ's ethical fulfillment of the Scriptures and fulfilling the prophecies. The ethical fulfillment is meant in Rom 8:4; 13:8; Galatians 5:14; Matt 3:15. Another meaning of fulfilling the word is to teach it fully, totally, meaning all of it or fully in a certain area

26. ἵνα πληρωθῇ τὸ ῥηθὲν ὑπὸ κυρίου διὰ τοῦ προφήτου λέγοντος

like in Rom 15:19.

Christ as the fulfillment of the Scriptures and their inner center

can be seen in Luke 24:25-27, 44-48; Acts 3:18; 1 Cor 15:3, 4 and 2 Cor 1:20.

Qualities of the Scriptures

According to their own testimony the Scriptures are ... Mt 5:17-20 permanent, important, to be fulfilled and obeyed; Rom 1:2 holy; 15:4 giving perseverance and encouragement (homophone and parak-
 lesis); prophetic Rom 16:26, 2 Pt 1:19-21; Heb 4:12 effective,
 powerful; 2 Tm 3:16 inspired, useful; John 10:35 can not be broken;
 1 Peter 1:23-2:2 life-giving and sustaining, eternal; John 17:17
 truthful, sanctifying and more ...

1.7.3 The New Testament witness to the New Testament Scriptures

The New Testament also gives witness of the New Testament message as the word of God. Some passages in the Gospels show us that the words of Jesus were seen as the eternal words of God which are being fulfilled and which have to be obeyed (Mt 7:24; 24:35; 28:20; John 2:22; 18:9; 18:32). The life of Christ as written in John's Gospel is the foundation for a life giving faith (John 20:31). The words of Jesus can be seen on one level with Old Testament Holy Scripture (1 Tm 5:18). 2 Peter 3:16 honors the letters of Paul as "Scriptures" on one level with the Holy Scriptures of the Old Testament. Paul sees his own preaching as the word of God inspired by the Holy Spirit (1 Thes 2:13; Gal 1:1, 11-12; 1 Cor 14:37; 7:10-12, 40). Because this is also true for his written letters, he has

developed a special way of signing his own letters as a mark of authenticity (2 Thes 3:17). He also urges the churches to read and obey his letters (Col 4:16; 1 Thes 5:27; 2 Thes 3:14).

1.8 The Evangelical View of the Qualities of the Scriptures

The European Reformation in the sixteenth century was a religious movement which can be understood with the background of the Renaissance movement which had the slogan "ad fontes" which means "To the sources!" or "To the fountains!" For the Renaissance this would mean for example to study the classical Greek and Latin authors with regard to science and philosophy. The Reformation movement begun by Martin Luther (1483-1546) in Germany applies the same principle "To the sources!" on Christianity and theology. The slogan of the Reformers became "sola scriptura!" Only through the Scripture man can find the true faith which helps him to be justified before God. Ulrich Zwingli (1484-1531), the reformer of German speaking Switzerland, and the Frenchman John Calvin (1509-1564) who developed an enormous influence from Geneva in French speaking Switzerland, both would agree with Luther that teaching must flow forth from the Holy Scriptures. Therefore the Lutheran and Reformed Churches and later developing free protestant evangelical churches have had a traditional emphasis on the importance and authority of the Bible.

1.8.1 Authority

The authority of Scripture is the authority of God. What the Scripture says, God says. This is, of course, derived from the biblical

testimonies within the Holy Scriptures as we have seen above. The reformers would not acknowledge Christian Tradition as being on the same level as the Holy Scriptures. While Roman Catholic Theologians would often point to decisions of Councils and Church Fathers, the reformers would emphasize that every teaching has to be proven through the Bible. They could also quote Church Fathers, for example Augustine, and they would use them to show that Protestant convictions can also be found in them, but the decisive authority had to be the Bible.

1.8.2 **Necessity**

The idea of the necessity of the Bible is another quality of the Holy Scripture according to classical evangelical theology.

Necessary for salvation

Paul teaches in Rom 10:9-10 that two things are necessary for salvation, the faith of the heart and the confession of this faith by one's mouth:

9 Because, if you confess with your mouth that Jesus is Lord and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved. 10 For with the heart one believes and is justified, and with the mouth one confesses and is saved.

It further becomes clear that the confession that Jesus is Lord is to be understood in the context of crying out in prayer to him as Lord and God (Rom 10:11-13; cf. Joel 2:32). And then Paul points out that this faith is born by the proclamation of the Word of God (Rom 10:17):

So faith comes from hearing, and hearing through the word of Christ.

Salvation is only to be found in the name of Jesus (Acts 4:12). He is the only way (John 14:6) and the only "mediator between God and men" (1 Tm 2:5-6). Therefore the word of God presenting Christ is necessary that saving faith may be born in the heart of a man and a saving confession be found on his lips.

Necessary for spiritual nourishment

If somebody accepts the truth of the Gospel and Christ as his Savior he is born again out of the seed of God's word (John 1:12; 3:3.5; 1 Pt 1:3.23). But then he needs to be nourished as Peter continues to say (1 Pt 2:1-3):

1 So put away all malice and all deceit and hypocrisy and envy and all slander. 2 Like newborn infants, long for the pure spiritual milk, that by it you may grow up to salvation²⁷ - 3 if indeed you have tasted that the Lord is good.

When Peter says "pure spiritual milk" he seems to think of the Word of God. So the Word of God is the seed through which new spiritual babies are born and the "spiritual milk" through which they are nourished and grow up. The word of Jesus in Mt 4:4 where he quotes Dt 8:3 agrees with this.

27. ὡς ἀρτιγεννήτα βρέφη τὸ λογικὸν ἄδολον γάλα ἐπιποθήσατε, ἵνα ἐν αὐτῷ αὐξηθῇτε εἰς σωτηρίαν

Necessary for knowing God's will

The revealed Word of God is also necessary for knowing God's will with certainty (Dt 29:29):

The secret things belong to the Lord our God, but the things that are revealed belong to us and to our children forever, that we may do all the words of this law.

God's law is necessary to know right from wrong (Rom 7:7). People get transformed by God's word to do what pleases God (2 Tm 3:16-17; Mt 28:20).

1.8.3 Clarity

The Word of God is clear enough to be taught to children (Dt 6:6-7; Mt 11:25). It can make simple people wise (Ps 19:7). It transforms people and makes them men and women of God if the Holy Spirit helps them to understand (2 Tm 3:16; 1 Cor 10:11; 2:14).

1.8.4 Sufficiency

The Word of God is sufficient for salvation (2 Tm 3:15). People are born again through the word of God (Jas 1:18; 1 Pt 1:23). It is sufficient to produce faith, obedience and patience (Rom 10:17; 15:4; 2 Tm 3:16-17).

1.9 The Canon of the Bible

1.9.1 The Canon of the Old Testament

Important Witnesses

The New Testament Mt 5:17-19; 2 Tm 3:16; 2 Pt 1:21; Lk 24:27.44; John 5:39; 10:35.

Prologue of Jesus ben Sira according to NETS:²⁸

(1) Seeing that many and great things have been given to us through the Law and the Prophets and the others that followed them, for which reason it is necessary to commend Israel for education and wisdom, and whereas it is necessary that not only those who read them gain understanding, (5) but also that those who love learning be capable of service to outsiders, both when they speak and when they write, Iesous, my grandfather, since he had given himself increasingly both to the reading of the Law and the Prophets (10) and the other ancestral books and since he had acquired considerable proficiency in them, he too was led to compose something pertaining to education and wisdom in order that lovers of learning, when they come under their sway as well, might gain much more in living by the law. (15) You are invited, therefore, to a reading with goodwill and attention, and to exercise forbearance in cases where we may be thought (20) to

28. Albert Pietersma and Benjamin G. Wright, eds., *A New English Translation of the Septuagint*, [accessed September 3, 2012], 2009, <http://ccat.sas.upenn.edu/nets/edition/>

be insipid with regard to some expressions that have been the object of great care in rendering; for what was originally expressed in Hebrew does not have the same force when it is in fact rendered in another language. And not only in this case, but also in the case of the Law itself and the Prophets (25) and the rest of the books the difference is not small when these are expressed in their own language.

2 Maccabees 2:13-15 according to NETS:²⁹

13 The same things are reported in the records and in the memoirs of Neemias, and also that he founded a library and collected the books about the kings and prophets, and the writings of Daudid, and letters of kings about votive offerings. 14 In the same way Ioudas also collected all the books that had been lost on account of the war that had come upon us, and they are in our possession. 15 So if you have need of them, send people to get them for you.

Philo, *De vita contemplativa* 25 Beckwith mentions Philo talking about what everyone of the "Therapeutes" would take to his place of devotion, not the common things of life but

(the) Laws, and (the) Oracles given by inspiration through (the) Prophets, and (the) Psalms, and the other books whereby knowledge and piety are increased and completed (νόμους καὶ λόγια θεσπισθέντα διὰ

29. Pietersma and Wright, A New English Translation of the Septuagint

προφητῶν καὶ ὕμνους καὶ τὰ ἄλλα οἷς ἐπιστήμη
καὶ εὐσέβεια συναύξονται καὶ τελειοῦνται)³⁰

Josephus, *Against Apion* 1:7-8

... and this is justly, or rather necessarily done, because every one is not permitted of his own accord to be a writer, nor is there any disagreement in what is written; they being only prophets that have written the original and earliest accounts of things as they learned them of God himself by inspiration; and others have written what hath happened in their own times, and that in a very distinct manner also. 8. For we have not an innumerable multitude of books among us, disagreeing from and contradicting one another, [as the Greeks have,] but only twenty-two books, [8] which contain the records of all the past times; which are justly believed to be divine; and of them five belong to Moses, which contain his laws and the traditions of the origin of mankind till his death. This interval of time was little short of three thousand years; but as to the time from the death of Moses till the reign of Artaxerxes king of Persia, who reigned after Xerxes, the prophets, who were after Moses, wrote down what was done in their times in thirteen books. The remaining four books contain hymns to God, and precepts for the conduct of human life. It is true, our history hath been written since Artaxerxes very particularly, but

30. Roger Beckwith, *The Old Testament Canon of the New Testament Church and its Background in Early Judaism* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Eerdmans, 1986), p. 117.

hath not been esteemed of the like authority with the former by our forefathers, because there hath not been an exact succession of prophets since that time...³¹

4 Esra 14:37-46

So I took the five men, as he commanded me, and we proceeded to the field, and remained there. And on the next day, behold, a voice called me, saying, open your mouth and drink what I give you to drink.” Then I opened my mouth, and behold, a full cup was offered to me; it was full of something like water, but its color was like fire. And I took it and drank; and when I had drunk it, my heart poured forth understanding, and wisdom increased in my breast, for my spirit retained its memory; and my mouth was opened, and was no longer closed. And the Most High gave understanding to the five men, and by turns they wrote what was dictated, in characters which they did not know. They sat forty days, and wrote during the daytime, and ate their bread at night. As for me, I spoke in the daytime and was not silent at night. So during the forty days ninety-four books were written. And when the forty days were ended, the Most High spoke to me, saying, “Make public the twenty-four books that you wrote first and let the worthy and the unworthy read them; but keep the seventy that were written last, in order

31. Flavius Josephus, *The Works of Flavius Josephus, Volume IV: Antiquities of the Jews XVIII-XX / Flavius Josephus Against Apion / Concerning Hades / Appendix / Index*, Whiston, William <trans> (Grand Rapids, Michigan, 1988), p. 158.

to give them to the wise among your people. For in them is the spring of understanding, the fountain of wisdom, and the river of knowledge." And I did so.

32

Talmud, Baba Bathra 14b-15a

Our Rabbis taught: The order of the Prophets is, Joshua, Judges, Samuel, Kings, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, Isaiah, and the Twelve Minor Prophets... The order of the Hagiographa is Ruth, the Book of Psalms, Job, Prophets, Ecclesiastes, Song of Songs, Lamentations, Daniel and the Scroll of Esther, Ezra and Chronicles... Who wrote the Scriptures? - Moses wrote his own book and the portion of Balaam and Job. Joshua wrote the book which bears his name and [the last] eight verses of the Pentateuch. Samuel wrote the book which bears his name and the Book of Judges and Ruth. David wrote the Book of Psalms, including in it the work of the elders, namely, Adam, Melchizedek, Abraham, Moses, Heman, Yeduthun, Asaph, and the three sons of Korah. Jeremiah wrote the book which bears his name, the Book of Kings, and Lamentations. Hezekiah and his colleagues wrote Isaiah, Proverbs, the Song of Songs and Ecclesiastes. The Men of the Great Assembly wrote Ezekiel, the Twelve Minor Prophets, Daniel and the Scroll of Esther. Ezra wrote the book that bears his name and the genealogies of the

32. James H. Charlesworth, *Apocalyptic literature and testaments*, vol. 1 (Garden City, New York: Doubleday, 1983), 995, p. 554f.

Book of Chronicles up to his own time... Who then finished it [the Book of Chronicles]? - Nehemiah the son of Hachaliah.³³

Vulgate Prologue of Jerome to the book of Kings

The Hebrews have 22 letters... Again, they have five double letters: Caph, Mem, Nun, Pe, Tsade. For at the beginning and in the middle of words these are written one way, and at the end of words another way. Whence it comes about that five of the books are by most people reckoned as double:

Samuel, Kings, Chronicles, Ezra, Jeremiah with Kinnoth, that is, his Lamentations. As, then, there are 22 letters of the alphabet ... so the count of the books is 22. Their first book ... we name Genesis. The second ... is named Exodus. The third ... Leviticus. The fourth ... we call Numbers. The fifth ... is entitled Deuteronomy. These are the five books of Moses, to which properly they give the name Torah, that is, the Law. They make a second category of the Prophets, and begin it with Jesus the son of Nave... Then they add ... the Book of Judges; and in the same book they include Ruth, because the events narrated in it occurred in the days of the Judges... Samuel follows third, which we call the first and second of Kings. Forth comes Kings, which is contained in our third and fourth of Kings ... The fifth is ... Isaiah. The sixth

33. Quoted according Isidore <ed> Epstein, Baba Bathra translated into English with Notes, Glossary and Indices, [accessed September 19, 2012], http://www.come-and-hear.com/bababathra/bababathra_0.html.

... Jeremiah. The seventh ... Ezekiel. The eighth, the Book of the Twelve Prophets... The third category contains the Hagiographa. And the first book takes its rise from ... Job. The second from ... David, whom they comprise in a single book of Psalms, divided into five parts. The third is ... Salomon, who has three books: Proverbs... The fourth is Ecclesiastes... The fifth is the Song of Songs ... The sixth is ... Daniel. The seventh ... Words of Days, which we can more expressively call a Chronicle of the whole divine history: among us the book is entitled the first and second of Paraleipomena. The eight ... Esdras, which among the Greek and Latin is itself likewise divided into two books. The ninth ... Esther. And thus altogether there come to be 22 books of the old Law, that is, five of Moses, eight of the Prophets, and nine of the Hagiographa. Although some set down ... Ruth and Kinoth among the Hagiographa, and think that these books ought to be counted (separately) in their computation, and that there are thus 24 books of the old Law; which the Apocalypse of John represents as adoring the Lamb in the number of the 24 elders... This prologue can fitly serve as a Helmed (i.e. equipped with a helmet, against assailants) Introduction to all the biblical books which we have translated from Hebrew into Latin, so that we may know that whatever is not included in these is to be placed among the apocrypha...³⁴

34. Quoted according to Beckwith, *The Old Testament Canon of the New Testament Church and its Background in Early Judaism*, p. 119f. This pro-

Some thoughts about the OT Canon

The canonization of the message of the prophets starts already in the Old Testament (Dt 4:2; 12:32; 18:15-22) and continues throughout the history of revelation (Dan 9:2; Zec 1:1-6).

The starting point for Christians is what Jesus Christ and the New Testament say about the Old Testament canon.

The New Testament presupposes a collection of holy and inspired writings of the Old Testament (Mt 5:17-19; 2 Tm 3:16; 2 Pt 1:21; Lk 24:27.44).

The Holy Scriptures of Jesus and the Holy Scriptures of the Jews were identical (John 5:39; 10:35; compare Rom 3:2).³⁵

The tripartite canon of the first century Jews with "law, prophets and writings" is also known to the New Testament (Lk 24:44).³⁶

Mt 23:34 and Lk 11:51 probably imply that the "Scripture" of Jesus and the "Scripture" of his listeners started with Genesis and ended with Chronicles (Beckwith and Maier).

logue was written about 391-94 C.E. The semitic names of the biblical books in transcription were left out.

35. G. <ed> Maier, *Der Kanon der Bibel*, TVG Monographien und Studienbücher (Wuppertal: Brockhaus, 1990), vi + 199 pp, p. 9.

36. Beckwith, *The Old Testament Canon of the New Testament Church and its Background in Early Judaism*, p. 105-109.

Some Jewish statements from the intertestamental period, the time of Jesus and the first centuries make it seem very probable that the canon of the Old Testament was already completed before the Christian era.

Since Jesus Ben Sira we find a tripartite canon with Torah, Prophets and Writings.³⁷

Since Jesus Ben Sira no new book has been added to the canon according to the testimony of the sources.³⁸

There was no "Palestinian canon" which was different from a supposed "Alexandrian canon".

The so-called "Synod of Jamnia" which has been seen as the closure of the Old Testament canon since Heinrich Graetz (1871) has never happened in the way this theory presupposes.³⁹

The statements in the Talmud about Ezekiel, Proverbs, Ecclesiastes, Song of Songs and Esther whether these books "defile the hands" or "must be hidden" or not, do not presuppose that those

37. Maier, *Der Kanon der Bibel*, p. 13.

38. *ibid.*, p. 13; and Beckwith, compare B. S. Childs in Ingo u.a. <Hrsg.> Baldermann, *Zum Problem des biblischen Kanons*, *Jahrbuch für Biblische Theologie* (Neukirchen-Vluyn: Neukirchener Verlag, 1988), p. 17f.

39. J. P. Lewis, "What do we mean by Jabneh?," *The Journal of Bible and Religion* 32 (1964): 125–132; S. Z. Leiman, *The Canonization of Hebrew Scripture: The Talmudic and Midrashic Evidence* (Hamden, 1976); Beckwith, *The Old Testament Canon of the New Testament Church and its Background in Early Judaism*; Maier, *Der Kanon der Bibel*.

books have been canonized in Jamnia. Because some of those statements are from after the first century.

The decision of the council of Trent (1545-1563) to include Tobit, Judith, 1st and 2d Maccabees, Jesus ben Sira and certain additions to Daniel within the canon of the Old Testament is understandable when we look at the way certain church fathers have used those books, but this decision does not agree with the Jewish Hebrew canon.

1.9.2 The Canon of the New Testament

Important Witnesses

The Muratorian canon

. . . at which nevertheless he was present, and so he placed [them in his narrative]. (2) The third book of the Gospel is that according to Luke. (3) Luke, the well-known physician, after the ascension of Christ, (4-5) when Paul had taken with him as one zealous for the law, (6) composed it in his own name, according to [the general] belief. Yet he himself had not (7) seen the Lord in the flesh; and therefore, as he was able to ascertain events, (8) so indeed he begins to tell the story from the birth of John. (9) The fourth of the Gospels is that of John, [one] of the disciples. (10) To his fellow disciples and bishops, who had been urging him [to write], (11) he said, 'Fast with me from today to three days, and what (12) will be revealed to each one (13) let us tell it to one another.' In the same night it was revealed (14) to Andrew, [one] of

the apostles, (15-16) that John should write down all things in his own name while all of them should review it. And so, though various (17) elements [3a] may be taught in the individual books of the Gospels, (18) nevertheless this makes no difference to the faith (19) of believers, since by the one sovereign Spirit all things (20) have been declared in all [the Gospels]: concerning the (21) nativity, concerning the passion, concerning the resurrection, (22) concerning life with his disciples, (23) and concerning his twofold coming; (24) the first in lowliness when he was despised, which has taken place, (25) the second glorious in royal power, (26) which is still in the future. What (27) marvel is it then, if John so consistently (28) mentions these particular points also in his Epistles, (29) saying about himself, 'What we have seen with our eyes (30) and heard with our ears and our hands (31) have handled, these things we have written to you? (32) For in this way he professes [himself] to be not only an eye-witness and hearer, (33) but also a writer of all the marvelous deeds of the Lord, in their order. (34) Moreover, the acts of all the apostles (35) were written in one book. For 'most excellent Theophilus' Luke compiled (36) the individual events that took place in his presence — (37) as he plainly shows by omitting the martyrdom of Peter (38) as well as the departure of Paul from the city [of Rome] (39) when he journeyed to Spain. As for the Epistles of (40-1) Paul, they themselves make clear to those desiring to understand, which ones [they are], from what place, or for what reason they were sent. (42) First

of all, to the Corinthians, prohibiting their heretical schisms; (43) next, to the Galatians, against circumcision; (44-6) then to the Romans he wrote at length, explaining the order (or, plan) of the Scriptures, and also that Christ is their principle (or, main theme). It is necessary (47) for us to discuss these one by one, since the blessed (48) apostle Paul himself, following the example of his predecessor (49-50) John, writes by name to only seven churches in the following sequence: To the Corinthians (51) first, to the Ephesians second, to the Philippians third, (52) to the Colossians fourth, to the Galatians fifth, (53) to the Thessalonians sixth, to the Romans (54-5) seventh. It is true that he writes once more to the Corinthians and to the Thessalonians for the sake of admonition, (56-7) yet it is clearly recognizable that there is one Church spread throughout the whole extent of the earth. For John also in the (58) Apocalypse, though he writes to seven churches, (59-60) nevertheless speaks to all. [Paul also wrote] out of affection and love one to Philemon, one to Titus, and two to Timothy; and these are held sacred (62-3) in the esteem of the Church catholic for the regulation of ecclesiastical discipline. There is current also [an epistle] to (64) the Laodiceans, [6b] [and] another to the Alexandrians, [both] forged in Paul's (65) name to [further] the heresy of Marcion, and several others (66) which cannot be received into the catholic Church (67)—for it is not fitting that gall be mixed with honey. (68) Moreover, the epistle of Jude and two of the above-mentioned (or, bearing the name of) John are counted (or, used) in the catholic

[Church]; and [the book of] Wisdom, (70) written by the friends of Solomon in his honour. (71) We receive only the apocalypses of John and Peter, (72) though some of us are not willing that the latter be read in church. (73) But Hermas wrote the Shepherd (74) very recently, in our times, in the city of Rome, (75) while bishop Pius, his brother, was occupying the [episcopal] chair (76) of the church of the city of Rome. (77) And therefore it ought indeed to be read; but (78) it cannot be read publicly to the people in church either among (79) the Prophets, whose number is complete, or among (80) the Apostles, for it is after [their] time. (81) But we accept nothing whatever of Arsinous or Valentinus or Miltiades, (82) who also composed (83) a new book of psalms for Marcion, (84-5) together with Basilides, the Asian founder of the Cataphrygians . . .⁴⁰

40. The text is taken from The Muratorian Fragment, [accessed September 22, 2012], <http://www.bible-researcher.com/muratorian.html> where it is given according to Bruce Metzger, *The Canon of the New Testament* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1987), pp. 305-307. On the website the background of the fragment is explained in the following way: "The Muratorian Fragment is the oldest known list of New Testament books. It was discovered by Ludovico Antonio Muratori in a manuscript in the Ambrosian Library in Milan, and published by him in 1740. It is called a fragment because the beginning of it is missing. Although the manuscript in which it appears was copied during the seventh century, the list itself is dated to about 170 because its author refers to the episcopate of Pius I of Rome (died 157) as recent." This is a Latin translation of a Greek original and often difficult to understand.

Origen Eusebius of Caesarea⁴¹ writes about Origen:⁴²

3. In his first book on Matthew's Gospel, maintaining the Canon of the Church, he testifies that he knows only four Gospels, writing as follows:

4. "Among the four Gospels, which are the only indisputable ones in the Church of God under heaven, I have learned by tradition that the first was written by Matthew, who was once a publican, but afterwards an apostle of Jesus Christ, and it was prepared for the converts from Judaism, and published in the Hebrew language.

5. The second is by Mark, who composed it according to the instructions of Peter, who in his Catholic epistle acknowledges him as a son, saying, 'The church that is at Babylon elected together with you, saluteth you, and so doth Marcus, my son.'

6. And the third by Luke, the Gospel commended by Paul, and composed for Gentile converts. Last of all

41. Philip Schaff, NPNF2-01. Eusebius Pamphilius: Church History, Life of Constantine, Oration in Praise of Constantine, Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers (Grand Rapids, MI: Christian Classics Ethereal Library, 1890), <http://www.ccel.org/ccel/schaff/npnf201.html>, p. 434-435 (Eusebius, Church History VI, 25,3-14).

42. Origen was born around 185-186 C.E. in Alexandria, Egypt. First he was a student and then since 203 teacher at the Catechetical School there. In 231 he was excommunicated by bishop Demetrius of Alexandria. He then founded a Christian school in Caesarea in Israel. He was a very prolific writer. He made a difference between faith (*pistis*) on the one hand and knowledge or deeper insight (*gnōsis*) on the other hand. Deeper insight does not deny faith, but is far superior. Origen probably died in 254 C.E. as a result of having been tortured in the Decian persecution. See Heussi, *Kompendium der Kirchengeschichte*, §17k.

that by John.”

7. In the fifth book of his Expositions of John’s Gospel, he speaks thus concerning the epistles of the apostles: “But he who was ‘made sufficient to be a minister of the New Testament, not of the letter, but of the Spirit,’ that is, Paul, who ‘fully preached the Gospel from Jerusalem and round about even unto Illyricum,’ did not write to all the churches which he had instructed and to those to which he wrote he sent but few lines.

8. And Peter, on whom the Church of Christ is built, ‘against which the gates of hell shall not prevail,’ has left one acknowledged epistle; perhaps also a second, but this is doubtful.

9. Why need we speak of him who reclined upon the bosom of Jesus, John, who has left us one Gospel, though he confessed that he might write so many that the world could not contain them? And he wrote also the Apocalypse, but was commanded to keep silence and not to write the words of the seven thunders.

10. He has left also an epistle of very few lines; perhaps also a second and third; but not all consider them genuine, and together they do not contain hundred lines.”

11. In addition he makes the following statements in regard to the Epistle to the Hebrews in his Homilies upon it: “That the verbal style of the epistle entitled ‘To the Hebrews,’ is not rude like the language of the apostle, who acknowledged himself ‘rude in speech’ that is, in expression; but that its diction is purer Greek, any one who has the power to discern differences of phraseology will acknowledge.

12. Moreover, that the thoughts of the epistle are admirable, and not inferior to the acknowledged apostolic writings, any one who carefully examines the apostolic text will admit.’

13. Farther on he adds: “If I gave my opinion, I should say that the thoughts are those of the apostle, but the diction and phraseology are those of some one who remembered the apostolic teachings, and wrote down at his leisure what had been said by his teacher. Therefore if any church holds that this epistle is by Paul, let it be commended for this. For not without reason have the ancients handed it down as Paul’s.

14. But who wrote the epistle, in truth, God knows. The statement of some who have gone before us is that Clement, bishop of the Romans, wrote the epistle, and of others that Luke, the author of the Gospel and the Acts, wrote it.” But let this suffice on these matters.

Eusebius of Caesarea Eusebius⁴³ writes about the New Testament canon in his Church History:

1. Since we are dealing with this subject it is proper to sum up the writings of the New Testament which have been already mentioned. First then must be put the holy quaternion of the Gospels; following

43. Eusebius was born about 260-265 and died about 339-340. He became bishop of Caesarea in Israel. His Church History (*Historia ekklesiastike*, often quoted as “h.e.”) is of enormous historical value because many quotes from old Christian books (now lost) can be found in it. See Heussi, *Kompendium der Kirchengeschichte*, §1b + 17m.

them the Acts of the Apostles.

2. After this must be reckoned the epistles of Paul; next in order the extant former epistle of John, and likewise the epistle of Peter, must be maintained. After them is to be placed, if it really seem proper, the Apocalypse of John, concerning which we shall give the different opinions at the proper time. These then belong among the accepted writings.

3. Among the disputed writings, which are nevertheless recognized by many, are extant the so-called epistle of James and that of Jude, also the second epistle of Peter, and those that are called the second and third of John, whether they belong to the evangelist or to another person of the same name.

4. Among the rejected writings must be reckoned also the Acts of Paul, and the so-called Shepherd, and the Apocalypse of Peter, and in addition to these the extant epistle of Barnabas, and the so-called Teachings of the Apostles; and besides, as I said, the Apocalypse of John, if it seem proper, which some, as I said, reject, but which others class with the accepted books.

5. And among these some have placed also the Gospel according to the Hebrews, with which those of the Hebrews that have accepted Christ are especially delighted. And all these may be reckoned among the disputed books.

6. But we have nevertheless felt compelled to give a catalogue of these also, distinguishing those works which according to ecclesiastical tradition are true and genuine and commonly accepted, from those others which, although not canonical but disputed, are yet at

the same time known to most ecclesiastical writers - we have felt compelled to give this catalogue in order that we might be able to know both these works and those that are cited by the heretics under the name of the apostles, including, for instance, such books as the Gospels of Peter, of Thomas, of Matthias, or of any others besides them, and the Acts of Andrew and John and the other apostles, which no one belonging to the succession of ecclesiastical writers has deemed worthy of mention in his writings.

7. And further, the character of the style is at variance with apostolic usage, and both the thoughts and the purpose of the things that are related in them are so completely out of accord with true orthodoxy that they clearly show themselves to be the fictions of heretics. Wherefore they are not to be placed even among the rejected writings, but are all of them to be cast aside as absurd and impious.⁴⁴

Theodor Zahn's overview of the history of the canon of the New Testament

This overview is based on Zahn's summary⁴⁵ of his own extensive work of eight volumes about the canon.

44. Schaff, NPNF2-01. Eusebius Pamphilus: Church History, Life of Constantine, Oration in Praise of Constantine, p. 220-225 (Eusebius, Church History III,25:1-7).

45. Theodor Zahn, Grundriß der Geschichte des neutestamentlichen Kanons, 2nd ed. (Leipzig: Deichert'sche Verlagsbuchhandlung, 1904)

§1 Main concepts (p. 1-14): The word canon (Greek: kanōn)⁴⁶ is related to cane (Greek "kanē")⁴⁷ as in "cane of reed". From kanē as something straight developed the meaning "ruler" or "straight-edge" for kanōn (p.2). The Greek word kanōn was then also used for "list, table" (p. 6). The regular use of kanōn for the Bible is evident from the middle of the 4th century C.E. (p. 7) according to Zahn in the sense of "list" (catalog; p. 9).⁴⁸ The Latin speaking church uses then the name "canon" (kanōn) for the Bible in the original sense of "(authoritative) rule of faith" (regula fidei). The terms "old testament"⁴⁹ and "new testament"⁵⁰ implied the idea of a completed collection of documents of revelation. Irenaeus of Lyon does not use "testament"⁵¹ for the Bible yet, but this usage of the word is found in Clement of Alexandria,⁵² Tertullian (testamentum) and Origen. Books belonging to this completed collection were defined as "being in the testament"⁵³ (compare 2 Cor 3:14). A condition for being part of this collection of revelation documents was ecclesiastical use, which means the book had to be read during the services on a regular basis (p. 12). Compare in this context the original us-

46. Greek: κανών

47. Greek κάνη, Hebrew qaneh קנה ; Syriac qanya' ܩܢܝܐ ; Assyrian-Babylonian kanû.

48. Greek: katalōgōs κατάλογος

49. παλαιά διαθήκη

50. καινή διαθήκη

51. διαθήκη

52. Clement of Alexandria served around 200 C.E. at the Catechetical School of Alexandria. Before this he traveled in Greece and the Near East. He started as a student of Pantaenus and then became his successor as teacher at the school in Alexandria which he left during the persecution in 202-203 C.E. See Heussi, Kompendium der Kirchengeschichte, §17g + h.

53. Greek: endiathēkōs ἐνδιάθετος

age of the word "apocryphal"⁵⁴ meaning excluded from the public reading in the service without implying any negative judgment of the book. Three supplementary remarks about this condition are necessary: 1. The books permitted to be read during the services were not the same all throughout Christianity. 2. The judgment varied with regard to more than one book up to later times or temporarily in different ecclesiastical provinces. 3. The definition of a regular reading in church services is not absolutely clear cut. But it is correct in spite of these supplementary remarks to speak of an identity of the books which were canonical as the books which were read regularly in the church services.

§2 The New Testament around 170-220 C.E. (p. 14-27): Summary on p. 26-27: Clearly belonging to the collection were the four gospels, 13 letters of Paul, Acts, Revelation, 1 Peter, 1 John (to which 2 and 3 John were regularly attached), probably Jude and the Shepherd of Hermas (not in the time from 200-210 A.D). But the judgment of the following books was varying: Hebrews, James, 2 Peter, Apocalypse of Peter, The Teaching of the Twelve Apostles (Didache), Epistle of Barnabas, 1 and 2 Clement, Acts of Paul and Barnabas, Shepherd of Hermas. The Polemics against Marcion, the Gnostics and the Alogi imply that this collection was not just put together in the times of the discussions but that it had already been present as a result of earlier developments.

§3 The New Testament around 140-170 C.E. (p. 27-35): 1. The Bible of Marcion (p. 28-29). 2. The Bible of the Valentinians (p. 30-32). 3. The Scriptures of the Apostles in Justin Martyr. According to Zahn as is evident from the books used in Justin's writings

54. Greek: ἀπόκρυφος ἀπόκρυφος

the Martyr knew the four gospels, Revelation, Romans, 1 Cor, Gal, Eph, (Philippians?), Col, 2 Thes, (Titus, 1 Tm?), Hebrews, 1 Pt, (James?), Acts and Didache among others.

§4 Oldest traces and origin of collections of apostolic writings

(p. 35-41): Many questions will never find certain answers. But it may be viewed as certain that both the fourfold gospel and the corpus of the 13 epistles of Paul originated around the years 80-110 C.E. and were introduced into the ecclesiastical usage of the Gentile Christian churches all the way from Antioch to Rome. These two collections were the foundation of the New Testament. It is equally certain that both these collections were from the start supplemented in the ecclesiastical usage and in the understanding of the churches by another collection of Christian writings. This third collection varied regarding the numbers of the books but was also regarded as profitable to be used for reading in services and for the teaching and edification of the churches (p. 41).

§5 Origen and his school (p. 41-44): No essential change of the canon of the New Testament happened through Origen or throughout the third century. The new contribution Origen brought was an exhaustive comparison of the traditional New Testament collections of different churches (p. 41).

The homologumena⁵⁵ were books that were universally acknowledged as holy scriptures. Antilegomena⁵⁶ were such books which were not acknowledged as holy scriptures by a part of the churches.

The Homologumena of the New Testament were, according to

55. ὁμολογούμενα

56. This expression was used later. Greek: ἀντιλεγόμενα

Origen, the four gospels, 13 letters of Paul, 1 Pt, 1 John, Acts, Revelation.

The Antilegomena were, according to Origen, Hebrews, 2 Pt, 2 and 3 John, James, Jude, Epistle of Barnabas, Shepherd of Hermas, Didache and the gospel of the Hebrews.

About Hebrews Origen thinks that it is canonical and from Paul. The ideas are from Paul, but Paul let the final writing be done by one of his disciples. Origen quotes 2 Peter as Holy Scripture. He himself has no doubts about the authenticity of 2 and 3 John, but he mentions the doubts of some people as a reason that they belong to the Antilegomena. Origen quotes James frequently, but he takes into account that this epistle is not universally acknowledged. In Latin translations of Origen's books James is also called "*scriptura divina*" (divine scripture). Only once Origen mentions that Jude is not universally acknowledged, but he himself quotes Jude as Holy Scripture and praises this epistle very much.

Origen gives the Epistle of Barnabas an equal status with the Catholic Epistles⁵⁷. Origen views the Shepherd of Hermas as an inspired and very useful book. He assumes that the author is the Hermas of Rom 16:14. But he also takes into account that people oppose this book as not canonical. Origen quotes Didache as holy scripture. This book was viewed as canonical in Alexandria, but by no means everywhere. Origen mentions the gospel of the Hebrews as the gospel of the Jewish Christian churches, but not of the Ebionites.

§7 Lucianus and Eusebius (p. 54-59): The Homologumena according to Eusebius are the four gospels, Acts, 14 letters of Paul, 1

57. The Catholic or General Epistles of the New Testament are James, 1 and 2 Peter, 1 and 2 and 3 John and Jude

Peter, 1 John, possibly also Revelation.

The Antilegomena which Eusebius wants to be included in the canon are James, Jude, 2 Peter, 2 and 3 John.

The Antilegomena which Eusebius sees as forgeries⁵⁸ and wants to be excluded from the canon are the Acts of Paul, Shepherd of Hermas, Apocalypse of Peter, Epistle of Barnabas, Didache and possibly Revelation.

The New Testament according to Eusebius is with the exception of Revelation the same as our New Testament. We find this New Testament of Eusebius with Cyril of Jerusalem, Gregory of Nazianzus, in the supplement of the Canon 59 of Laodicea, in the Ecclesiastical Canons of the Same Holy Apostles⁵⁹, probably in the Apostolic Constitutions⁶⁰ and Amphilochius of Iconium takes it into account together with the canon of Antioch (p. 57).

§8 Athanasius (p. 59-61): In the 39th Festal Letter of Athanasius (367 C.E.) he is the first who presents the 27 books of our New Testament as the only canonical ones (p. 60). The "kanōnizōmena"⁶¹ are the 27 books of our New Testament. The "apōkrypha"⁶² are totally rejected writings. The "anaginōskōmena"⁶³ which can be read with profit like the Didache, Shepherd of Hermas, Wisdom of

58. νόθα

59. See Philip Schaff, ANF07. Fathers of the Third and Fourth Centuries: Lactantius, Venantius, Asterius, Victorinus, Dionysius, Apostolic Teaching and Constitutions, Homily, and Liturgies, Ante-Nicene Fathers (Grand Rapids, MI: Christian Classics Ethereal Library, 1886), <http://www.ccel.org/ccel/schaff/anf07.html>, p. 749.

60. See *ibid.*, p. 573.

61. κανονιζόμενα

62. ἀπόκρυφα

63. ἀναγινωσκόμενα

Solomon, Jesus ben Sira, Esther, Judith, Tobias.

§9 The further development of the Greek orient until the time of Justinian (p.61-64).

§10 The approximation of the occident (p. 64-75): Nobody did more for the approximation of the occident to the orient with regard to the Bible than Jerome (p. 65). Athanasius had also a certain influence on the development in the occident. From 340-343 he was in Rome (p. 66). The relationship of Hebrews and some of the Catholic Epistles to the New Testament: Hebrews remained excluded from the Latin New Testament during the first three quarters of the fourth century (p. 67). 2 Peter and 2 and 3 John had an insecure relationship to the Latin New Testament into the fourth century (p. 68). The books of James and Jude were excluded up to 360 in Africa. No African author after Tertullian and before Augustine quoted one of those letters (p. 68). There are only a few traces of the distribution of 2 Peter, James, Jude, 2 and 3 John before 380 C.E. (p. 69). In 382 C.E. the Council of Rome convened under the authority of the bishop of Rome, Damasus. The then 40-year-old presbyter Jerome was very important in the discussions because he became a trusted man and scholarly adviser of Damasus. The decisions were later renewed and extended by Pope Gelasius (492-96) and Pope Hormisdas (514-523; p. 70). Accordingly the New Testament contains the four gospels, 14 letters of Paul (Hebrews last), Revelation, Acts, seven Catholic epistles (1 and 2 Peter, epistle of the apostle James, one letter of the apostle John, 2 letters of the presbyter John, epistle of the apostle Judas Zealot). This canon was basically the canon of Athanasius. "Rome had spoken, and the nations of the Occident had heard" (p. 71). It took more time in

Africa. The councils in Hippo Regius (393 C.E.) and Carthage (397 C.E.) accepted the canon of the 27 books which had been decided on in Rome (382 C.E.) The idea that James and Jude were apostles was dropped. James and Jude were put last in the list of the Catholic epistles. The idea of two Johns was dropped as well. The decision of 397 was renewed in the council of Carthage in 419. Augustine, who had already been an authority as a presbyter amongst the bishops at the council of Hippo promoted the new canon unremittingly (p. 71).

1.10 The Textual Transmission of the Bible

The area of biblical sciences which deals with the textual transmission of the Bible is called "textual criticism". Textual criticism tries to ascertain the original wording of a text, in this case of the text of the books of the Bible. It is also used outside biblical sciences for example to establish the original text of authors of classical Greek or Latin books.

1.10.1 The Textual Transmission of the Old Testament

This section is based on E. Würthwein, *Der Text des Alten Testaments*, edition no. 4 (Stuttgart: Württembergische Bibelanstalt, 1973), 230 pp.

Script and Writing Material

The script of most of the old Hebrew manuscripts and fragments which have come down to us is the square script which had developed out of the post-exilic Aramaic script. Pre-exilic Hebrew was

written in the Phoenician alphabet.⁶⁴

The writing material for books was papyrus and leather. Papyrus was made from the papyrus plant which grew in the Nile Valley. It was in use already in the third millennium B.C. Later papyrus was exported from Egypt to the whole of the Mediterranean world.⁶⁵ Leather was also in use as a writing material from very ancient times, but the invention of parchment out of leather around 200 B.C. brought further advantages. It is more durable than papyrus and writable on both sides. After scrubbing and scouring they can be reused. A reused parchment is called a palimpsest. Since the 9th century C.E. paper was also used in addition to parchment. Paper had been invented in China in the first century C.E. or even earlier.⁶⁶

The ancient form of a book was a scroll made of papyrus or leather. Most of the books of the Bible were first written on separate scrolls and thus circulated. From the first century C.E. onwards we see codices in use which are more like modern books and had many advantages in comparison with scrolls. Both sides of the writing material (papyrus or parchment) could be used and more written content could be united in one book. This meant that several books or even the whole Bible could be written in one codex. Christians seem to have preferred the codex, and the victory of Christianity in the Roman Empire meant also the victory of the codex over the scroll. In the 4th century C.E. the codex overtook the use of scrolls and became the dominant form of the book also in the Middle Ages.⁶⁷

64. Würthwein, *Der Text des Alten Testaments*, p. 3.

65. *ibid.*, p. 7-8.

66. *ibid.*, p. 8-10.

67. *ibid.*, p. 10-11.

As writing utensils the Old Testament mentions *ḥeret*⁶⁸ (Is 8:1) and *‘eṭ*⁶⁹ (Jer 8:8; 17:1; Ps 45:2; Job 19:24). *ḥeret* is a stylus with which letters could be carved into the writing material. The same writing utensil is probably meant in Jer 17:1 "with a pen of iron, with a point of diamond"⁷⁰ and in Job 19:24.⁷¹ But the "pen of the scribes" in Jer 8:8 and the "the pen of a ready scribe" in Ps 45:1 is the pen of the professional scribe writing with ink on leather, papyrus and ostraca.⁷² Ink⁷³ is mentioned only once in the Old Testament (Jer 36:18; 605 B.C.) but as something well known. It could be non-metallic or metallic ink.⁷⁴

The Masoretic Text

The Masoretic text (מ) is named after the transmission work (Masorah) of the Masoretes (Jewish transmission experts). In the *Biblia Hebraica Stuttgartensia*⁷⁵ (BHS) the Masoretic text is given according to the *Codex Leningradensis*, a manuscript which was written in 1008 C.E. We have no Hebrew manuscript of the whole Old Testament which has been written before the 10th century. The oldest dated codex is *Codex Cairensis* from 895 C.E. and contains only the prophetic books. Near Khirbet Qumran at the Dead Sea, some

68. חֶרֶט This word is also used in Ex 34:2 as a graving tool.

69. עֵט

70. בֶּעֶט בַּרְזֶל בְּצִפְרוֹן שָׁמַיִר

71. Oh that with an iron pen and lead they were engraved in the rock forever!

72. בֶּעֶט־בַּרְזֶל וְעֹפְרָת

73. An ostrakon is a piece of pottery used for writing purposes like scrap paper today.

74. דִּיּוֹ

75. *ibid.*, p. 11.

76. K. Elliger, W. Rudolph, and et al., *Biblia Hebraica Stuttgartensia*, Fifth (Stuttgart: Deutsche Bibelstiftung, 1997), 1574 pp

Hebrew manuscripts have been found which partly go back to pre-Christian times: a complete Isaiah scroll, the first two chapters of the prophet Habakkuk and all other books only in fragments. But even more important than the age of a manuscript is the kind of transmission tradition to which it belongs. Some schools of copyists were very conscientious in their endeavor to preserve the original and others not so much.⁷⁶

The most decisive work for the transmission of the Hebrew Old Testament was done in the first millennium after Christ by Jews living in Palestine with their center in Tiberias (Western Masoretes) or in the great Jewish colony in Babylonia (Eastern Masoretes). In the 10th and 11th centuries the Western Masoretes took the lead and their text became the standard text. In the Masoretic tradition the Soferim wrote the consonant text, the Nakdanim the vowel signs and accents and the Masoretes the Masorah marginalis and finalis, that is the tradition at the margin of the page and at the end of the book. But in the case of the Codex Leningradensis all three works have been done by one person, Samuel Ben Jacob.⁷⁷

It is a well known fact that the Hebrew text of the Old Testament was for centuries only written with consonants.⁷⁸ The vowel signs were added at a time when the consonant text was already fixed. The Masoretic consonant text goes back to about 100 C.E. and has become dominant around 132-135 C.E. There are old text forms known without the Masoretic tradition which are not as conservative as the Masoretic consonant text tradition. While the Masoretic textual tradition resembles a more conservative, exact or "official" text form, these other text forms have partly been called "vulgar"

76. Würthwein, *Der Text des Alten Testaments*, pp. 12-14.

77. *ibid.*, p. 14-15.

78. *ibid.*, p. 15-18.

text traditions. They use the "matres lectionis" more often than מ. They assimilate some Hebrew forms to the dominant Aramaic dialect of their own time. They prefer Hiphil forms. They may use imperative forms instead of the absolute infinitive used with an imperative meaning. And they might add words from parallel texts. We know of this plurality of Old Testament text forms through the Samaritan Pentateuch, the Papyrus Nash, the Septuagint and some of the Qumran manuscripts which differ from the Masoretic consonant text tradition. Other manuscripts found near Khirbet Qumran have essentially the same consonant text as the Masoretic tradition. This is proof that the consonant text of the Masoretic tradition can even be traced back to the pre-Christian era.

There are several phenomena in the Masoretic text tradition which agree with their very conservative way of handling the consonant text.⁷⁹ One very important is the phenomenon of "Kativ and Qere" of which there are more than 1300 instances. Kativ⁸⁰ is what is written in the text. Qere⁸¹ is what is to be read. The consonants of the Qere are written in the margin with a ק sign for Qere and the vowels of the Qere are added around the consonantal letters of the Kativ. According to the tradition of the Masoretes the consonant text had to be copied exactly according to the original and could not be altered. Even if they favored another reading out of grammatical, aesthetic, dogmatic or other reasons they could not change the text. So they invented the method of Kativ and Qere to give their alternate readings in the margin. To preserve the consonant text exactly the Soferim counted verses, words, letters of the Torah and other parts of the Bible to make the checking of the

79. *ibid.*, p. 19-21.

80. From Aramaic כְּתִיב .

81. From Aramaic קִרִּי .

copied manuscripts easier. They found the ו in גזון of Lv 11:42 to be the middle letter of the Torah and the ש in דרש of Lv 10:16 to be the middle word of the Torah. The Hebrew manuscripts of the Middle Ages are very uniform. This shows how effective the Masoretic tradition was.

It is interesting to have a look at the sections of the Masoretic text.⁸² The Jews did not have the chapters of the Old Testament which are in use today and which originated after the time of the Masoretes but they used a system of open⁸³ and closed⁸⁴ "Parashot" for the whole of the Old Testament with the exception of the Psalms. The open Parashah first started after an empty or not fully written line and the closed Parashah after only an empty space within one line. Later it became customary to use the first letters for the words "open" פ or "closed" ס to signal the start of the open or closed Parashah. This is also the practice in BHS.

Another way of sectioning is done through the 452 Sedarim⁸⁵ which originated in Palestine. The Torah is divided in so many Sedarim (weekly sections) that it would be read during the synagogue service within three years. In Babylonia there was a system of 54 or 53 Parashot (weekly sections) so that the Torah would be read within one year. In BHS the sign for a beginning Seder ס and for a beginning Parashah פ is put in the inner margin.

The division of the Old Testament into verses is already attested for Talmudic times with differences between Babylonians and Palestinians. Counting the verses within chapters started in the

82. Würthwein, *Der Text des Alten Testaments*, p. 22-23.

83. פתוחא abbreviated פ

84. סתומא abbreviated ס

85. Singular with the meaning of order, sequence: סדר .

16th century. The division into chapters was copied from the Vulgate starting in the 14th century. This chapter division goes back to Stephen Langton (about 1150-1228 C.E.).⁸⁶

The punctuation of the Hebrew Old Testament text started in the fifth century C.E..⁸⁷ In addition to the pure consonant text vowels were added by using a system of points. Several punctuation systems were developed, a Babylonian, a Palestinian and a Tiberian. The Babylonian and Palestinian were supra-linear. The Tiberian used points above and below the consonants to mark the vowels and also the accents for the reading. This system became dominant and fixed not only the pronunciation of the words but also the way to present the sentences while reading them in the service. The Codex Leningradensis in the public library of Saint Petersburg (formerly "Leningrad") has this Tiberian system of vocalization and accentuation.

Manuscripts

Now we come to the manuscripts of the Hebrew Old Testament.⁸⁸ Of greatest importance for the modern history of the Old Testament text are the findings of the Dead Sea Scrolls since 1947 near Khirbet Qumran. In the nomenclature the different manuscripts and fragments found there have a Q in their name. If a number is put in front of the Q then the number points to one of the eleven caves where the manuscript was found. Cave one, four and eleven were of special importance according to what was found in them. Q^a or 1 Q Is^a is the famous Isaiah scroll with all 66 chapters of the book

86. *ibid.*, p. 22-23.

87. See *ibid.*, p. 22-23.

88. For the different manuscripts see *ibid.*, p. 33-49.

found in cave 1. It is a vulgar text (see above). It essentially confirms **𐤎** but it has also a great number of variants. **𐤎^b** or 1 Q Is^b is another Isaiah manuscript which is fragmentic and very close to the Masoretic textual tradition. 1 Qp Hab is a Habakkuk commentary from cave 1. 11 Q Ps^a is a Psalm scroll from cave 11.

Before 1947 the Papyrus Nash was seen as the oldest witness for the Hebrew Bible text. W. L. Nash bought this sheet of Papyrus 1902 in Egypt and gave it as a present to the Cambridge University Library. It contains the ten commandments partly following Ex 20:2ff and partly Dt 5:6ff and the Sch^ema from Dt 6:4-5 and is dated in the first or second century C.E. or even before.






In the second half of the 19th century over 200,000 Jewish manuscript fragments were found in the Genizah or storeroom of the synagogue of Old Cairo in Egypt. Biblical texts were found in the Hebrew language and translations in Aramaic and Arabic. The fragments also contained Midrash, Mishnah and Talmud texts, liturgical texts, lists and letters. The sign used in the name of the fragments is **𐤌**. The biblical fragments of the Genizah of which the earliest might belong to the fifth century C.E. have made it possible to follow the development of the work of the Masoretes and their punctuation system before the great Masoretes of Tiberias.

Among the Masoretes of Tiberias the Ben-Asher-family stands out. This family has given us two important manuscripts: The Codex Cairensis and the Codex Aleppo. The Codex Cairensis (C) contains the former and latter prophets and was written in C.E. 895 by Moses ben Asher and punctuated. The Aleppo Codex was written in the first half of the tenth century C.E.. Punctuation and Masorah were added by Aaron ben Moses ben Asher. It contained the whole of the Old Testament and was kept for hundreds of years in a synagogue in Aleppo. In 1947 there were riots against Jews and Jewish property. The synagogue was burnt. The Codex was

damaged. In the beginning Gn to Dt 28:16 are missing and at the end Song of Songs from 3:12, Ecclesiastes, Lamentations, Esther, Daniel and Ezra. Now it is in the Hebrew University in Jerusalem.

The Leningrad Codex (L) was written in 1008 C.E. according to the colophon as a copy of manuscripts that had been written by Aaron ben Moses ben Asher. It is used as the main text in BHS while the variants are given in the critical apparatus at the bottom of each page.

The St. Petersburg Codex (P) from 916 C.E. contains Is, Jer, Ez and the 12 prophets with Masorah. It uses the signs of Babylonian punctuation but follows in consonant text, punctuation and Masorah the Western tradition.

The Samaritan Pentateuch () is a version of the Hebrew language Pentateuch written in the Samaritan alphabet. There are about 6000 variants from . A high number of these variants is related to orthography, for example plene writing is used more often. It is however noteworthy that in about 1900 cases  agrees with the LXX against . Some variants also go back to their own version of religion. They have added a commandment to build a temple on Mount Gerizim after Ex 20:17. In Dt 11:30 they add מול שכם at the end of the verse. In 19 places in Dt  puts the election of the holy place into the past tense and wants it to be understood of Shechem (Mt. Gerizim).⁸⁹

Translations out of the Original Tongues

The Greek Septuagint ( and LXX). For the early Church the Septuagint was the standard translation of the Hebrew Old Testa-

89. In the phrase יהוה יבחר המקום אשר יבחר יהוה instead of the future form יבחר the past tense form בחר is used.

ment into Greek.⁹⁰ Many quotations of the Old Testament in the New are according to the LXX. Wherever Paul went into a synagogue in the diaspora he could use the LXX in his argument that Jesus was the promised Messiah. The Greek speaking Jews read it as their Bible.

Where did this translation come from? A letter which purports to be from Aristeas to his brother Philocrates describes "how the Jewish Law was translated from Hebrew into Greek by seventy-two Jews sent to Alexandria for this purpose".⁹¹ According to this letter the Pentateuch was translated into Greek on the request of Ptolemy II Philadelphus (285-247 B.C.) of Egypt to have this book for the library of Alexandria. The time given in this letter for the translation of the Pentateuch is credible, but scholars have pointed out that quite a few other statements sound legendary. The Prologue of Jesus Ben Sira says around 116 B.C. that in addition to the Law also "the Prophets and the rest of the books" were available in Greek translation. Many books of the LXX give a quite literal translation, others like Job and Daniel are translated more freely. In the Greek translation of Jeremiah roughly 2700 words of the Hebrew text are missing. Probably the Hebrew manuscript of Jeremiah from which this version was translated differed considerably from **MT**. Having these several points in view it seems better not to see the LXX as a unified translation by one translator or one group of translators but to understand it as a collection of translations. The translators were

90. This section about the LXX and other Greek translations follows Würthwein, *Der Text des Alten Testaments*, p. 51-80.

91. See James H. Charlesworth, *Expansions of the "Old Testament" and legends, wisdom and philosophical literature, prayers, psalms and odes, fragments of lost Judaeo-Hellenistic works*, vol. 2 (Garden City, New York: Doubleday, 1985), 1006 pp, p. 7. The English translation of the letter is found on pp. 12-34.

quite different according to their translation technique, knowledge of Hebrew and style.

Aquila's translation into Greek (α'). Aquila was a proselyte to Judaism from Sinope in Pontus and according to Jewish tradition a disciple of Rabbi Akiba. His translation is literal to the extreme. Our knowledge of Aquila's translation is based on quotations, fragments of the Hexapla of Origen and on palimpsests from the Genizah in Cairo from the sixth century C.E.

The translation of Symmachus into Greek (σ'). Symmachus created a second new translation about 170 C.E. which was intended not only to be literal but also good Greek. According to Eusebius and Jerome he was an Ebionite, according to Epiphanius a Samaritan who converted to Judaism. Only a few fragments of the Hexapla of Origen are witnesses of this translation.

Theodotion's Revision of the LXX (θ'). According to the ancient church Theodotion was also a proselyte to Judaism. He seems to have revised a Greek translation according to the Hebrew text. It is debated whether this Greek translation was the LXX. Rahlfs is in favor of this. Kenyon and Kahle are against it. These three translations (Aquila, Symmachus and Theodotion) have also the sign "the three" (οἱ τρεῖς ἐρμηνευταί = οἱ γ' or "the remaining" (οἱ λοιποὶ ἐρμηνευταί = οἱ λ')).

The Aramaic Targumim (ܬ). In the time after the Babylonian exile Aramaic became the spoken language of the Jewish people

even in Judah.⁹² It was the official language of the Persian empire. Hebrew was still used by a part of the Jewish population, but not by all. For the services it became necessary not only to read the Hebrew scripture texts but also to paraphrase them into Aramaic. This custom was surely very old and pre-Christian, because the demand for this started very early. Perhaps the Jewish tradition is correct which connects the beginning of this custom with Ezra because of Neh 8:8. The translation should only be given orally in the synagogue service to show the people that the real holy text was the Hebrew one. This translation was called "targum" in the singular and "targumim" in the plural form. But it was not forbidden to write such Aramaic translations down. It is clear that such written targumim existed at the beginning of the Christian Era at the latest. Only a part of the many targumim have come down to us. There are two main kinds of targumim. Those who represent the old Palestinian targum on the one hand and those which have been redacted in Babylonia on the other: The Targum Onkelos for the Pentateuch⁹³ and the Targum Jonathan for the Prophets.⁹⁴ In BHS the abbreviation for both is **¶**. These Babylonian redactions have become authoritative for Judaism as official Targumim. Their final text was probably fixed in Babylonia in the fifth century. Their names go (erroneously) back to the Greek translators "Aquila" (Onkelos) and Theodotion (Hebrew: Jonathan). Perhaps

92. This section about the Targumim is based on Würthwein, *Der Text des Alten Testaments*, p. 80-86.

93. Alexander Sperber, *The Pentateuch according to Targum Onkelos*, vol. 1 (Leiden: Brill, 1992 <1959-1973>)

94. Alexander Sperber, *The Former Prophets according to Targum Jonathan*, vol. 2 (Leiden: Brill, 1992 <1959-1973>) and Alexander Sperber, *The Latter Prophets according to Targum Jonathan*, vol. 3 (Leiden: Brill, 1992 <1959-1973>)

the reason is that these two were famous for literal exposition of the Scriptures in agreement with the Jewish faith. They are quite literal translations of the Hebrew text. The Palestinian Targumim are in contrast freer translations and contain midrashic additions.

The Peshitta (S). The Syriac Church gave the name Peshitta⁹⁵ to the translation that was commonly used within the church. Peshitta means "the simple (translation)". The beginnings of this translation with regard to the Old Testament might go back to the middle of the first century C.E. when the ruling family and some important families of Adiabene (east of the Tigris river) were won for the Jewish faith. Because the Syriac Church split in the fifth century into Nestorians and Jacobites we have to distinguish the Nestorian East Syrian tradition from the Jacobite West Syrian tradition. The Codex Ambrosianus (S^A) in Mailand belongs to the West Syrian tradition from the 6th or 7th century and contains the whole of the Old Testament.

The Vetus Latina (L). The old Latin translation is called Vetus Latina.⁹⁶ Because the Vulgate translation by Jerome later became the standard Latin translation the church lost interest in the old Latin version and its manuscripts. The Vetus Latina was probably not one translation but a designation for several old Latin translations. It is possible to distinguish between one African text and a European text which can be divided into further subtypes. The Vetus Latina was translated from the LXX and not from the Hebrew text. Therefore it is a good witness for the state of the LXX before the several

95. This section about the Peshitta is based on Würthwein, *Der Text des Alten Testaments*, p. 86-89.

96. This section about the Vetus Latina is based on *ibid.*, p. 90-93.

LXX recensions happened.

The Vulgate (V). Pope Damasus I (366-384) saw that the church was in need of an official and reliable Latin Bible text.⁹⁷ So he entrusted Jerome (about 345-420)⁹⁸, §33 c.) with the translation work who seemed well gifted for this task with his knowledge of Latin, Greek and Hebrew. Jerome translated the Old Testament out of the Hebrew into Latin from 390-405 C.E.. Augustine was against this approach and wanted a translation based on the LXX. But the Vulgate (as Jerome's translation was called since the 16th century) gained ground in the Latin speaking church. At the beginning of the seventh century the Vulgate was with regard to respect and use equal to the *Vetus Latina* and in the eighth and ninth centuries it became the preferred Latin Bible version. Alcuin of York (730/35-804 C.E.) who was close to Charlemagne and who in 796 became Abbot of Saint Martin's at Tours made a revision of the Vulgate which became the standard version in the kingdom of the Franks. In 1546 on the 8th of April the council of Trent issued a decree that the Vulgate translation was affirmed to be the authoritative text of Scripture within the Roman Catholic Church. This decision made it necessary to produce an official edition of the Vulgate. This demand was fulfilled by the edition of Pope Clement VIII (*Clementina*) in 1592.

The Coptic Translations (K) Coptic is the language of the Egyptians who converted to Christianity and was written in Greek letters.

97. This section about the Vulgate is based on Würthwein, *Der Text des Alten Testaments*, p. 93-98.

98. Heussi, *Kompendium der Kirchengeschichte*

Coptic has several dialects into which the Bible was translated.⁹⁹ Without doubt the oldest of these is the Upper Egyptian Sahidic (Sa) translation of the Bible out of the Greek tongue which was done about the middle of the third century C.E. The Akhmimic was then translated out of the Sahidic. Later, perhaps in the fourth century, the Lower Egyptian Bohairic (Bo) was translated out of the Greek independent from the Sahidic. In textual criticism the Sahidic and the Bohairic translations are important witnesses for the LXX out of which they have been translated.

The Ethiopian Translation (Ä) About the middle of the fourth century the ruler of the kingdom of Aksum in Abyssinia embraced Christianity. Bible translation¹⁰⁰ out of the Greek and perhaps the Syriac and Hebrew will have started shortly afterwards, but it will have taken a long time, some think several centuries, to complete. We do not know how much of this original translation is still present in the extant manuscripts we have of which the oldest belongs to the 13th century.

The Armenian Translation (Arm) After the Armenian national Church had first used Greek and Syriac as languages of literature and church, the Armenian priest Mesrop (about 361-439) created the Armenian alphabet at the beginning of the fifth century which enabled the Armenians to create their own literature. According to Armenian witness the first Bible¹⁰¹ was translated out of the Peshitta and was completed about 414 C.E. and revised later. The

99. This section about the Coptic translations is based on Würthwein, *Der Text des Alten Testaments*, p. 98-99.

100. This section about the Ethiopian translation is based on *ibid.*, p. 99-100.

101. This section about the Armenian translation is based on *ibid.*, p. 100.

final and official translation which has come to us is based on the LXX, but is also influenced by the Peshitta.

The Arabic Translations (2) The Arabic language spread with the victory of Islam in conquered countries. Consequently Arabic became also the daily language of many Jews and Christians in these areas. Therefore a need for Arabic Bible translations¹⁰² arose and was met with several independent, interpretive versions. The partly preserved translation of Saadia Gaon was based on the Hebrew text. He was from Egypt and in 928 C.E. became head of the Jewish academy of Sura in Babylonia. His translation was originally accepted by the Samaritans. The *textus receptus*¹⁰³ of the Arabic translation which the Samaritans use today is said to be from Abu Said who lived about the middle of the 13th century. The value of the Arabic translations for textual criticism is not so high, but they have value for the history of interpretation.

Reasons for errors in textual transmission.

Reading or writing mistakes as unintentional changes. The following unintentional changes of the original can happen while copying.¹⁰⁴

1. Confusion of similar looking letters: Sometimes the copyist could confuse similar looking letters.
2. Transposition of letters: Because there were originally no vowel signs in Hebrew, it was easier that the copyist would

102. This section about the Arabic translations is based on Würthwein, *Der Text des Alten Testaments*, p. 101.

103. That means the "received" and acknowledged "text".

104. See *ibid.*, p. 103-109.

switch two consonants while reading them and then he would write them down in the wrong order.

3. Haplography: Sometimes the copyist could accidentally write only one letter or syllable or word where he should copy two similar letters or syllables or words.
4. Dittography: This is the opposite mistake. The copyist accidentally writes two letters, words or phrases where he should have written only one.
5. Homoioteleuton means "similar ending". If two similar ending words were standing close to each other in the original, it could happen that the eyes of the copyist could err from the first to the second word while copying. Therefore some words would be missing in the copy. If two similar or the same words would stand at the end of their two lines, the eye could err from the end of the one line to the end of the other line, so that one or more whole lines would be missing in the copy.
6. Homoiarkton means "similar beginning". If two similar beginning words were standing close to each other in the original, it could happen that the eyes of the copyist could err from the first to the second word while copying. Therefore some words would be missing in the copy. If two similar or the same words would stand at the beginning of their two lines, the eye could err from the beginning of the one line to the beginning of the other line, so that one or more whole lines would be missing in the copy.
7. Wrong word combination: If the space between two words was not enough to distinguish the two words as separate in

the original, the copyist could combine the letters of the two words in a wrong way and copy the two words as two different words.

8. Wrong word separation: If a word was written on two lines because there was not enough space on the first line, a copyist could make a wrong separation of this word and write it as two words or combine the letters in the wrong way.
9. Abbreviations not understood. If a text uses abbreviations for frequent used words, the copyist could misunderstand these and commit errors.

Intentional changes.

1. Insertion of small and frequently used words: We have seen that some of the vulgar texts would insert something small to make the sense clearer.
2. Exchange of one word for another: It could happen that a word which was seldom used or used with an uncommon meaning could be exchanged for a word which was used more often to make it more understandable.
3. If the wording of the original contained expressions which were viewed as inappropriate with regard to religion or ethics, it could happen that the words would be altered to something more acceptable.
4. It could happen that one reader of a text would write a gloss in the margin and that a later copyist of that manuscript would copy this in a way that he includes it in the main text.

The method of textual criticism.

For a sound method of textual criticism the following three steps may prove profitable.¹⁰⁵

1. Collation of textual variants. To analyze the tradition of the text the first step is to make a collation of the variants from the different witnesses for the transmitted text. It is good to start with **M** and then hear the others in the following order according to their importance for textual criticism: **W G α' σ' θ' S T V L Sah K A Arm**. The reason for this order is the historical background of these witnesses as noted above.

2. Evaluation of the textual variants. The variants have to be evaluated according to both linguistic grammatical reasons and according to content. The preferred interest is in **M** because this tradition is in Hebrew and not in a translated language. This textual tradition has again and again been proven to be the best. For every deviation from **M** good reasons must be given. This is mostly true for the consonant text and less for the vowels as is clear from the history of the text given above. It should be seen as a common rule that where ever **M** is sound according to grammar and content it should be preferred before every other tradition except in single cases where there are special other reasons favoring the other tradition. The decision whether **M** is sound or faultless according to grammar and content can only be made after seriously evaluating all possibilities of interpretation. In addition to **M** the translations have also to be evaluated extensively because it is still possible that

105. This section is based on Würthwein, *Der Text des Alten Testaments*, p. 109-118.

a translation may have preserved the original text even if **ℳ** seems sound. Only such variants of a translation can be put retranslated as a possible alternative to **ℳ** which can not be explained as a translational error or another mistake or as in agreement with known tendencies of the translators.

3. Decision. After the collation of the variants and their evaluation the decision has to be made which text can be seen as the original text or the as the closest to the original. While weighing up the different variants, the following constellations mainly occur:

1. **ℳ** and the other textual witnesses present the same, sound, and faultless text. In this case one should naturally assume that the tradition has preserved the original and it is imperative to follow it.
2. If **ℳ** and the other textual witnesses or a part of them differ from each other after an extensive analysis and if so two real variants confront each other, the following cases are thinkable:
 - (a) **ℳ** proves itself surely or probably as the original, and the variants of the other versions are clearly secondary (misreading, misunderstanding, intentional or unintentional correction). **ℳ** has to be followed.
 - (b) Both **ℳ** and the variants of the other versions give a different but equally possible or meaningful text. At the same time it is not possible to prove one of the variants as surely or probably secondary. In this case one should generally give **ℳ** the preference as a basic principle. But other aspects are also important, for

example certain textual critical rules. It could be that the variant deserves the preference which is according to grammar or content the more difficult one. Or the other rule could be decisive according to which the variant has to be preferred which explains the origin of the other best. It could also be that a very clear decision is not really possible.

- (c) The text of **מ** is according to grammar or content questionable or impossible. The other witnesses present a variant which is satisfactory. If it is possible to give good reasons for the originality of this variant, especially to show how the text of **מ** was corrupted out of this variant, then one can with full right correct **מ** according to this variant. But if it seems that the meaningful text of a translation originated only because the translator tried to make sense out of an already corrupted Hebrew text that lay before him, that means that this translation is a conjecture, then we have to conclude that the original text has not been preserved by the tradition.

- 3. In this case and or in the other case that neither **מ** nor the other versions present a text which is according to grammar or content possible or probable, one can try to heal the text by conjecture or state that healing is impossible (crux).

1.10.2 The Textual Transmission of the New Testament

Ancient book production.

As we have seen above the material used for ancient books¹⁰⁶ was papyrus and leather, especially parchment (see section 1.10.1). A papyrus scroll would be 9 to 10 m long. If the scroll was written on both sides, it is called an opisthograph. But a scroll was not easy to handle. The sections could not be found quickly. The codex was much more convenient to find sections fast.

The scribes used cursive script for daily writing needs but uncial script (majuscule script, capital letters) for writing of literature in the third to sixth centuries C.E. Since the 9th century a cursive minuscule script was used which made book production simpler and cheaper. This led to a greater spreading of literature. Uncial manuscripts are older and minuscule manuscripts younger. The ratio of extent minuscule manuscripts to majuscule manuscripts is ten to one. One reason for this seems to be that literature had become cheaper and more people could buy a book, also a Holy Book.

In ancient times Greek was normally written without spaces between the words (*scriptio continua* = continuous script). This could sometimes lead to ambiguity.

Often holy names (*nomina sacra*) were abbreviated with a line drawn above the abbreviation: For the Greek counterparts of God, Lord, Jesus, Christ, and Son the first and the last letter were written; of Spirit, David, cross, and Mother the first two letters and the last were written; of Father, Israel, and Savior the two first and the two last were written; of Man, Jerusalem, and Heaven the first and the last syllable were written.

106. This section is based on Bruce Metzger, *The Text of the New Testament*, 2nd ed. (New York and Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1968), p. 3-35.

When Christianity became a recognized religion in the Roman Empire in the fourth century, it became possible to have the Holy Scriptures copied in a "scriptorium" done by professional book copyists. One person would read and the others had to write down what they heard without seeing the original manuscript. This could lead to errors of the ears in the copy. Later when monks copied the Holy Scriptures there were less mistakes because the monks took more time for copying.

The scribe might put some interesting information in the colophon at the end of the manuscript. This could even include his name or the date and place of writing.

We find several "helps for readers". The Codex Vaticanus (B) from the fourth century has a system of "kephalaia" (chapters) for the gospels: 170 in Matthew, 62 in Mark, 152 in Luke and 50 in John. Other chapter divisions are found in the Codex Alexandrinus (A) of the fifth century and in most of the other Greek manuscripts: 68 in Mt, 48 in Mk, 83 in Lk and 18 in John. Similar kephalaia were used for Acts, the letters and Revelation. For each of the kephalaia of the Codex Alexandrinus and in most of the later manuscripts there is a "titlos" in the margin which is a summary title of the section. The title in the margin of John 2:1 for example is "About the wedding at Cana".

Eusebius of Caesarea invented an ingenious system for finding parallel texts in the Gospels. It spread very far. Many manuscripts in Greek have it, also in Latin, Syriac, Coptic, Gothic, Armenian, and in other translations. Every Gospel was divided in longer or shorter sections depending on the parallels in the other Gospels. All sections were numbered: 355 in Mt, 233 in Mk, 342 in Lk and 232 in John. Then Eusebius produced his tables or "canons". The first table has sections which are found in all four; the second table sections which are in Mt, Mk and Lk; the third those which are

in Mt, Lk and John; and so forth. These tables were written in columns of numbers and were normally found on the first pages of the Gospel manuscripts. Within the Gospels the number of the Gospel section was written with the number of the fitting table. If someone reading John 4:44 wanted to look at the parallel texts he would find section number 35 in the margin together with table 1. Looking at the table one he would find together with section 35 of John, section 142 in Mt, 51 in Mk and 21 in Lk. The canons of Eusebius are also printed in some modern editions of the Greek text so that they can still help the reader.¹⁰⁷

A summary of the content of a book might be given in a preface or a short introduction. There might be some information about the life of the author. In the oldest manuscripts the book titles are short and simple ("According to Matthew"; "To the Romans"). Later they grew longer and got more complicated. The subscriptions at the end of a book were originally like the titles; short and simple, and marking only the end of the book. Later they got more developed and often included information about the assumed place of writing or the names of the secretaries.

The earliest manuscripts have only scarce punctuation. In the sixth and seventh century scribes started to use punctuation marks more generously. A gloss is a brief marginal explanation of a difficult word or phrase. Scholia are explanatory comments of a teacher which are inserted on the margin of the manuscript. When scholia are systematically given to explain the whole text continuously, the book is called a commentary. A catena is a biblical commentary made up of excerpts from earlier Biblical commentators. Catena means "chain" in Latin pointing to the chain of explanations. Each

107. See for example E. Nestle and K. Aland, *Novum Testamentum Graece*, 27th ed. (Stuttgart: Deutsche Bibelstiftung, 2006), p. 85*-89*.

excerpt is normally introduced with the abbreviated name of the author. Onomastica try to give the meaning and etymology of names.

Ornately decorated initials were used to make the book more beautiful. In the Byzantine time the Greeks added pictures to help the reader to a better understanding. These could be pictures of Christ or his apostles or of scenes reported in the New Testament.

Presenting the text in cola (single sentences) and commata (single phrases) was done to help with the public reading of texts. In the Septuagint this system can be found in the poetic books. Jerome arranged his translation of the Prophets colometrically. The colometric system was used by some bilingual codices of the New Testament, e.g. Codex Bezae (D), Codex Claromontanus (D^P), Codex Coislinianus or Euthalianus (H^P), all dating to the sixth century.

Neumen are Byzantine notes helping to sing sections or to speak them rhythmically. They start to appear in codices from the seventh and eighth century, but it is not clear whether they were written when these manuscripts were written or added later. The notes were added with red or green ink above the words which should be sung.

Lectionaries were manuscripts with a collection of texts chosen to be read in the different services of the ecclesiastical year starting with Easter. Because such official liturgical texts have the tendency to be conservative and even archaic, the lectionaries are viewed as potentially valuable witnesses for a Greek text which might be older than the manuscript of the lectionary.

It is very interesting to look at the statistics of the Greek manuscripts of the New Testament in comparison to other ancient books. To classify the different manuscripts it has become customary to follow a system that was started by Wettstein and Gregory.

When the Swiss scholar Johann Jakob Wettstein had his beautiful two volume edition of the Greek New Testament printed in

Amsterdam in 1751-52, he used Latin capital letters for the uncial manuscripts and Arabic numbers for the minuscule manuscripts.

Caspar René Gregory from Philadelphia, USA went to Germany after his theological studies in Princeton and became New Testament professor at the University of Leipzig in 1889. Gregory modified Wettstein's system by using a Gothic P with a superscript Arabic number for the papyrus manuscripts to distinguish them from the parchment manuscripts (for example P^{46}). After Wettstein it had become customary to use Latin and Greek capitals and the Aleph from the Hebrew alphabet for the longest known uncial manuscripts. But at the time of Gregory the number of the uncials had surpassed the letters of those alphabets. So Gregory gave every uncial manuscript an Arabic number with a prefixed zero (for example 01, 02, 03, ... 0100, 0101, 0102, ..., 0249, 0250). Gregory gave the lectionaries a l with an Arabic number (for example l 32). A l without any addition is a lectionary of the Gospels. l^a is a lectionary with texts out of Acts and the epistles. l^{+a} is a lectionary with texts out of the Gospels, Acts, and the epistles. The Greek lectionary has no texts out of Revelation.

In 1963 there were 76 papyri cataloged. According to the list of the Greek manuscripts in Nestle-Aland¹⁰⁸ there were 116 papyri cataloged in 2001. In 1963 there were 250 cataloged uncials. According to the list in Nestle-Aland¹⁰⁹ there were 303 uncials cataloged in 2001. In 1963 there were 2646 minuscule manuscripts cataloged. According to Nestle-Aland¹¹⁰ there were at least 2829 minuscules cataloged in 2001. In 1963 there were 1997 lectionaries

108. Nestle and Aland, *Novum Testamentum Graece*, p. 684-690.

109. *ibid.*, p. 690-704.

110. *ibid.*, p. 704-714.

cataloged. According to Nestle-Aland¹¹¹ there were at least 2211 lectionaries cataloged in 2001. Altogether for 1963 there are 4969 Greek manuscripts and for 2001 at least 5459.

Only 50 manuscripts contain the whole New Testament, out of which Codex Sinaiticus is the only uncial manuscript.

As we have said before, it is interesting to contrast these numbers with the number of manuscripts which preserve the text of the ancient classics. For Homer's Iliad there are 457 papyri, 2 uncial manuscripts, and 188 minuscule manuscripts. For the works of Euripides there are 54 papyri and 276 parchment manuscripts, almost all of the later dating from the Byzantine period. Often there is a lapse of a millennium or more between the composition of the ancient classics and the earliest extant copies. In contrast the time between the composition of the books of the New Testament and the earliest extant copies is relatively brief. Several papyri of portions of the New Testament are extant which were copied within a century or so after the composition of the original documents.¹¹²

Important witnesses to the text of the New Testament

The most important witnesses for the New Testament text are Greek manuscripts, old translations, and quotations in the church fathers.¹¹³

1. Greek manuscripts.

Papyri. Two of the most important collections of Papyri¹¹⁴ were acquired in 1930-31 by (now Sir) Chester Beatty (London)

111. *ibid.*, p. 712-713.

112. According to Metzger, *The Text of the New Testament*, p. 34-35.

113. This section is based on *ibid.*, p. 36-92.

114. For the papyri see *ibid.*, p. 36-42.

and in 1955-56 by Martin Bodmer (Geneva). The first named collection is now in the Chester Beatty Library in Dublin (**p**⁴⁵; **p**⁴⁶; **p**⁴⁷).

1. **p**⁴⁵, Chester Beatty I, is from the first half of the third century. This codex contained originally Mt, Mk, Lk, John and Acts on 220 sheets of the format 22.8 x 16 cm.¹¹⁵ A few fragments of this codex which originally were one sheet out of Mt have surfaced in the Austrian National Library in Vienna. The type of text in Mark stands closer to the Caesarean text than to the Alexandrian or to the Western text. With regard to the other gospels it stands between the Alexandrian and the Western text. In Acts it stands decidedly closer to the Alexandrian text.
2. **p**⁴⁶, Chester Beatty II, is from about 200 C.E. This codex contained originally ten letters of Paul in the following order: Rom, Heb, 1. and 2. Cor, Eph, Gal, Phil, Col, 1 and 2 Thes on 104 sheets of the format 23 x 15 cm.¹¹⁶ Generally

115. According to Nestle and Aland, *Novum Testamentum Graece*, p. 686 **p**⁴⁵ contains now Mt 20:24-32; 21:13-19; 25:41-26:39; Mk 4:36-40; 5:15-26; 5:38-6:3.16-25.36-50; 7:3-15; 7:25-8:1.10-26; 8:34-9:9.18-31; 11:27-12:1.5-8.13-19.24-28; Lk 6:31-41; 6:45-7:7; 9:26-41; 9:45-10:1.6-22; 10:26-11:1.6-25.28-46; 11:50-12:12.18-37; 12:42-13:1.6-24; 13:29-14:10.17-33; Jn 4:51.54; 5:21.24; 10:7-25; 10:30-11:10.18-36.42-57; Acts 4:27-36; 5:10-21.30-39; 6:7-7:2.10-21.32-41; 7:52-8:1.14-25; 8:34-9:6.16-27; 9:35-10:2.10-23; 31-41; 11:2-14; 11:24-12:5.13-22; 13:6-16.25-36; 13:46-14:3.15-23; 15:2-7.19-27; 15:38-16:4.15-21.32-40; 17:9-17.

116. According to *ibid.*, p. 686 **p**⁴⁶ contains now Rom 5:17-6:3.5-14; 8:15-25.27-35; 8:37-9:32; 10:1-11:22.24-33; 11:35-15:9; 15:11-16:27; 1 Cor 1:1-9:2; 9:4-14:14; 14:16-15:15; 15:17-16:22; 2 Cor 1:1-11:10.12-21; 11:23-13:13; Gal 1:1-8; 1:10-2:9.12-21; 3:2-29; 4:2-18; 4:20-5:17; 5:20-6:8.10-18; Eph 1:1-2:7; 2:10-5:6; 5:8-6:6.8-18.20-24; Phil 1:1.5-15.17-28; 1:30-

this papyrus stands closer to the Alexandrian than to the Western text.

3. **℘**⁴⁷, Chester Beatty III, is from the middle or second half of the third century. This codex containing the book of Revelation had probably originally 32 sheets of the format 20 x 12.5 cm.¹¹⁷ Generally **℘**⁴⁷ agrees more often with Codex Sinaiticus than with any other even though its remarkable independence appears quite often.

The other collection of Martin Bodmer is in the Bodmer library in Cologny near Geneva (**℘**⁶⁶; **℘**⁷²; **℘**⁷⁴; **℘**⁷⁵).

1. **℘**⁶⁶, Bodmer II, is a papyrus codex of the Gospel according to John from about 200 C.E. The format of the extant pages is 14.2 x 16.2 cm.¹¹⁸ The text is a mixed text type with typical Alexandrian and Western elements. In about 20 cases the copyist has made corrections on the margin or between the lines and the dropped text belongs almost always to the Western tradition while the preferred variants belong to the Alexandrian text type.
2. **℘**⁷², Bodmer VII, is a papyrus codex of the format 15.5 x 14.2 cm. M. Testuz edited this papyrus in 1959 and dated it to the third century. It contains a wide-ranging collection of

2:12.14-27; 2:29-3:8.10-21; 4:2-12.14-23; Col 1:1-2.5-13.16-24; 1:27-2:19; 2:23-3:11.13-24; 4:3-12.16-18; 1 Thes 1:1; 1:9-2:3; 5:5-9.23-28; Heb 1:1-9:16; 9:18-10:20.22-30; 10:32-13:25.

117. According to *ibid.*, p. 687 **℘**⁴⁷ contains now Rv 9:10-11:3; 11:5-16:15; 16:17-17:2.

118. According to *ibid.*, p. 687, **℘**⁶⁶ contains Jn 1:1-6:11; 6:35-14:26.29-30; 15:2-26; 16:2-4.6-7; 16:10-20:20.22-23; 20:25-21:9.

writings in this order: the Nativity of Mary, the apocryphal correspondence of Paul to the Corinthians, the eleventh ode of Solomon, the epistle of Jude, Melito's Homily on the Passover, a fragment of a hymn, the Apology of Phileas, and Psalm 33 and 34 and 1 and 2 Peter. Because of its small format Testuz thinks that this papyrus was intended for private use and not for reading during the service. The text of 1 Peter shows clear connections to the Alexandrian text group and especially to the Sahidic text within this group.

3. **p**⁷⁴, Bodmer XVII, is quite a large papyrus codex from the seventh century. Originally it had 264 pages of the format 32 x 20 cm, but today it is in bad shape and contains parts of Acts, James, 1 and 2 Pt, 1 and 2 and 3 Jn, and Jude. The preserved text often agrees with the Codex Alexandrinus.
4. **p**⁷⁵, Bodmer XIV.XV, is a papyrus codex with the gospel according to Luke and John from about 175 to 225 according to the editors.¹¹⁹ Out of the original 144 pages of the format of 26 x 13 cm just 102 pages are fully or partly preserved. The text type stands very close to the Codex Vaticanus. Occasionally the codex is the only Greek witness who supports some interesting variants in agreement with the Sahidic translation.

p⁵² has only a size of 6 x 9 cm and contains only a few verses out of the fourth gospel (18:31-33.37-38). It is the oldest copy of any

¹¹⁹. According to Nestle and Aland, *Novum Testamentum Graece*, p. 688, **p**⁷⁵ contains Lk 3:18-22; 3:33-4:2; 4:34-5:10; 5:37-6:4; 6:10-7:32.35-39.41-43; 7:46-9:2; 9:4-17:15; 17:19-18:18; 22:4-24:53; Jn 1:1-11:45.48-57; 12:3-13:10; 14:8-15:10.

part of the New Testament which so far has become known. Even though Bernhard P. Grenfell had already acquired it in 1920, it remained unnoticed until 1934 amongst hundreds of other papyrus fragments. In that year C. H. Roberts recognized its content when he was sorting the unpublished papyri of the John Rylands Library in Manchester. He published it dating it to the first half of the second century. Not all scholars were convinced by his arguments, but eminent paleographers like F. G. Kenyon, W. Schubart, Sir H. I. Bell, A. Deißmann, U. Wilcken and W.H.P. Hatch agreed with him. Therefore in spite of its tiny size P^{52} is of utmost importance pointing to an early composition of John's Gospel, because it was found in a provincial town at the river Nile far away from its traditionally assumed place of writing (Ephesus in Asia Minor).

Uncial manuscripts. The following uncials are of special importance.¹²⁰

1. \aleph 01 The Codex Sinaiticus from the fourth century originally contained the whole Bible with four columns on every page having the format of 38 x 34.3 cm. Parts of the Old Testament were lost, but the whole of the New Testament is still preserved. This is the only uncial manuscript with the whole of the New Testament. Tischendorf found this codex about the middle of the 19th century in the monastery of Saint Catherine at Mount Sinai. Generally speaking the text of Codex Sinaiticus belongs to the Alexandrian type but contains also quite a few Western variants. Before this codex left the scriptorium several correctors did their work. The original reading of any manuscript is given with *, in this case it

120. For the uncials see Metzger, *The Text of the New Testament*, p. 42-61 and Nestle and Aland, *Novum Testamentum Graece*, p. 690-704.

would be \aleph^* . The variants of these correctors are given with the sign \aleph^a . Later, perhaps in the sixth and seventh century, several correctors who worked in Caesarea made a lot of selective changes in the Old Testament as well as in the New.

These readings, designated by the siglum \aleph^{ca} and \aleph^{cb} , represent a thoroughgoing effort to correct the text to a different standard, which according to a colophon at the end of the books of Esdras and Esther is stated to have been "a very ancient manuscript that had been corrected by the hand of the holy martyr Pamphilus".¹²¹

2. A 02 The Codex Alexandrinus from the fifth century contains the Old Testament (minus a few mutilations) and most of the New Testament.¹²² The text type of the Alexandrinus in the gospels is the Byzantine text type making the Alexandrinus the oldest example of this text which is generally seen as less valuable. In the rest of the New Testament the Alexandrinus stands together with B and \aleph as a typical representative of the Alexandrian text. The reason for this may be that the copyist of these parts used another source than for the gospels.
3. B 03 One of the most valuable amongst all manuscripts of the Greek Bible is the Codex Vaticanus from the middle of the fourth century. It was already listed in 1475 as part of the

121. Metzger, *The Text of the New Testament*, p. 46.

122. According to Nestle and Aland, *Novum Testamentum Graece*, p. 690, the parts of the New Testament which are missing in A are Mt 1:1-25:6; Jn 6:50-8:52; 2 Cor 4:14-12:6.

Vatican library. It never became quite clear why all scholars who wanted to have a deeper look at this manuscript in the 19th century could not get permission to do this from the administration of the *Bibliotheca Vaticana* for a long time. It was not until 1889-90 that a complete photographic facsimile was published, edited by G. Cozza-Luzi. B contains the Old and New Testaments and the Apocrypha without *Maccabees*. Today there are three missing sections: In the beginning almost 46 chapters of *Genesis* are missing, then about thirty *Psalms* and finally the last pages of the New Testament are missing from *Heb 9:14* onwards (with 1 and 2 *Tm*, *Tit*, *Phlm*, *Rv*). The script is a small uncial without ornaments. That is seen as a sign that the *Vaticanus* is a little bit older than the *Sinaiticus*. The text type of the *Vaticanus* is viewed by many scholars as an eminent representative of the *Alexandrian* text type.

4. C 04 The *Codex Ephraemi Rescriptus* is a manuscript of the Greek Bible from the fifth century. The former text was washed off its pages in the twelfth century and many of the sheets were rewritten with the text of a Greek translation of 38 ascetic tracts of the Syrian church father *Ephraim* (fourth century). By using chemicals and working very industriously *Tischendorf* was able to read the original text of this palimpsest and publish an edition of it in 1843. Only 64 sheets of the Old Testament are preserved but 145 of the New Testament, that is roughly 5/8 of the New Testament. Even though the manuscript is from the fifth century, its text is not as important as one might assume because of its age. It seems to be a mixture of all the more important text types and agrees often with the *Byzantine* text which is viewed by

most scholars as the most inferior type of the New Testament text. Two correctors have worked on the manuscript (C^2 or C^b and C^3 or C^c). The first lived presumably in the sixth century in Palestine and the second in the ninth century in Constantinople.

5. D 05 The Codex Bezae Cantabrigensis from the fifth or sixth century contains most of the four gospels and Acts and a small fragment of 3 Jn. The text is given in Greek on the left page and Latin on the right page. The order of the gospels in D is the so called Western order: Matthew, John, Luke, Mark (first the two apostles and then the disciples of apostles at the end). No known manuscript has so many and so strange deviations from what is usually considered as the normal New Testament text. One characteristic of the Codex Bezae is the free addition or the occasional elision of words, sentences or whole scenes. The type of text is a Western type.
6. D^p 06 The Codex Claromontanus from the sixth century contains only the letters of Paul (including Hebrews). The text is given in Greek on the left page and Latin on the right page as in the Codex Bezae. At least nine correctors have worked on the manuscript. The fourth of them has added spiritus and accents in the ninth century. The type of text is a Western type as in Codex Bezae.
7. W 032 The Codex Washingtonianus is one of the more important uncials that have been discovered in the 20th century. It is from the late fourth or early fifth century and contains the four gospels in the so called Western order (Mt, Jn, Lk, Mk). It had been acquired in 1906 by C. L. Freer from Detroit and is now kept in Washington. The text type is pe-

cularly mixed as if the text had been copied from different text families. In Matthew and in Lk 8:13-24:53 the text is like the common Byzantine text type; in Mk 1:1-5:30 it is Western and similar to the Vetus Latina (the old Latin translation); Mk 5:31-16:20 is Caesarean and related to \mathfrak{P}^{45} ; Lk 1:1-8:12 and Jn 5:12-21:25 are Alexandrian. The text of Jn 1:9-5:11 fills a quire which has been added in the seventh century, perhaps to supplant a damaged quire; it is a mixed text of Alexandrian character with some Western variants.

Important minuscule manuscripts. The following minuscule manuscripts are of special importance.¹²³ In some cases scholars have discovered "family-relations" between certain manuscripts which seem to belong to one tradition.

1. \mathfrak{M} or Byz "Majority text, including the Byzantine Koine text, indicates readings supported by the majority of all manuscripts, i.e., always including manuscripts of the Koine type in the narrow sense."¹²⁴

123. For the minuscules see Metzger, *The Text of the New Testament*, p. 61-66 and Nestle and Aland, *Novum Testamentum Graece*, p. 704-714.

124. So *ibid.*, p. 55*. On p. 714 we are told that these minuscules belong to the Majority text: "2, 3, 8, 9, 11, 12, 14, 15, 18, 20, 21, 23-25, 27, 29, 30, 32, 34, 36, 37, 39, 40, 44-47, 49, 50, 52-55, 57, 58, 60, 63, 65, 66, 68, 70, 73-78, 80, 82-84, 89, 90, 92, 95, 97-100, 105, 107-112, 116, 119-123, 125, 127-129, 132-134, 136-144, 146-148, 150, 151, 155, 167, 170, 171, 177, 183, 185-187, 190, 192-204, 207, 208, 210, 212, 214, 215, 217, 219-221, 223, 224, 226, 227, 231, 232, 235, 236, 240, 244-248, 250, 259-262, 264, 266, 267, 269, 272, 275-278, 280, 282-292, 300, 302, 304, 306, 308, 309, 313, 314, 316, 319, 320, 324, 325, 327-329, 331, 334, 337, 342, 344, 347, 351-362, 364, 366-369, 373-376, 379, 381, 384-386, 388, 390, 392-396, 399, 401, 402, 404, 405, 407-415, 418, 419, 422, 425, 426, 432, 438, 439, 443, 450, 452, 454, 457, 458, 461, 465, 466, 469, 476, 480, 491, 496, 498, 506,

507, 509-512, 514, 516, 518-521, 523-526, 528, 529, 531-535, 538, 540, 541, 546-551, 553, 554, 556, 558-560, 564, 568, 570, 571, 573, 575, 577, 578, 580, 583-588, 592-594, 596, 597, 600-604, 607, 616, 618, 620, 622, 624-628, 632-634, 637-640, 644, 645, 648-651, 655-657, 662-664, 666, 668, 669, 672-674, 677, 680, 684-686, 688-692, 694, 696, 698, 699, 705, 707, 708, 711, 714, 715, 717, 718, 721, 724, 725, 734, 736, 737, 739, 741, 745, 746, 748, 750, 754-757, 770, 794, 798, 801, 802, 824, 825, 831, 836, 839-841, 843-846, 848, 852, 853, 857, 862, 864, 866-868, 870, 877, 880, 884, 887, 890, 893, 894, 896, 901, 910, 911, 914, 916, 919-922, 928, 936-938, 942-944, 950, 951, 959, 962, 967, 970, 977, 980, 991, 993, 994, 1013, 1016, 1023, 1028, 1030, 1031, 1045, 1069, 1070, 1072-1078, 1080, 1094, 1099-1101, 1103-1105, 1107, 1110, 1112, 1119, 1121, 1129, 1148-1150, 1161, 1170, 1185, 1186, 1189-1191, 1193, 1196, 1198-1200, 1202, 1203, 1205-1209, 1211-1215, 1217, 1218, 1220-1227, 1231-1236, 1238, 1240, 1244, 1247-1250, 1254, 1255, 1260, 1264, 1277, 1283, 1285, 1300, 1309, 1310, 1312, 1314, 1316, 1320, 1323, 1324, 1328, 1330, 1331, 1334, 1339-1341, 1343, 1345, 1347, 1350-1352, 1356, 1360, 1370, 1374, 1392, 1395, 1400, 1417, 1437, 1438, 1444, 1445, 1447, 1449, 1452, 1470, 1476, 1482, 1483, 1492, 1503, 1504, 1508, 1513-1517, 1520, 1521, 1539, 1540, 1543, 1545, 1547, 1548, 1556, 1566, 1570, 1572, 1577, 1583, 1594, 1597, 1604, 1605, 1607, 1613, 1614, 1617-1619, 1622, 1626, 1628, 1636, 1637, 1649, 1656, 1662, 1668, 1672, 1673, 1683, 1693, 1701, 1714, 1717, 1720, 1723, 1725-1728, 1730-1734, 1736-1738, 1740-1743, 1745-1750, 1752, 1754-1757, 1759, 1761-1763, 1767, 1768, 1770-1772, 1800, 1821, 1826, 1828, 1829, 1835, 1847, 1849, 1851, 1855, 1856, 1858-1862, 1869, 1870, 1872, 1878-1880, 1882, 1883, 1888, 1889, 1897, 1899, 1902, 1905-1907, 1911, 1914-1934, 1936-1938, 1941, 1946, 1948, 1951, 1952, 1954-1958, 1967, 1968, 1970-1972, 1974, 1975, 1978-1982, 1986, 1988, 1992, 1997, 1998, 2001, 2003, 2007, 2009, 2013, 2085, 2096, 2098, 2111, 2119, 2125, 2126, 2132, 2133, 2135, 2139-2142, 2144, 2160, 2172, 2173, 2175-2178, 2181, 2183, 2187, 2189, 2191, 2199, 2218, 2221, 2236, 2261, 2266, 2267, 2273, 2275, 2277, 2281, 2289, 2295, 2300, 2303, 2306, 2307, 2309-2311, 2352, 2353, 2355, 2356, 2373, 2376, 2380-2382, 2386, 2389, 2390, 2423-2425, 2431, 2441, 2447, 2450, 2466, 2468, 2475, 2479, 2484, 2490, 2491, 2496, 2499-2503, 2507, 2532, 2534, 2536, 2540, 2545, 2547, 2549, 2552, 2554, 2558, 2572, 2573, 2578, 2579, 2581, 2584, 2587, 2593, 2600, 2619, 2626, 2627, 2629, 2631, 2639, 2657, 2666, 2668, 2671, 2675, 2690, 2691, 2696, 2698-2700, 2704,

2. f¹ The minuscule manuscripts 1, 118, 131, and 209 are counted as family 1.¹²⁵ All these manuscripts come from the 12th to 14th centuries. Textual analysis of the Gospel according to Mark has shown that the text type of these minuscules often agrees with Codex Θ and seems to go back to the text type which was spread in Caesarea in the third and fourth centuries.
3. f¹³ The minuscule manuscripts 13, 69, 124, 174, 230, 346, 543, 788, 826, 828, 983, 1689, 1709 and others are counted as family 13.¹²⁶ All these manuscripts come from the 11th to 15th centuries and go back to an archetype which originated either in Calabria or Sicily. One of the most noteworthy characteristics of these manuscripts is that they have the section of the adulterous woman (Jn 7:53-8:11) not in the fourth gospel but after Lk 21:38. Like f¹ this family is also related to the Caesarean text type.

2. Ancient Versions of the New Testament. The earliest versions¹²⁷ were done by missionaries and church workers to spread the Gospel in Syriac (see section 1.10.1), Latin (see section 1.10.1),

2711, 2712, 2716, 2723, 2746, 2761, 2784, 2785, 2815, 2817, 2829” and many others.

125. Metzger, *The Text of the New Testament*, p. 61. According to Nestle and Aland, *Novum Testamentum Graece*, p. 713 family 1 consists of 1, 118, 131, 209, 1582 and others.

126. According to *ibid.*, p. 713. See also Metzger, *The Text of the New Testament*, p. 61.

127. For the ancient versions of the New Testament see *ibid.*, p. 67-86.

Coptic (see section 1.10.1), Gothic¹²⁸, and Armenian (see section 1.10.1). With regard to textual criticism they can be helpful if used with care. Here are some sigla used in Nestle-Aland.¹²⁹

| | | | |
|------------------|--|-------------------|--|
| latt | entire Latin tradition | sy | all Syriac versions |
| lat(t) | entire Latin tradition with few exceptions | sy ^s | Syrus Sinaiticus |
| lat | Vulgata and a part of Old Latin tradition | sy ^c | Syrus Curetonianus |
| it | all or majority of Old Latin witnesses | sy ^p | Peshitta |
| a.b.c. | Individual Old Latin manuscripts | sy ^h | Harklensis |
| vg | Vulgata | sy ^{hmg} | A marginal reading of the Harklensis |
| vg ^s | Vulgata Sixtina 1590 | sy ^{h**} | Readings of the Harklean text enclosed by critical signs |
| vg ^{cl} | Vulgata Clementina 1592 | sy ^{ph} | Philoxeniana |
| vg st | Vulgata (Stuttgart) 1994 | co | all Coptic versions |
| vg ^{ww} | Vulgata Wordsworth-White-Sparks | sa | Sahidic |
| aeth | Ethiopic | ac | Akhmimic |
| arm | Armenian | ac ² | Subakhmimic |
| geo | Georgian | mae | Middle Egyptian (= Mesokemic) |
| slav | Old Church Slavonic | mf | Middle Egyptian Fayyumic |
| got | Gothic | pbo | Proto-Bohairic |
| | | bo | Bohairic |

3. New Testament quotations in the Church Fathers. According to Metzger the quotations from the New Testament in the writings of the early Church Fathers are very numerous.¹³⁰

128. About 350 C.E. Ulfilas or Wulfila translated the Bible into Gothic after having created the Gothic alphabet for this.

129. Nestle and Aland, *Novum Testamentum Graece*, p. 63*-72*.

130. Metzger, *The Text of the New Testament*, p. 86.

Indeed, so extensive are these citations that if all other sources for our knowledge of the text of the New Testament were destroyed, they would be sufficient alone for the reconstruction of practically the entire New Testament.

Sometimes it is difficult to recognize whether it is a quotation or a more liberal use according to the sense of a section. Here is a list of more important writers of the first centuries whose books contain numerous quotations from the New Testament.¹³¹

| | | | |
|-----------------------|----------|-----------------------|---------------|
| Ambrose of Milan | †397 | Hippolytus of Rome | †235 |
| Ambrosiaster | 366-384 | Irenaeus | †ca. 202 |
| Athanasius | †373 | Isidore of Pelusium | †435 |
| Augustine | †430 | Jerome | †419/420 |
| Chrysostom | †407 | Justin Martyr | †ca. 165 |
| Clement of Alexandria | †ca. 212 | Lucifer | †370/371 |
| Cyprian | †258 | Marcion | †150/160 |
| Cyrill of Alexandria | †444 | Origen | †253/254 |
| Didymus of Alexandria | †ca. 398 | Pelagius | 4th/5th cent. |
| Ephraim the Syrian | †373 | Primasius | †after 552 |
| Epiphanius of Salamis | †403 | Pseudo-Jerome | 5th/6th cent. |
| Eusebius of Caesarea | †339/340 | Rufinus of Aquileia | †410 |
| Gregory of Nazianzus | †389/390 | Tatian | ca. 170 |
| Gregory of Nyssa | †394 | Tertullian | †after 220 |
| Hilary | †367 | Theodor of Mopsuestia | †428 |

The pre-critical period: The origin and dominance of the *Textus Receptus*.

When we look at the history of New Testament textual criticism we can distinguish between a pre-critical period¹³² with the dominance of the *Textus Receptus* and modern textual criticism from

131. *ibid.*, p. 88-89.

132. This section is based on *ibid.*, p. 95-118.

Griesbach to the present.

From Ximenez and Erasmus to the brothers Elzevir. When Johannes Gutenberg invented the printing press with a movable type in Europe in the middle of the 15th century, this brought a big change in book production and especially in the spreading of the Bible. The first great project of Gutenberg's printing press was the printing of the Vulgata between 1450 and 1456. The first complete Hebrew Bible was printed in 1488 at Soncino in the Italian region of Lombardy. The first printed edition of the Greek New Testament was part of the Complutensian Polyglot Bible by Cardinal Francisco Ximenez de Cisneros (1437-1517), printed in 1514, but not published until 1522.

Desiderius Erasmus (1469–1536) was the first who published a printed New Testament in Greek (1516) which was printed by the publisher Froben in Basel. The printing of 1000 pages started on October 2, 1515 and was completed very quickly on March 1, 1516. Because of the great haste in the production there were hundreds of printing errors in it.

Because Erasmus could not find any manuscript with the whole of the New Testament, he used different manuscripts for the different parts of it. For most of the text he trusted two quite inferior manuscripts from the University library of Basel, one for the gospels and the other for Acts and the epistles, both from about the 12th century. For Revelation he only had one manuscript which he had borrowed from his friend Johann Reuchlin. The last sheet of this manuscript was missing that had contained the last six verses of Revelation. For these six verses Erasmus followed the Vulgata and translated it back into Greek. In some places of this manuscript the text of Revelation was so mixed up with the added commentary

that it was not possible to distinguish both. Here as well Erasmus followed the Vulgata and translated it back into Greek.

In these sections Erasmus has created variants which can not be found in any other known Greek manuscript. But because the so-called Textus Receptus (=TR; "Received Text" TR) was born out of this work of Erasmus, these variants are still printed with the Textus Receptus. Not only in Revelation but also in other parts of the New Testament Erasmus brought material into the Greek text which he had taken from the Vulgata and which consequently became part of the Textus Receptus out of which the King James Version of 1611 was translated.

The first edition of the Greek New Testament of Erasmus was sold and then the second edition, both within three years, all in all 3300 copies. The second edition became the source for Luther's translation of the New Testament into German.

His third edition was published in 1522 with the Comma Johanneum. This is an addition in 1 John 5:7-8 which at the time of Erasmus was part of the Vulgata and only available in one Greek manuscript when he included this in his third edition (KJV):

7 ... in heaven, the Father, the Word, and the Holy
Ghost: and these three are one. 8. And there are three
that bear witness in earth...

In a footnote Erasmus himself writes that he had the suspicion that this one manuscript had only been produced recently. He said that if there was only one Greek manuscript with these words, he would publish them in his next edition.¹³³

The fourth edition of Erasmus was published in 1527. It contained the text of the New Testament in three parallel columns, the

133. Metzger, *The Text of the New Testament*, p. 101.

Greek, the Vulgata and his own Latin translation. In this fourth edition Erasmus used the Greek New Testament text of the Complutensian Polyglot Bible by Ximenez to correct his own Greek text because he had realized that this was text-critically better. Therefore in his fourth edition Erasmus changed the Greek text in 90 places in Revelation according to the Greek text of the Complutensian Polyglot Bible. In a fifth edition in 1535 Erasmus dropped the text of the Vulgata, but the Greek text was almost without differences to the fourth edition.

The Greek text of Erasmus was not as good as the Greek text of the Complutensian Polyglot Bible which was prepared from 1502 to 1514, but it was published earlier and in a cheaper and more convenient edition. Therefore it spread much more and had a greater influence than the competition.

The Greek text of Erasmus had also an influence on the editions of Robert Estienne's (in Latin: Stephanus) four editions (1546, 1549, 1550 in Paris; 1551 in Geneva). The third edition of Stephanus was the first Greek New Testament with critical apparatus. This third edition became for many people, especially in England, the standard edition of the Greek New Testament. The fourth edition of Stephanus, which had the Greek text with the Vulgata and the translation of Erasmus, became important because it was the first time that the New Testament was printed with verses numbered consecutively.

Theodore Beza (1519-1605), friend and successor of Calvin in Geneva, published nine editions of the New Testament between 1565 and 1604. Four of these are independent editions (1565, 1582, 1588/89 and 1598), the others are only reprints in a smaller size. The editions have explanations, their own Latin translation and the Vulgata together with the Greek text. Beza had access to some more Greek manuscripts, for example to Codex Bezae (see item 5)

and Codex Claromontanus (see item 6), but he did not consult them much because they were too different from what was considered the standard text of his time. His Greek text does not differ much from the fourth edition of Stephanus from 1551. The work of Beza was important because his editions had the tendency to fix the *textus receptus* and to spread it. The translators of the King James Version of 1611 used Beza's editions of 1588/89 and 1598 extensively.

The two Dutch brothers Bonaventura and Abraham Elzevir published in 1624 in Leiden a small and handy edition of the Greek New Testament whose text was mainly based on Beza's edition of 1565. The preface to their second edition of 1633 boasts:

Therefore you have the text which is now received
(=acknowledged) by all: in which we present nothing
which is changed or corrupted.¹³⁴

The Latin "received text" has only to be changed from the accusative (*textum receptum*) to the nominative case (*textus receptus*) to give you the famous name "Textus Receptus" (TR) under which it has been known since.

The TR became not only the Greek source for the King James version of 1611 but for most of the important Protestant Bible translations in Europe until 1881. It was so respected as the standard text that any criticism of it was almost viewed as blasphemy. But we have to remember that the textual source of the TR was only a handful of not so important minuscule manuscripts. In ten places the TR presents variants which are not supported by any known Greek witness.

134. The English translation was done by E. Lanz. The Latin original text is given in a footnote by Metzger, *The Text of the New Testament*, p. 106: *Textum ergo habes, nunc ab omnibus receptum: in quo nihil immutatum aut corruptum damus.*

The collection of variant readings. Metzger states about the following time:¹³⁵

The next stage in the history of New Testament textual criticism is characterized by assiduous efforts to assemble variant readings from Greek manuscripts, versions, and Fathers. For almost two centuries scholars ransacked libraries and museums, in Europe as well as the Near East, for witnesses to the text of the New Testament. But almost all of the editors of the New Testament during this period were content to reprint the time-honoured but corrupt Textus Receptus, relegating the evidence for the earlier readings to the apparatus. An occasional brave soul who ventured to print a different form of Greek text was either condemned or ignored.

The first systematic collection of variants was presented by the Polyglot Bible of Brian Walton (1600-1661) which was published from 1655-1657 in six great folios in London. The fifth volume contained the New Testament in Greek, Latin, Syriac, Ethiopic, Arabic and (in the gospels) Persian. The Greek text is the text of Stephanus from 1550 with a few slight changes. At the bottom of the page variants from the Codex Alexandrinus were given which Cyril Loucaris, the Patriarch of Constantinople, had presented to king Charles I of England in 1627. In the sixth volume of the Polyglot, in the appendix, Walton presented also a critical apparatus done by Archbishop Ussher with variants from 15 other authorities to which the marginal variants of Stephanus were also added.

135. Metzger, *The Text of the New Testament*, 106. This section is based on his pages 106-118.

John Mill (1645-1707) published his epoch-making edition of the Greek New Testament two weeks before his own death in 1707 after having worked for 30 years on textual critical issues. He had collected evidence from all Greek manuscripts, early translations and church fathers on which he could lay his hands. He wrote valuable prolegomena to his edition in which he talked about the canon of the New Testament, the transmission of the New Testament text and described 32 printed editions of the Greek New Testament and almost 100 manuscripts. He presented about 30,000 variants in his edition. The Greek text which he printed as his main text was the 1550 text of Stephanus.

The mathematician Edward Wells (1667-1727) published his edition of the Greek New Testament from 1709-1719 in ten parts. Wells deviated in 210 places from the TR and this almost always in agreement with the text critical editions of the 19th century. Even though his edition was ignored in his own time, history has to give him the honor of having been the first to reject the TR in favor of older manuscripts.

In 1729 Daniel Mace anonymously published his "The New Testament in Greek and English". He had selected those variants out of Mill's apparatus which he thought were superior to the TR. With regard to many of his changes he anticipated the opinions of later scholars.

With Johann Albrecht Bengel (1687-1752) we come to a new chapter of the history of New Testament textual criticism. When he was studying theology in Tübingen, Germany, his pietist faith in the inspiration of the Bible was shaken by the 30,000 variants of Mill's edition. He decided therefore to commit himself to the study of textual criticism. With enormous energy and persistence he obtained all editions, manuscripts and early translations he could get. After extensive studies he came to the conclusion that the variants

were less in number than expected and that they would not shake a single article of the evangelical doctrine.

In his "Prodromus" (Forerunner, 1725)¹³⁶ for his planned edition of the New Testament, Bengel proposed sound principles for textual criticism. Textual witnesses cannot just be counted but have to be weighed according to their value. They have to be ordered according to "groups, families, tribes and nations". Consequently he was the first to distinguish two big groups or "nations": The "Asian" which originated in Constantinople and surroundings and which includes the newer manuscripts and the "African" which he subdivided into two tribes, which have their respective main representatives in the Codex Alexandrinus on the one hand and in the Vetus Latina on the other. To distinguish the variants Bengel coined a rule which has been approved by all later textual critics in one form or other:

Formulated in Bengel's pithy Latin it is, *proclivi scriptioni praestat ardua* ('the difficult is to be preferred to the easy reading').¹³⁷

In 1734 Bengel published an edition of the Greek New Testament with critical apparatus. The main text is still the TR. But in the lower margin of the page he inserted a selection of variants. Bengel gives his opinion about the value of the different variants with Greek letters:

α original reading
β a reading better than that in the TR

136. "Prodromus Novi Testamenti Graeci recte cauteque ordinandi" published in Johann Albrecht Bengel, *Chrysostomus, De Sacerdotio libri VI* (Denkendorf, 1725). See Metzger, *The Text of the New Testament*, p. 112.

137. *ibid.*, p. 112.

γ a reading equal to the TR
 δ readings inferior to the TR
 ε a very inferior reading that has to be rejected

Even though Bengel was a man whose personal piety and practiced charity was well known and whose orthodoxy was acknowledged, he was treated as if he were an enemy of the Holy Scriptures. In answer to the accusations Bengel published a "Defence" (*defensio*) of the Greek Text of his New Testament.

Johann Jakob Wettstein (1693-1754) published his edition of the Greek New Testament in two volumes in Amsterdam in 1751-52, a result of 40 years of research. The main text printed was the TR, but in the margin Wettstein presented the variants which he thought to be the right ones. In an appendix¹³⁸ he gives a lot of good advice, for example that

manuscripts must be evaluated by their weight,
 not by their number¹³⁹

Weinstein's critical apparatus was the first in which Latin capital letters were sigla for the uncials and Arabic numbers were sigla for the minuscules including the lectionaries.

The modern critical period: from Griesbach to the present

The beginnings of scientific textual criticism of the New Testament are related to Johann Jakob Griesbach (1745-1812) who was New Testament professor at the University of Jena from 1775

138. The title of the appendix is "Animadversiones et cautiones ad examen Variarum Lectionum N.T. necessariae" according to *ibid.*, p. 114.

139. Translation Metzger. The Latin original is: "codices autem pondere, non numero estimandi sunt", see *ibid.*, p. 114.

until his death.¹⁴⁰ He distinguished three groups of texts: the Alexandrian, the Western and the Byzantine Recension. Griesbach saw Origen as representative of an Alexandrian recension, Codex D and the Latin translations as representatives of a Western recension, and Codex Alexandrinus and the uncials as representatives of a Byzantine recension. Griesbach was the first scholar in Germany who dared to deviate from the TR in many places. His most important editions of the Greek New Testament were printed in Halle in 1775-77, in Halle and London in 1796-1806, and in Leipzig in 1803-1807.

The end of the dominance of the Textus Receptus. The German scholar Karl Lachmann (1793-1851) was the first major editor to break from the Textus Receptus. He was professor of classical and German philology at the Humboldt University, Berlin. In his edition of the Greek New Testament published in 1831 in Berlin he did not try to restore the original text which he deemed impossible, but to present the text which was in use in Eastern Christianity about 380 C.E.

The man who has done most for the modern textual criticism of the New Testament is without doubt Lobegott Friedrich Konstantin von Tischendorf (1815-1874) who discovered and published more manuscripts than any other scholar. Between 1841 and 1872 he published 8 editions of the Greek New Testament and 22 volumes with texts of biblical manuscripts. Having studied theology in Leipzig from 1834-1838 he committed himself to the restoration of the original form of the New Testament text. He visited libraries all over Europe and in the near East where he looked for old

140. This section is based on Metzger, *The Text of the New Testament*, p. 119-146.

manuscripts and checked them. The most important of his editions of the Greek New Testament is the eighth which was published in Leipzig in two volumes (1869-1872). With regard to this eighth edition Tischendorf was criticized that he had given too much importance to the Codex Sinaiticus which he had discovered between the seventh and eighth edition.

In England it was Samuel Prideaux Tregelles (1813-1875) who had the greatest success in leading the British away from their preference for the TR. His important edition of the Greek New Testament was published in six parts in London from 1857-1872. He saw his lifelong work for the Greek Text of the New Testament as an act of worshipping and serving God.

The year 1881 saw the publication of the most important edition which ever was done by British scholarship. Brooke Foss Westcott (1825-1901) and Fenton John Anthony Hort (1828-1892) published their two volumes "The New Testament in the Original Greek". The first volume contains the Greek text, the second an "Introduction and Appendix" in which textual critical principles are explained. The two scholars had worked from 1853 to 1881 on this edition. They distinguish four text types: the Syrian (its latest form is the TR), the Western (e.g. Codex D), the Alexandrian (e.g. Codex C and L) and the "neutral" type (e.g. Codex B and Codex Sinaiticus). According to Westcott and Hort the first type is the least original and the last type the most valuable. This meant a total break with the *textus receptus*.

The approach of the German scholar Bernhard Weiss (1827-1918) was different from Westcott and Hort, but he came to similar conclusions. He also saw the Codex Vaticanus as the most important witness for the Greek New Testament text.

Hermann Freiherr von Soden (1852-1914) published a great

work about the Greek New Testament in the years 1902-13.¹⁴¹ Von Soden's work is very intensive and thorough, but it became a kind of magnificent failure. He created a totally new system for the sigla of the manuscripts that was so complicated that it was not accepted by others.

The most widely used pocket edition of the Greek New Testament is the one done by Eberhard Nestle (1851-1913) for the Württembergische Bibelanstalt in Stuttgart.¹⁴² Since the third edition of 1901, Nestle followed the simple principle that he compared the three editions of the Greek New Testament from Tischendorf, Westcott/Hort, and Weiss. Wherever two of the three agreed, Nestle printed their text. Since the 17th edition some variants have been accepted into the main text against the majority of the three above named editions because in the case of these variants many scholars agreed that they have a claim to be the more original readings.¹⁴³

The origins of textual criticism as a scholarly discipline.

As it is the case with many other areas of Western science, textual criticism as a scholarly discipline can be traced back to the Greeks.¹⁴⁴ One of the librarians of the famous library of Alexandria

141. Hermann Freiherr von Soden, *Die Schriften des neuen Testaments, in ihrer ältesten erreichbaren Textgestalt / hergestellt auf Grund ihrer Textgeschichte I Untersuchungen*, vol. 1 (Berlin, 1902-1910); Hermann Freiherr von Soden, *Die Schriften des neuen Testaments, in ihrer ältesten erreichbaren Textgestalt / hergestellt auf Grund ihrer Textgeschichte II Text mit Apparat*, vol. 2 (Berlin, 1913).

142. Eberhard Nestle, *Novum Testamentum Graece*, 1st ed. (Stuttgart: Württembergische Bibelanstalt, 1898); E. Nestle and K. Aland, *Novum Testamentum Graece*, 28th ed. (Stuttgart: Deutsche Bibelstiftung, 2012).

143. See Metzger, *The Text of the New Testament*, p. 144.

144. This section is based on *ibid.*, p. 149-155.

in Egypt, Zenodotus of Ephesus (about 325-234 B.C.), compared many manuscripts to restore the original text of the Iliad and the Odyssey of Homer shortly before 274 B.C.. In his critical edition of Homer he deleted doubtful lines, transposed others and made emendations.

The Hexapla of Origen is an example for an early textual critical work on the Old Testament. It gave a "sixfold" Old Testament 1. in Hebrew, 2. in Hebrew transliterated into Greek characters, 3. according to Aquila, 4. Symmachus, 5. LXX, and 6. Theodotion.¹⁴⁵ In his commentary on Matthew 15:14 about Mt 19:16ff Origen states that certain differences between the manuscripts of the gospels came into existence, either by the negligence of some writers, or by the audacious boldness of others, because some did not correct the copied manuscript according to the original, or while they corrected they left things out or added others according to what seemed best to them.

According to modern standards Jerome (about 345-420) was a more sharp-witted textual critic than Origen. For example Jerome mentions the possible confusion of similar looking letters and of abbreviations, the phenomenon of haplography and dittography, the switching of letters and also the possible intentional corrections through scribes.¹⁴⁶

In writing about the mentioning of Jeremiah in Mt 27:9 which was not included in some manuscripts of his time Augustine (354-430) argues that he understood in this case that more difficult variant is the more original one.¹⁴⁷

145. See Würthwein, *Der Text des Alten Testaments*, p. 58.

146. See Metzger, *The Text of the New Testament*, p. 153.

147. Philip Schaff, NPNF1-06. St. Augustin: Sermon on the Mount; Harmony of the Gospels; Homilies on the Gospels, Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers (Grand Rapids, MI: Christian Classics Ethereal Library, 1886), <http://www>.

Modern methods of textual criticism.

The classical method of textual criticism which has been generally practiced by editors of classical Greek and Latin texts involves two main processes, recension and emendation. Recension is the selection, after examination of all available material, of the most trustworthy evidence on which to base a text. Emendation is the attempt to eliminate the errors which are found even in the best manuscripts.¹⁴⁸

The application of critical methods in the editing of classical texts was developed principally by three German scholars, Friedrich Wolf (1749-1824), Immanuel Becker (1785-1871), and Karl Lachmann (1793-1851). Lachmann used a "genealogical method" in analyzing the manuscripts: If certain manuscripts agree with regard to certain variants they probably have a common ancestor and it might be possible to reconstruct a family tree.

Often, however, difficulties hinder the construction of a family tree of manuscripts. A disturbing element enters when a mixture has occurred, that is, when a copyist has had two or more manuscripts before him and has followed sometimes one, sometimes the other. To the extent that manuscripts have a "mixed" ancestry, the genealogical relations among them become progressively more complex and obscure to the investigator.

A theory of local texts in the transmission of the New Testament was developed by B. H. Streeter in his "The Four Gospels, a Study of Origins".¹⁴⁹ Building upon the classical work of Westcott and

ccel.org/ccel/schaff/npnf106.html, p. 288-289.

148. This section is based on Metzger, *The Text of the New Testament*, p. 156-185.

149. Burnett Hillman Streeter, *The Four Gospels, a Study of Origins* (1924)

Hort, Streeter sees Antioch, Rome and Alexandria as centers of local text groups representing three text types (Eastern, Western, Alexandrian). Alexandrian" is Streeter's name for his combination of the "neutral" text type of Westcott-Hort and their "Alexandrian type". In addition to this Caesarea is viewed as a center of a fourth text type especially for the gospels. Variants which are later than the fifth century can be ignored if they do not deviate from the dominant Byzantine text type¹⁵⁰ which according to Streeter was a harmonized mixed text type of the text groups going back to the fourth century and was a forerunner of the later TR.

The evaluation of variants only according to internal evidence (the style of the author, the immediate context etc.) while neglecting the external evidence (date and geographical distribution of the witnesses) is according to Metzger not acceptable. Both internal evidence and external evidence have to be taken into account.¹⁵¹

Methods to discern family relationships between manuscripts are very difficult and imply a lot of work.¹⁵²

A conjecture, as a conjectural emendation, tries to reconstruct the original reading of a clearly corrupt or illegible textual fragment. It is only permissible if there is no other way to reconstruct the original reading. It must have an intrinsic probability and must

150. Streeter's name for the Syrian text type of Westcott-Hort. See Metzger, *The Text of the New Testament*, p. 170.

151. See *ibid.*, p. 175-179.

152. See *ibid.*, p. 179-181.

be capable of explaining the origin of the alleged corrupt reading.¹⁵³

The causes of error in the transmission of the text of the New Testament.

Unintentional Changes. Almost all unintentional changes which we have seen for the Old Testament are also important in the area of New Testament textual criticisms: confusion of similar looking letters, transposition of letters, haplography, dittography, homoioteleuton, homoioarkton, confusion with regard to abbreviations¹⁵⁴ (see section 1.10.1). In addition to those errors there is also the category of hearing errors for the New Testament when copies were made in a scriptorium with one reading aloud and the others writing the text down from hearing it. For example the Greek personal pronouns for "you" and "we" could be thus confused.

Intentional changes. It might sound strange but some more thoughtful scribes were more in danger of changing the given text than others who only wanted to faithfully copy what was before them.¹⁵⁵ Most of these changes were done out of the good intentions of scribes who thought that they were correcting an error or an unfortunate expression which had crept into the Holy text.

1. Changes involving spelling and grammar. The book of Revelation contains many Semitisms and expressions which could be viewed as non-standard Greek. Consequently some copy-

153. See Metzger, *The Text of the New Testament*, p. 182-185.

154. See *ibid.*, p. 186-195.

155. This section is based on *ibid.*, p. 195-206.

ists have "corrected" the original phrases of some verses in some manuscripts (Rv 1:4; 1:6; 1:15; 2:20).

2. Harmonistic corruptions. Monks knew many Bible sections by heart. While copying texts they could be tempted to adjust one gospel passage to the other. The words written in John 19:20 "it was written in Hebrew, in Latin, and in Greek" have been added in many manuscripts in Lk 23:38.
3. Addition of natural complements and similar adjuncts. Some phrases were used so often together that they seemed to belong naturally together, for example "the chief priest" and "the scribes". If in some verse only one phrase is used, a copyist might erroneously add the other as well. When Jesus says in Mt 9:13, "For I came not to call the righteous, but sinners", some manuscripts added "to repentance", probably mentally taken from Luke 5:32.
4. Clearing up historical and geographical difficulties. In Mk 1:2-3 we find a combined quotation of first Mal 3:1 and then Is 40:3, but only the name Isaiah is given as a reference. Therefore some later manuscripts did not say "as it is written in Isaiah the prophet", but "as it is written in the prophets". This seems to have been a deliberate "correction" to remove an alleged error.
5. Conflation of Readings. "What would a conscientious scribe do when he found that the same passage was given differently in two or more manuscripts which he had before him? Rather than make a choice between them and copy only one of the two variant readings (with the attendant possibility of omitting the genuine reading), most scribes incorporated

both readings in the new copy which they were transcribing. This produced what is called a conflation of readings, and is characteristic of the later, Byzantine type of text.¹⁵⁶ A good example for this is the end of Luke (24:53): Some old manuscripts said about the disciples that they were continually in the temple "blessing God"¹⁵⁷, other old manuscripts said that they were continually in the temple "praising God".¹⁵⁸ The result was that younger manuscripts combined both readings to they were continually in the temple "praising and blessing God".¹⁵⁹

6. Alterations made because of doctrinal considerations. In some manuscripts statements have been erased or changed which seemed to contain an unacceptable or difficult teaching. In other manuscripts words might have been added as "proof" for some doctrinal statement. An example for the last mentioned possible change is the addition of "and to the Holy Spirit" in some Latin manuscripts¹⁶⁰ after Luke's statement in Lk 1:3 "it seemed good to me" (compare Acts 15:28). A

156. Metzger, *The Text of the New Testament*, p. 200.

157. εὐλογοῦντες τὸν θεόν. According to K. Aland and B. Metzger, *The Greek New Testament, UBS*, 3rd ed. (Stuttgart: United Bible Societies, 1975), p. 319 this reading is found in \mathfrak{P}^{75} \aleph B C* L syr^{s,pal} cop^{sa,bo} geo.

158. αἰνοῦντες τὸν θεόν. According to *ibid.*, p. 319 this reading is found in D it^{a,b,d,e,ff2,l,r1} Augustine.

159. αἰνοῦντες καὶ εὐλογοῦντες τὸν θεόν. According to *ibid.*, p. 319 this reading is found in A C² K W X Δ Θ Π Ψ 063 f¹ f¹³ 28 33 565 700 892 1009 1010 1071 1079 1195 1216 1230 1241 1242 1253 1344 1365 1546 1646 2148 2174 Byz Lect l^{185m} it^{aur}, c, f, q vg syr^{p,h} arm Diatessaron. The aeth has the two verbs the other way around. This would be in Greek: εὐλογοῦντες καὶ αἰνοῦντες τὸν θεόν.

160. et spiritui sancto b q vg^{mss}; see Nestle and Aland, *Novum Testamentum Graece*, p. 150.

possible example for deleting a phrase for doctrinal reasons is found in some manuscripts which do not have "and the son" in Mt 24:36.¹⁶¹

7. Addition of miscellaneous details. In some manuscripts details were added. For example a manuscript of a Syrian translation adds some names in the genealogy of Jesus in Mt 1:8 which can be found in 1 Chr 3:11-12 but which destroy the intended order of 14 generations of Matthew (Mt 1:17).¹⁶²

The practice of New Testament textual criticism.

Basic criteria for the evaluation of variant readings.

The most basic criterion : "... choose the reading which best explains the origin of the others."¹⁶³

The external evidence.

1. The date of the witness is important or, rather, the date of the type of text to which this witness belongs.
2. One should also look into the geographical distribution of the witnesses that agree in supporting a variant.

161. According to Aland and Metzger, *The Greek New Testament*, UBS these e.g. do not have it: \aleph^a K L W Δ Π f^d and others. While these have "and the son": \aleph^{*b} B D Θ f^{13} and others.

162. Sy^c according to Nestle and Aland, *Novum Testamentum Graece*, p. 1. See Metzger, *The Text of the New Testament*, p. 203.

163. *ibid.*, p. 207; this section is based on p. 207-211.

3. With regard to the genealogical relationship of texts and families of witnesses it has to be emphasized that witnesses should be weighed rather than counted.

The internal evidence involves two kinds of probabilities: transcriptional and intrinsic.

1. Transcriptional Probabilities depend upon considerations of palaeographical details and the habits of scribes.
 - (a) In general the more difficult reading is to be preferred because the scribe had the tendency to make easier what seemed difficult to him.
 - (b) In general the shorter reading is to be preferred. BUT this rule should not be followed:
 - i. if a homoioteleuton could be the cause of the shorter version,
 - ii. if the scribe dropped material as superfluous or awkward or going against pious faith, liturgical or ascetic practice.
 - (c) That reading is to be preferred which stands in verbal dissidence with the other because scribes had the tendency for harmonization of parallel texts.
 - (d) Scribes sometimes used:
 - i. to exchange an unfamiliar word with a familiar synonym,
 - ii. to make a grammatically less elegant expression more elegant according to atticistic tendencies,
 - iii. to insert pronouns, conjunctions or expletive words to make the text smoother.

2. Intrinsic Probabilities depend upon considerations of what the author was more likely to have written, taking into account:
 - (a) the style and vocabulary of the author throughout the book,
 - (b) the immediate context,
 - (c) harmony with the usage of the author elsewhere, and, in the Gospels:
 - (d) the Aramaic background of the teaching of Jesus,
 - (e) the priority of the Gospel according to Mark,¹⁶⁴
 - (f) the influence of the Christian community upon the formulation and transmission of the passage in question.

The process of evaluating variant readings.

Make a list of the different variant readings.¹⁶⁵

The external evidence has to be considered first.

1. Variant readings which have an early witness should be preferred.
2. If a reading is only attested by Byzantine (or "Koine") witnesses, then it is generally probably not original, because the Koine text is based on a recension of earlier text types.

164. This is what Metzger says. But good arguments can be brought in favor of a priority of the Gospel according to Matthew.

165. This section is based on Metzger, *The Text of the New Testament*, p. 211-219.

3. Koine or Byzantine witnesses:¹⁶⁶

- (a) Gospels: A E F G H K P S V W (in Mt and Lk 8:13-24:53) Π Ψ (partially in Luke and John) Ω and most minuscules.
- (b) Acts: H L P 049 and most minuscules.
- (c) Epistles: L 049 and most minuscules.
- (d) Revelation: 046 051 052 and most minuscules.

4. Western witnesses:

- (a) Gospels: D W (in Mk 1:1 to 5:30) 0171, the Old Latin, (syr^s and syr^c in part), early Latin Fathers, Tatian's Diatessaron.
- (b) Acts: \mathfrak{p}^{29} \mathfrak{p}^{38} \mathfrak{p}^{48} D E 383 614 1739 syr^{hmg} syr^{palms} cop^{G67} early Latin Fathers, Ephraem.
- (c) Epistles: the Greek-Latin bilinguals D F G, Greek Fathers to the end of the third century, Old Latin mss. and early Latin Fathers, Syrian Fathers to about A.D. 450.
- (d) For Revelation no specifically Western witnesses have been identified.

5. Caesarean witnesses

"The classification of Caesarean witnesses into pre-Caesarean and Caesarean proper has been most fully explored in

166. For the lists of the Alexandrian, Western, Caesarean and Byzantine witnesses we follow here Bruce Metzger, *A Textual Commentary on the Greek New Testament* (London, New York: United Bible Societies, 1975), 767 pp, p. xxix-xxx.

the text of the Gospel of Mark... Very little research has been undertaken in identifying the Caesarean text (if there is such a text) in the other books of the New Testament."¹⁶⁷

- (a) Pre-Caesarean: \mathfrak{P}^{45} W (in Mk 5:31 to 16:20) $\mathfrak{f}^1 \mathfrak{f}^{13}$ 28.
- (b) Caesarean proper: Θ 565 700 arm geo Origen (in part), Eusebius, Cyril-Jerusalem.

6. Alexandrian witnesses

- (a) Proto-Alexandrian: \mathfrak{P}^{45} (in Acts) $\mathfrak{P}^{46} \mathfrak{P}^{66} \mathfrak{P}^{75} \mathfrak{s}$ B Sahidic (in part), Clement of Alexandria, Origen (in part), and most of the papyrus fragments with Pauline text.
- (b) Later Alexandrian:
 - i. Gospels: (C)¹⁶⁸ L T W (in Lk 1:1 to 8:12 and John) (X) Z Δ (in Mark) Ξ Ψ (in Mark; partially in Luke and John) 33 579 892 1241 Bohairic.
 - ii. Acts: \mathfrak{P}^{50} A (C) Ψ 33 81 104 326.
 - iii. Pauline Epistles: A (C) H I Ψ 33 81 104 326 1739.
 - iv. Catholic Epistles: $\mathfrak{P}^{20} \mathfrak{P}^{23}$ A (C) Ψ 33 81 104 326 1739.
 - v. Revelation: A (C) 1006 1611 1854 2053 2344; less good: $\mathfrak{P}^{47} \mathfrak{s}$.

¹⁶⁷. *ibid.*, p. xxx.

¹⁶⁸. "In this list parentheses indicate that the text of the manuscript thus designated is mixed in character." *ibid.*, p. xxix.

Then the internal evidence is taken into account.

1. Which variant reading is more difficult, that is, more difficult for the scribe?
2. Knowing the development of Christian doctrine and cultus is important for evaluating some variant readings.
3. If a text from the synoptic gospels is under discussion, the parallel texts have to be looked at. Because of the tendency for harmonization the variant which is different from the parallel text is the more difficult reading.
4. In quotations from the Old Testament the LXX has to be consulted. The reading which deviates from the LXX is the more difficult one.
5. Is it possible that one of the variants can be traced back to a scribal error? Here a good knowledge of majuscules and minuscules is helpful.

Metzger gives a good summary of his special experience using the above given principles:

"In course of time the student will observe that generally the reading which is supported by a combination of Alexandrian and Western witnesses is superior to any other reading. There is, however, an exception to this observation; in the Pauline Epistles the combination of B D G is ordinarily not of great weight. The reason for this is that though B is purely Alexandrian in the Gospels, in the Pauline Epistles it has a certain Western element. Hence the combination of B plus one or more Western witnesses in Paul may mean only the addition of one Western witness to others of the same class. The combination of Western and Caesarean witnesses does not usually

possess exceptional weight, for the Caesarean text was probably formed from a base which had Western affiliations."¹⁶⁹

169. Metzger, *The Text of the New Testament*, p. 218.

Chapter 2

Theology - One God Revealed in Three Persons

2.1 The Oneness of God

The fact that God is one according to the Bible is found in the Old Testament as well as in the New. It is one of the core truths of the teaching of the Bible.

2.1.1 In the Old Testament

In the Torah

The idea of the oneness of God is part of the covenant of Ex 19-24 and of the covenant in Deuteronomy. It is also related to the teaching that God has created the heavens and the earth and all what is in them (Gn 1:1 and 2:1-3):

1:1 In the beginning, God created the heavens and
the earth... 2:1 Thus the heavens and the earth were

finished, and all the host of them.¹ 2 And on the seventh day God finished his work that he had done, and he rested on the seventh day from all his work that he had done. 3 So God blessed the seventh day and made it holy, because on it God rested from all his work that he had done in creation.

Gn 1:1 states that God created the heavens and the earth, 2:1-3 adds the insight that he also created "all the host of them", meaning all the creatures and created things which belong to the heavens and to the earth. This implies the idea that there is nothing which exists, which has not been created by him. He is the creator of everything, therefore the Lord of everything and the God above all. Within Gn 1:1-2:3 time appears as part of creation. It is a created entity. The counting of the days starts with God creating and so having set the beginning. Time is part of the created cosmos, but God himself is eternal. He was before he set the beginning and he will be forever. Therefore Gn 1:1-2:3 teaches God as the only God and the eternal God related to the fact that he is the creator of everything. And we should keep in mind that this is the beginning of the Torah, the Old Testament and the Christian Bible. It is the foundation for the Jewish-Christian way to look at the world and at everything.

In a similar way Ex 20:2-3 teaches God as the only God related to the fact that he is the liberator of Israel out of the slavery of Egypt:

2 I am the LORD your God, who brought you out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of slavery. 3 You shall have no other gods before me.²

1. וְכֹל הַשָּׁמַיִם וְהָאָרֶץ וְכָל-צָבָאָם

2. לֹא יִהְיֶה-לְךָ אֱלֹהִים אֲחֵרִים עַל-פָּנַי

Within the context of the book of Exodus this not point to monolatry³ but to monotheism.⁴ The covenant of mount Sinai in Ex 19-24 builds upon Ex 1-18 as the foundation where God liberated Israel from Egypt and brought them to mount Sinai. God had raised Moses and sent him with the power of the divine name to implement the ten plagues to force the superpower Egypt into submission. The ten plagues convey messages about God and his special relationship with Israel (7:17):

Thus says the LORD, “By this you shall know that I am the LORD: behold, with the staff that is in my hand I will strike the water that is in the Nile, and it shall turn into blood.

Pharaoh has to give the time for being freed from the plagues of the frogs (8:10):

And he said, “Tomorrow.” Moses said, “Be it as you say, so that you may know that there is no one like the LORD our God.

Swarms of flies only hit the Egyptians, but not the area of the Israelites to convey the message that the Lord in the midst of the earth has Israel as his special people (8:22-23):

22 But on that day I will set apart the land of Goshen, where my people dwell, so that no swarms of flies shall be there, that you may know that I am the LORD

3. Exodus would preach monolatry if Israel was only to worship one God their liberator, but would not exclude the existence of other Gods.

4. Monotheism means belief in the existence of only one God. All other gods do not really exist.

in the midst of the earth. 23 Thus I will put a division between my people and your people. Tomorrow this sign shall happen.

In the text announcing the plague of hail we find God revealing himself as unique, having all power over the governments of the earth including Egypt, because he has raised Pharaoh to power so that the Lord's name will become famous to all mankind when God shows his power over Pharaoh (9:14-16):

14 For this time I will send all my plagues on you yourself, and on your servants and your people, so that you may know that there is none like me in all the earth. 15 For by now I could have put out my hand and struck you and your people with pestilence, and you would have been cut off from the earth. 16 But for this purpose I have raised you up, to show you my power, so that my name may be proclaimed in all the earth.

The way the plague of hail is stopped shows that the God of Israel is owner of the earth and Lord over it (9:29):

Moses said to him, "As soon as I have gone out of the city, I will stretch out my hands to the LORD. The thunder will cease, and there will be no more hail, so that you may know that the earth is the LORD's."

In the introduction of the eighth plague of the locusts (10:1-2) God reveals his plan that the history of the plagues and the liberation of Egypt would be a story glorifying God to be told from generation to generation:

1 Then the LORD said to Moses, “Go in to Pharaoh, for I have hardened his heart and the heart of his servants, that I may show these signs of mine among them, 2 and that you may tell in the hearing of your son and of your grandson how I have dealt harshly with the Egyptians and what signs I have done among them, that you may know that I am the LORD.”

God's power over heaven became evident in the ninth plague where God switched the lights off (10:21-23):

21 Then the LORD said to Moses, “Stretch out your hand toward heaven, that there may be darkness over the land of Egypt, a darkness to be felt.” 22 So Moses stretched out his hand toward heaven, and there was pitch darkness in all the land of Egypt three days. 23 They did not see one another, nor did anyone rise from his place for three days, but all the people of Israel had light where they lived.

In the introduction of the last plague God puts an emphasis on Israel as a special nation for himself (11:6-7):

6 There shall be a great cry throughout all the land of Egypt, such as there has never been, nor ever will be again. 7 But not a dog shall growl against any of the people of Israel, either man or beast, that you may know that the LORD makes a distinction between Egypt and Israel.

The climax of the ten plagues is of course this last plague where we learn what purpose the plagues had (Ex 12:11-13):

11 In this manner you shall eat it: with your belt fastened, your sandals on your feet, and your staff in your hand. And you shall eat it in haste. It is the LORD's Passover. 12 For I will pass through the land of Egypt that night, and I will strike all the firstborn in the land of Egypt, both man and beast; and on all the gods of Egypt I will execute judgments: I am the LORD.⁵ 13 The blood shall be a sign for you, on the houses where you are. And when I see the blood, I will pass over you, and no plague will befall you to destroy you, when I strike the land of Egypt.

The fact that God executes "judgments" on all the gods of Egypt shows him to be superior and a judge over those "gods". They will not be able to protect the Egyptians; they stand condemned as useless and powerless. Such ideas were implied in the plagues one to nine as well, but here it is put into words.

In this way the plagues give the summarized message that the Lord, the God of Israel, is the true owner of heaven and earth with no one like him, the ruler over all nations of the earth and the supreme God and judge over all perceived deities in this world which are useless and powerless.

Ex 1-18 as a section leading up to the making of the covenant in Ex 19-24 shows us that Ex 20:2-3 has to be understood as the teaching that there is only one God and no real other god can be besides him, and the sabbath commandment in the ten commandments implies the same teaching (20:8-11)

8 "Remember the Sabbath day, to keep it holy.

9 Six days you shall labor, and do all your work, 10

5. וּבְכָל-אֱלֹהֵי מִצְרַיִם אֲעֲשֶׂה שְׁפָטִים אֲנִי יְהוָה:

but the seventh day is a Sabbath to the LORD your God. On it you shall not do any work, you, or your son, or your daughter, your male servant, or your female servant, or your livestock, or the sojourner who is within your gates. 11 For in six days the LORD made heaven and earth, the sea, and all that is in them,⁶ and rested the seventh day. Therefore the LORD blessed the Sabbath day and made it holy.

The first link of Ex 20:8-11 within the Pentateuch is of course Gn 2:1-3. In the first sentence of the ten commandments the Lord presents himself as God and liberator of Israel from the slavery in Egypt. But he is identical with the creator of the heavens and the earth and the sea and "all that is in them". The Sabbath day is his holy day of rest. The Sabbath day is the most frequent feast of Israel and proclaims God as creator of everything in heaven, on earth and in the sea. There is no room for any other god to be equal to him. Everything is his creation. He is unique and as creator is Lord of all. This is the strictest monotheism thinkable. The ten commandments are the summary and the core of God's covenant with Israel from mount Sinai. And in the heart of it God the creator is one and he is the God of Israel.

We find very similar ideas to what we have seen in Exodus in the book of Deuteronomy. Before repeating the ten commandments Moses draws a line from creation to the liberation of Israel out of Egypt as a proof that the Lord, the God of Israel is one and unique, there is no other (Dt 4:32-39):

32 "For ask now of the days that are past, which were before you, since the day that God created man

6. כִּי שֵׁשֶׁת־יָמִים עָשָׂה יְהוָה אֶת־הַשָּׁמַיִם וְאֶת־הָאָרֶץ אֶת־הַיָּם וְאֶת־כָּל־אֲשֶׁר־בָּם.

on the earth, and ask from one end of heaven to the other, whether such a great thing as this has ever happened or was ever heard of. 33 Did any people ever hear the voice of a god speaking out of the midst of the fire, as you have heard, and still live? 34 Or has any god ever attempted to go and take a nation for himself from the midst of another nation, by trials, by signs, by wonders, and by war, by a mighty hand and an outstretched arm, and by great deeds of terror, all of which the LORD your God did for you in Egypt before your eyes? 35 To you it was shown, that you might know that the LORD is God; there is no other besides him. 36 Out of heaven he let you hear his voice, that he might discipline you. And on earth he let you see his great fire, and you heard his words out of the midst of the fire. 37 And because he loved your fathers and chose their offspring after them and brought you out of Egypt with his own presence, by his great power, 38 driving out before you nations greater and mightier than yourselves, to bring you in, to give you their land for an inheritance, as it is this day, 39 know therefore today, and lay it to your heart, that the LORD is God in heaven above and on the earth beneath; there is no other.

Within the ten commandments Dt 5:6-7 repeats Ex 20:2-3. In the next chapter we find a very famous text about God's oneness in 6:4-5:

4 "Hear, O Israel: The LORD our God, the LORD

is one. ⁷ 5 You shall love the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your might.

Because the Lord is one, the believers in Israel should love him with all their heart and soul and might. If there were two or more gods, they would have to divide their love and attention to the different gods, never knowing whether some neglected god might punish them. But the good news is that the Lord has proven himself to be unique, without equal, and one. At the same time he has made a covenant with Israel to be their God. What grace! This is the good news they have to teach their children all the time (Dt 6:6-9). They should love God wholeheartedly from generation to generation and avoid idolatry. It is a core truth of the Old Testament and so of the Christian Bible which is repeated to admonish them in later verses of the book (Dt 10:12; 11:28).

In the Prophets and Writings

This teaching of the oneness of God is taken up in the Prophets and the Writings. In his famous Psalm after he had been delivered from all his enemies David praises God (2 Sm 22:32⁸; Ps 18:31⁹):

“For who is God, but the LORD?
And who is a rock, except our God?

When Solomon blessed the nation of Israel after his prayer at the dedication of the newly built temple he used these words (1 Kgs 8:59-60):

7. שְׁמַע יִשְׂרָאֵל יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵינוּ | יְהוָה אֶחָד:
8. כִּי מִי־אֵל מִבְּלַעַד יְהוָה וְכִי צוּר מִבְּלַעַד אֱלֹהֵינוּ:
9. כִּי מִי אֱלֹהִים מִבְּלַעַד יְהוָה וְכִי צוּר זִוְלָתִי אֱלֹהֵינוּ:

59 Let these words of mine, with which I have pleaded before the LORD, be near to the LORD our God day and night, and may he maintain the cause of his servant and the cause of his people Israel, as each day requires, 60 that all the peoples of the earth may know that the LORD is God; there is no other.¹⁰

In Joel 2:27 God promises that Israel will recognize "that I am the LORD your God and there is none else."¹¹ When Hezekiah receives the blasphemous letter of Sennacherib he prays to God (Is 37:16.20):

16 "O LORD of hosts, God of Israel, who is enthroned above the cherubim, you are the God, you alone, of all the kingdoms of the earth;¹² you have made heaven and earth... 20 So now, O LORD our God, save us from his hand, that all the kingdoms of the earth may know that you alone are the LORD."¹³

The other version of Hezekiah's prayer in 2 Kgs 19:15.19 is similar. There is a small difference at the end of 19:19: "... that all the kingdoms of the earth may know that you, O LORD, are God alone."¹⁴ Both versions can be understood as stating the same: If there is only one God and the name of this God is "Lord", then to say "you alone are the Lord" and "you are God alone" has the same meaning. The prophet Isaiah has a very strong emphasis on the Lord being the only true God in contrast to the useless idols of the

10. לְמַעַן יֵדַעַת כָּל־עַמֵּי הָאָרֶץ כִּי יְהוָה הוּא הָאֱלֹהִים אִין עוֹד:

11. וְאֵנִי יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵיכֶם וְאִין עוֹד

12. אַתָּה־הוּא הָאֱלֹהִים לְבַדְּךָ לְכָל מַמְלָכוֹת הָאָרֶץ

13. וַיִּדְעוּ כָל־מַמְלָכוֹת הָאָרֶץ כִּי־אַתָּה יְהוָה לְבַדְּךָ:

14. כִּי אַתָּה יְהוָה אֱלֹהִים לְבַדְּךָ:

nations (Is 43:10-13; 44:6-9; 45:5-7; 45:14-18; 45:20-22; 46:8-10). Let us hear the section where this is combined with an invitation for all nations to be saved (45:20-22):

20 Assemble yourselves and come;
draw near together,
you survivors of the nations!
They have no knowledge
who carry about their wooden idols,
and keep on praying to a god that cannot save.
21 Declare and present your case;
let them take counsel together!
Who told this long ago? Who declared it of old?
Was it not I, the LORD?
And there is no other god besides me,¹⁵
a righteous God and a Savior;
there is none besides me.¹⁶
22 Turn to me and be saved,
all the ends of the earth!
For I am God, and there is no other.¹⁷

In the next verses we have God's solemn oath that all knees will bow to him and all tongues will confess him as the source of righteousness and strength (Is 45:23-25).

In Jer 10:1-16 we have an emphasis which is very like these sections of Isaiah. It is interesting that within this Hebrew section we have one verse in Aramaic which was the most common language in the middle east of that time (Jer 10:11):

15. וְאִין עֹד אֱלֹהִים מִבִּלְעָדִי

16. אִין זִוְלָתִי:

17. כִּי אֲנִי־אֵל וְאִין עֹד:

Thus shall you say to them: “The gods who did not make the heavens and the earth shall perish from the earth and from under the heavens.”

The result of course would be that only the one and true God is left who has created the heavens and the earth. He is proclaimed as king and creator in the verses before and after this Aramaic proclamation to the world (Jer 10:10.12-13).

The day of the Lord at the end of time is the subject of Zec 14. The great result of God's coming and battle on that day is Zec 14:9:

And the LORD will be king over all the earth. On that day the LORD will be one and his name one.¹⁸

2.1.2 In the New Testament

The belief that there is only one God is also a core truth in the New Testament. When Jesus was asked about the most important commandment of God, he answered in Mk 12:29-30:

The most important is, ‘Hear, O Israel: The Lord our God, the Lord is one.’¹⁹ 30 And you shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind and with all your strength.’²⁰ 31 The second is this: ‘You shall love your neighbor as yourself.’ There is no other commandment greater than these.

18. יהיה יהוה למלך על-כל-הארץ ביום ההוא יהיה יהוה אחד ושמו אחד.

19. Ἀκουε, Ἰσραήλ, κύριος ὁ θεὸς ἡμῶν κύριος εἷς ἐστίν

20. The parallel texts in Mt 22:37 and Lk 10:27 speak of the commandment to love God with all your heart etc., but they do not introduce it with the oneness of God like Mark does. All three texts of course go back to Dt 6:4-5.

When the scribe who had asked Jesus the question agreed and confirmed the answer of Jesus in an understanding way (12:32-33), Jesus told him that he was not far from the kingdom of God (12:34). This underlines the importance of this truth that God is one, combined with loving him from our whole hearts. A person who has this truth is not far from God's kingdom.

When Jesus was tempted by the devil to worship him, he answered (Mt 4:10):

Be gone, Satan! For it is written, "You shall worship the Lord your God and him only shall you serve."²¹

The quote is probably from Dt 6:13 and the "only" is supplied according to the meaning from the context in Dt 6:4-5. Dt 6 teaches, of course, that there is only one God. So if you have to worship him, you can not divide your heart to worship someone else as well. The parallel in Lk 4:8 has the same teaching. So far we have seen that all synoptic gospels incorporate the Old Testament teaching of the oneness of God. The same is true for John (5:44):

How can you believe, when you receive glory from one another and do not seek the glory that comes from the only God?²²

This statement of Jesus implies that to believe in the one and only God also means to seek glory from God and not from other human beings. Any person who is honor-oriented towards men, can not trust God the way he should. This shows that the faith in the one

21. Κύριον τὸν θεόν σου προσκυνήσεις καὶ αὐτῷ μόνῳ λατρεύσεις. This quoted Greek text from Mt 4:10 is the same in Lk 4:8.

22. πῶς δύνασθε ὑμεῖς πιστεῦσαι, δόξαν παρ ἀλλήλων λαμβάνοντες, καὶ τὴν δόξαν τὴν παρὰ τοῦ μόνου θεοῦ οὐ ζητεῖτε;

and only God is crucial for the saving and live-giving faith as stated in the Gospel of John. John 17:3 points in this same direction:

And this is eternal life, that they know you the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom you have sent.²³

To have real faith according to John 5:44 means to trust the one and only God and seek honor from him. According to John 17:3 to have real and eternal life means to know this same one and only God and to know Jesus Christ. When we reflect on the purpose of the book of John which is to generate life-giving faith (John 20:31), we understand how crucial the faith in the one and only God is for the whole book. When the Jews in their discussion with Jesus claimed, "We have one Father—even God" (John 8:41), they, of course, presupposed the oneness of God as well.

Paul points frequently in his letters to the oneness of God (Rom 3:30; 1 Cor 8:4-6; Gal 3:20; Eph 4:6; 1 Tm 1:17; 1 Tm 2:5). His use of God's oneness is very interesting. In Rom 3:29-30 God is the Savior of the Jews and the Gentiles alike through faith in Christ because there is only one God:

Or is God the God of Jews only? Is he not the God of Gentiles also? Yes, of Gentiles also, 30 since God is one. He will justify the circumcised by faith and the uncircumcised through faith.²⁴

In 1 Cor 8:4-6 Paul introduces the oneness of God into the discussion of the food offered to idols:

23. αὕτη δέ ἐστιν ἡ αἰώνιος ζωὴ ἵνα γινώσκωσι σὲ τὸν μόνον ἀληθινὸν θεὸν καὶ ὃν ἀπέστειλας Ἰησοῦν Χριστόν.

24. εἴπερ εἷς ὁ θεός, ὃς δικαιώσει περιτομὴν ἐκ πίστεως καὶ ἀκροβυστίαν διὰ τῆς πίστεως.

4 Therefore, as to the eating of food offered to idols, we know that “an idol has no real existence,” and that “there is no God but one.”²⁵ 5 For although there may be so-called gods in heaven or on earth—as indeed there are many “gods” and many “lords”—6 yet for us there is one God, the Father, from whom are all things and for whom we exist, and one Lord, Jesus Christ, through whom are all things and through whom we exist.²⁶

The idea here is that idols have no existence of their own, because there is only one real God who has created everything. In Gal 3:19-20 Paul speaks of the law which had been given through a plurality of angels and one mediator (Moses) and because of sins until the offspring should come to whom the special promise had been made (Christ). Paul states (3:19 according to ESV; 3:20, translation Lanz):

19 Why then the law? It was added because of transgressions, until the offspring should come to whom the promise had been made, and it was put in place through angels by an intermediary. 20 But the mediator is not a mediator of one, but God is one.²⁷

I understand the mediator to be Moses. The cryptic phrase that Moses was not a "mediator of one" I take in the context of Paul's

25. καὶ ὅτι οὐδεὶς θεὸς εἰ μὴ εἷς.

26. ἀλλ' ἡμῖν εἷς θεὸς ὁ πατήρ, ἐκ οὗ τὰ ἴνα καὶ ὑμεῖς εἰ αὐτῷ, καὶ εἷς κύριος Ἰησοῦν Χριστόν, διὰ οὗ τὰ ἴνα καὶ ὑμεῖς διὰ αὐτοῦ.

27. 19 Τὰ οὐ ὁ νόμος; τῆς παραβάτην Κύριον προσετέθη, ἄχρις οὗ ἔθνη τὸ σπέρμα πῶς ἐπήγγελται, διαταγείς διὰ ἀλλήλων ἐκ χειρὶ μεσίτου• 20 ὁ δὲ μεσίτου θεὸς οὐ ἔστιν, ὁ δὲ θεὸς εἷς ἔστιν.

statement that the law "was put in place through angels by an intermediary". Of course, God was the giver of the covenant and the law, but he used angels to put the law into place and that through the mediator Moses. And because Moses received much of God's word through a plurality of angels, in spite of the fact that it was the word of the one and only God, still Moses had to deal with more than one person and was mediator not of only one, but God is one. In contrast to this, when Christ, the offspring of Abraham came "to whom the promise had been made", it became clear that he was God incarnate and his being mediator was of quite another quality (1 Tm 2:3-6):

3 This is good, and it is pleasing in the sight of God
our Savior, 4 who desires all people to be saved and
to come to the knowledge of the truth. 5 For there is
one God, and there is one mediator between God and
men, the man Christ Jesus,²⁸ 6 who gave himself as
a ransom for all, which is the testimony given at the
proper time.

In both texts Paul uses the same word "mediator" for Moses in Gal 3:19-20 and for Christ in 1 Tm 2:5, but the big difference is that now the time of the promised offspring had come and the New Covenant is there which is superior to the Old Covenant. Salvation history had progressed, Christ the God-man had come, given himself up as the true and eternally valid sacrifice and laid the foundation for the potential salvation of all mankind. Christ in his person as man and God is the perfect mediator without any angels in between. In the

28. εἷς γὰρ θεός, εἷς καὶ μεσίτου θεοῦ καὶ ἀνθρώπων ἄνθρωπος Χριστόν Ἰησοῦν

same letter Paul sums up the Gospel and then gives praise to the one and only God who gave it to us (1 Tm 1:15-17):

15 The saying is trustworthy and deserving of full acceptance, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners, of whom I am the foremost. 16 But I received mercy for this reason, that in me, as the foremost, Jesus Christ might display his perfect patience as an example to those who were to believe in him for eternal life. 17 To the King of ages, immortal, invisible, the only God, be honor and glory forever and ever. Amen.²⁹

Paul admonishes the Ephesians "to maintain the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace" (Eph 4:3) and then points to the good reasons why all Christians should be one (Eph 4:4-6):

4 There is one body and one Spirit—just as you were called to the one hope that belongs to your call—
5 one Lord, one faith, one baptism, 6 one God and Father of all, who is over all and through all and in all.³⁰

This text presents the oneness of God as one of the core Christian beliefs which are essential to the unity of the world wide church.

James refers to the oneness of God as a core belief (2:19) in the context of his emphasis that true faith must have an impact on one's life visible in works of faith (2:18-21):

29. τῆς δὲ βασιλεῖ τῆς αἰώνιος, ἀφθάρτω, ἀφθάρτω, μόνῳ θεοῦ, μὴ καὶ δόξαν εἰ τοῦ αἰώνιος τῆς αἰώνιος· ἀμήν.

30. εἶς θεὸς καὶ πατὴρ πάντων, ὁ ἐκ πάντων καὶ διὰ πάντων καὶ ἐκ ποιῶσιν.

18 But someone will say, “You have faith and I have works.” Show me your faith apart from your works, and I will show you my faith by my works. 19 You believe that God is one; you do well. Even the demons believe—and shudder!³¹ 20 Do you want to be shown, you foolish person, that faith apart from works is useless? 21 Was not Abraham our father justified by works when he offered up his son Isaac on the altar?

Jude concludes his short epistle with a praise of the only God and our Savior (Jude 1:24-25):

24 Now to him who is able to keep you from stumbling and to present you blameless before the presence of his glory with great joy, 25 to the only God, our Savior, through Jesus Christ our Lord,³² be glory, majesty, dominion, and authority, before all time and now and forever. Amen.

The oneness of God is sometimes also touched indirectly in the New Testament when God is presented as the one and only who can do something or has a certain quality no one else has. He alone can forgive sins (Mk 2:7). He alone is good in an absolute sense (Mk 10:18; Lk 18:19). He alone is worthy to be served in an absolute way. When somebody wants to serve God he must serve him only and can not serve another master in addition to God, for example he can not serve his own wealth and money in addition to serving

31. σὺ πιστεύεις ὅτι εἷς ἐστὶν ὁ θεός ; κανὼν οἷς• καὶ τὰ δαιμόνια πιστεύουσιν καὶ φρίσσουσιν.

32. μόνῳ θεοῦ σωτῆρι ἡμῶν διὰ Ἰησοῦν Χριστόν τοῦ κυρίου ἡμῶν

God (Mt 6:24; Lk 16:13). In Rom 16:27 God alone is wise in an absolute sense as glory is given "to the only wise God".³³

2.2 The Trinity

The doctrine of the Trinity is one of the core beliefs of the Bible and of mainstream historical Christianity. During the first five centuries of church history the greatest minds of the Christian Church have struggled to understand and present to the church the teachings of the Old and New Testament about God the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit. At the heart of this struggle lies the greatest miracle of all times, the incarnation of God in the person of Jesus Christ who was conceived by the Holy Spirit and born of the virgin Mary. On the one hand this has grown historically to a very sophisticated doctrine of the Holy Trinity, on the other hand the core elements of this creed can be presented in very simple sentences. As Wayne Grudem has put it so ably:

Three Statements Summarize the Biblical Teaching ...

1. God is three persons.
2. Each person is fully God.
3. There is one God.³⁴

While we enter into the discussion of this important subject we will start with the Old Testament, progress to the New and then have a look at the historical development in the early church after that.

33. μόνῳ σοφῷ θεοῦ διὰ Ἰησοῦν Χριστόν πῶς ἡ δόξαν εἰ τοῦ αἰώνιος ἀμίν. The Greek here is given according to Aland and Metzger, The Greek New Testament, UBS.

34. Wayne A. Grudem, Systematic Theology. An Introduction to Biblical Doctrine (Leicester: Inter Varsity Press, 2005), p. 231.

2.2.1 In the Old Testament

Within the course of progressive revelation history the clearest and most important texts in support of this doctrine are found within the pages of the New Testament. But as is the case with many of the different subjects of revelation history certain texts and statements within the Old Testament can be found that are like seeds preparing the way for the growth of later revelation history.

Hints towards a plurality of persons

In certain texts within the Old Testament there seem to be hints towards a plurality of persons within the Godhead. We learn about the creation of man in Gn 1:26-27:

26 Then God said, "Let us make man in our image, after our likeness. And let them have dominion over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the heavens and over the livestock and over all the earth and over every creeping thing that creeps on the earth." 27 So God created man in his own image, in the image of God he created him; male and female he created them.

In Gn 1:26 God speaks in the first person plural ("Let us make man in our image, after our likeness.") about the creation of man in the image of God. In Gn 1:27 when man is actually created the third person singular is used to tell the reader that man was created in God's image. How is this plural to be understood? In the Hebrew Grammar of Gesenius and Kautzsch we find this interesting explanation:³⁵

35. W. Gesenius, Kautzsch E., and A. E. Cowley, Hebrew Grammar, 2nd ed. (Oxford, 1976), §124 g, note 2.

The Jewish grammarians call such plurals רבוי הפחות *plur. virium* or *virtutum*; later grammarians call them *plur. excellentiae, magnitudinis*, or *plur. maiestaticus*. This last name may have been suggested by the *we* used by kings when speaking of themselves (cf. already 1 Macc. 10¹⁹, 11³¹); and the plural used by God in Gn 1²⁶, 11⁷, Is 6⁸ has been incorrectly explained in this way. It is, however, either *communicative* (including the attendant angels; so at all events in Is 6⁸, cf. also Gn 3²²), or according to others, an indication of *the fullness of power and might* implied in אלהים (see Dillmann on Gn 1²⁶); but it is best explained as a plural of *self-deliberation*. The use of the plural as a form of respectful address is quite foreign to Hebrew.

It is remarkable that here the plural of majesty is rejected. I do not think that it can be communicative in Gn 1:26. It cannot include the angels in the *we* because nowhere in the Bible men are said to have been created in the image of the angels. The special honor of man is that he has been created in the image of God. And if it clearly cannot be communicative in Gn 1:26, then some other sense must be understood and the same understanding might be the right one for Gn 3:22 and 11:7 which belong to the same wider context of Gn 1-11. It could be communicative in Is 6, but if some other and better understanding is found for the instances in Gn 1-11, then the same could be applied in Is 6:8. The favored understanding of the above quoted famous grammar book is the plural of self-deliberation. Let us see whether this fits Gn 3:22-23:

Then the Lord God said, "Behold, the man has

become like one of us in knowing good and evil.³⁶
 Now, lest he reach out his hand and take also of the tree of life and eat, and live forever—” 23 therefore the Lord God sent him out from the garden of Eden to work the ground from which he was taken.

The phrase "like one of us" puts the speaker in a group of plurality and exceeds the limits of a plural of self-deliberation. This plural used by God himself speaking is the first such plural after Gn 1:26. This puts both speeches of God into a closed context. In Gn 1:26 it was not really possible to include the angels as those talked to. Here, I think, the wording "like one of us" is against a plural of self-deliberation. The result is that from the start of the Bible there are certain "hints", not more than that, but still hints towards a plurality within the Godhead.³⁷ If that is accepted Gn 11:7 can be understood in a similar way because all three examples are found in the same context of the primeval history of Gn 1-11:

Come, let us go down and there confuse their language,³⁸ so that they may not understand one another's speech.

With regard to Is 6:8, it is noteworthy that this would not be the only hint within the book of Isaiah towards a plurality in the Godhead:

36. הֵן הָאָדָם הָיָה בְּאַחַד מִמֶּנּוּ לְדַעַת טוֹב וָרָע.

37. So with Grudem, *Systematic Theology. An Introduction to Biblical Doctrine*, p. 227. On the same page Grudem states in footnote 2 about the Jewish understanding of Gn 1:26: "My own extensive search of subsequent Jewish interpretation in the Babylonian Talmud, the targumim and the midrashim showed only that later Rabbinic interpreters were unable to reach agreement on any satisfactory interpretation of this passage, although the 'plural of majesty' and 'God speaking to angels' interpretations were commonly suggested."

38. הָבָה נִרְדָּה וְנִבְלָה שָׁם שְׂפָתֵם.

And I heard the voice of the Lord saying, "Whom shall I send, and who will go for us?"³⁹ Then I said, "Here am I! Send me."

The case of Is 6:8 within its context resembles the situation in Gn 1-11. Is 6:8 is part of the chapter which begins the narrative block of Is 6-8 with the sequence of prophecies in Is 9-12. Within this context you have a series of oracles⁴⁰ which can be understood as Messianic, pointing even to a divine Messiah in Isaiah (see subsection 4.1.3).

If it is correct that the Messiah who is called "Mighty God" in Is 9:6 is identified with the "mighty God" to which the Israelites will turn in repentance in Is 10:21, then we have a divine Messiah in Isaiah. If we have a divine Messiah prophesied in Isaiah 9-10, then we can use this information to understand the plural in Is 6:8.

"The Angel of the Lord" can sometimes point to a revelation of the divinity. But this is not always the case because even human beings can be called literally the "angel of the Lord" with the same Hebrew words which are usually translated as "the angel of the Lord": The Levitic priests are called "the messenger of the Lord of hosts" in Mal 2:7.⁴¹ Haggai is also called "the messenger of the Lord" in Haggai 1:13.⁴² But there are certain sections where the context shows that the meeting with "the angel of the Lord" is understood as an encounter with the living God (Gn 16:13; Ex 3:2-6; Nm 22:35.38; Jgs 6:11.14. In Ex 23:20-22 the "name" of God is in

39. אֶת־מִי אֲשַׁלַּח וּמִי יֵלֶךְ־לָנוּ.

40. Is 7:14; 8:8-10; 9:6-7; 10:20-21; 11:1-10. See also in the same book: 42:1-12; 49:1-13; 50:4-11; 52:13-53:12; 55:3-4; 61:1-3.

41. כִּי מַלְאָךְ יְהוָה־עֲבָדוֹת הוּא.

42. מַלְאָךְ יְהוָה.

the angel of the Lord.

There is another text in the Old Testament which is quite important for the development of trinitarian teaching and this is Proverbs 8:22-31, especially the personification of wisdom in this passage.

22 The Lord possessed me at the beginning of his
work, the first of his acts of old.⁴³

23 Ages ago I was set up,
at the first, before the beginning of the earth.

24 When there were no depths I was brought forth,
when there were no springs abounding with water.

25 Before the mountains had been shaped,
before the hills, I was brought forth,

26 before he had made the earth with its fields,
or the first of the dust of the world.

27 When he established the heavens, I was there;
when he drew a circle on the face of the deep,

28 when he made firm the skies above,
when he established the fountains of the deep,

29 when he assigned to the sea its limit,
so that the waters might not transgress his command,

when he marked out the foundations of the earth,
30 then I was beside him, like a master workman,

and I was daily his delight,
rejoicing before him always,

31 rejoicing in his inhabited world
and delighting in the children of man.

The verb in the idiom "The Lord possessed me" is used in Gn 4:1 of the joy of Eve who gave birth to Cain and said: "I have gotten

43. יהוה קנני ראשית דרכו קדם מפעליו מאז.

a man with the help of the Lord.”⁴⁴ So it is possible to understand it in the context of a parent getting a son. The similarity of the personification of wisdom in Prv 8:22-31 with certain aspects of the characteristics of the Lögös, the Word, in John 1:1-18 has led to an early combination of the two texts in trinitarian and christological discussions in church history. It is clear in Proverbs 8 that God must have had his wisdom first, before he created the world and all of the things of the world, because he did it all wonderfully and with great skill. The same is true for the Lögös in John 1:1-18 which is identified with the Son of God, Jesus Christ. In the beginning God created everything through the power of his Word as Genesis 1 shows us.

God as Father

Within the Old Testament God has revealed himself as Father right from the beginning. In order to free Israel from the slavery in Egypt Moses had to tell Pharaoh (Ex 4:22-23):

22 Then you shall say to Pharaoh, ‘Thus says the Lord, Israel is my firstborn son, 23 and I say to you, “Let my son go that he may serve me.” If you refuse to let him go, behold, I will kill your firstborn son.”’

The idea that God is the Father of Israel is then repeated throughout the Old Testament (e.g. Dt 14:1; Ps 73:15; Is 64:8; Mal 1:6). The Old Testament teaching about God as Father of Israel "from of old" is reflected very well in Is 63:16:

For you are our Father,
though Abraham does not know us,

44. קִנֵּיתִי אִישׁ אֶת־יְהוָה:

and Israel does not acknowledge us;
you, O Lord, are our Father,
our Redeemer from of old is your name.

The Messiah as Son of God

God's covenant with David (2 Sm 23:1.5; 7:11-16) implied that God would also be the Father of the Son of David who would be the "anointed" (= Hebrew: Messiah, Greek: Christos) king on the throne (2 Sm 7:14-15):

14 I will be to him a father, and he shall be to me a son. When he commits iniquity, I will discipline him with the rod of men, with the stripes of the sons of men, 15 but my steadfast love will not depart from him, as I took it from Saul, whom I put away from before you. 16 And your house and your kingdom shall be made sure forever before me. Your throne shall be established forever.

The Son of David and king in Jerusalem would be an adopted Son of God. This covenant of God is based on grace and even overcoming the possible future sins of the Sons of David from generation to generation. This is the reason that David's throne shall be established forever.

When later prophets pointed back to these promises of God to David, they prophesied, guided by the Holy Spirit, a future coming Son of David who would bring salvation and forgiveness of sins to Judah and Israel (Jer 23:5-6; Zec 3:8-9; 9:9-11; 12:10-13:1; Is 42:1-7; 53:4-6; 55:1-5). This future Son of David would be himself without sin (Is 53:9), building his kingdom on total and perfect

righteousness and thus ruling the whole world forever in peace (Is 9:6-7; 11:3-10).

Within the wisdom literature of the Old Testament Proverbs 30:4 points also to the mystery of the identity of the "Son of God". For further discussion of the Messiah or Christ as God see the subject of Christology (chapter 4).

The Holy Spirit as God

When God accuses Israel of sinning because they carry out plans without God and make alliances, "but not of my Spirit" (Is 30:1), it is clear that the phrases "without God" and "not of my Spirit" are placed in a synonymous parallelism: The Spirit of God is divine, is God himself. The same is true when God says in Is 31:3:

"The Egyptians are man, and not God, and their
horses are flesh, and not spirit.

Again "God" and "Spirit" are put in a synonymous parallelism and identified. The Spirit of God is God. For further discussion of the Holy Spirit as God see the subject of Pneumatology (chapter 6).

2.2.2 In the New Testament

God is three persons.

Trinitarian statements can be found in different places in the New Testament. The three persons of the Trinity can be seen in Mt 3:16-17:

16 And when Jesus was baptized, immediately he
went up from the water, and behold, the heavens were

opened to him, and he saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove and coming to rest on him; 17 and behold, a voice from heaven said, "This is my beloved Son, with whom I am well pleased."

The descent of the Spirit of God on Jesus shows him to be the Messiah (cf. John 1:32-33). Here Jesus is anointed with the Holy Spirit (Acts 10:38). The voice of God the Father from heaven also affirms Jesus as the Messiah from Ps 2:7 and the servant of the Lord from Is 42:1. All persons of the Trinity are involved and every person appears separately. At the end of the same Gospel of Matthew Jesus points to the Trinity in the great commission (Mt 28:18-20):

18 And Jesus came and said to them, "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. 19 Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit,⁴⁵ 20 teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you. And behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age."

The resurrected Jesus Christ himself appears here as the Lord of all in heaven and earth. The disciples fall down before him (28:17). The gospel of Christ has to be proclaimed to all nations. Everyone who becomes a disciple of Jesus by accepting his teaching has to be baptized in the name of the triune God.

The apostle Paul uses trinitarian language more than once (1 Cor 12:4-6; Eph 4:4-6; 2 Thes 2:13-14). His conclusion of 2 Corinthians (13:14) has become especially famous:

45. πορευθέντες οὖν μαθητεύσατε πάντα τὰ ἔθνη, βαπτίζοντες αὐτοὺς εἰς τὸ ὄνομα τοῦ πατρὸς καὶ τοῦ υἱοῦ καὶ τοῦ ἁγίου πνεύματος

The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ and the love of God and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with you all.⁴⁶

Peter starts his first letter with the three persons of the Trinity (1:1-2):

1 Peter, an apostle of Jesus Christ,
To those who are elect exiles of the dispersion in Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia, and Bithynia, 2 according to the foreknowledge of God the Father, in the sanctification of the Spirit, for obedience to Jesus Christ and for sprinkling with his blood:
May grace and peace be multiplied to you.

And Jude urges the believers to persevere in their faith by pointing them to the Trinity as well (1:20-21):

20 But you, beloved, build yourselves up in your most holy faith; pray in the Holy Spirit; 21 keep yourselves in the love of God, waiting for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ that leads to eternal life.

Each person is fully God.

The Father is God. The New Testament speaks very often of God the Father. This can be traced back not only to the influence of the Old Testament (see above) but also to the special emphasis of Jesus Christ who taught his disciples to trust in God as their Father in heaven and to pray to him accordingly. In his Sermon on the Mount

46. ἡ χάρις τοῦ κυρίου Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ καὶ ἡ ἀγάπη τοῦ θεοῦ καὶ ἡ κοινωνία τοῦ ἁγίου πνεύματος μετὰ πάντων ὑμῶν.

alone all the following verses speak of God as Father or of the disciples as children of God: Mt 5:9.16; 5:45.48; 6:1.4.6.8; 6:9.14.15; 6:18.26.32; 7:11.21. There is no real disagreement that the first person of the Trinity is God in the full sense of the word. There has been more disagreement in the history of the Church about the question of the divinity of the Son. But it must be stated here that the fact that God the creator of the heavens and the earth is also our heavenly father in Jesus Christ is of enormous importance for the whole of the New Testament. The Fatherhood of God is a core element of New Testament teaching and of Christianity. Without the Fatherhood of God there is no New Testament, no Gospel and no Christianity.

The Son is God. Even though we can speak in the Old Testament only of hints towards the divinity of the Messiah, in the New Testament this becomes a core teaching. The following books of the New Testament present the divinity of Jesus Christ already in their opening chapters in words which have become famous in the discussion of this subject: John 1:1-4.14; 1 John 1:1-2:2; Colossians 1:15-20; 2:9; Hebrews 1:1-14; and Revelation 1:1-20.

The one who is called "the Word"⁴⁷ in John 1:1-4.14 is pre-existent ("in the beginning") and divine ("the Word was God"). All things have been created through him (1:3) and he himself is life for all men (1:4). This "Word" has become flesh in John 1:14 which means He has become a human being called the Son of God. He is more than all the prophets because he reveals the invisible God the Father in the full sense (1:18). In agreement with the prologue of John (1:1-18) Jesus himself speaks of his pre-existence and divine glory in John 8:24.58 and 17:5.24. The climax of the book of John

47. ὁ λόγος

with the passion and resurrection narrative leads to the confession of the apostle Thomas "My Lord and my God!" (Jn 20:28).

The writer of the Gospel of John also uses the title "Word" for Jesus Christ in his first letter (1 Jn 1:1-3) with only the difference that he calls Jesus "the word of life"⁴⁸. This word is life-giving and pre-existent (1 Jn 1:1), has been made manifest as divine to ear-witnesses, eye-witnesses and touch-witnesses (1:1-2), having come as the Son from the presence of the Father and being known now as Jesus Christ, through whom all believers have fellowship with the Father, as well after having been cleansed by the blood of Christ (1:7.9; 2:1-2). As the Gospel of John starts with the divinity of Christ and ends with it, so 1 John also starts and ends with the same important teaching proclaiming Jesus Christ as "the true God and eternal life" (see 1 Jn 5:20).

The same writer has also received the Revelation where Jesus is again called the "Word", but this time "the Word of God"⁴⁹ (Rv 19:13). The eyes are the same eyes that are found in Rv 1:14 and 2:18 as the eyes of the divine judge (Rv 19:12; cf. Dn 10:5-6). His name "King of kings and Lord of lords" (Rv 19:16) also points to his divinity (cf. Dt 10:17; 1 Tm 6:15). The name of Christ being "the first and the last" (Rv 1:17; 2:8; 22:13) presents him as the almighty God of Israel and creator of the world who has revealed himself under this name in Isaiah (41:4; 44:6; 48:12-13).

One reason why we do not know for sure who has written Hebrews, is that this person did not want to start this letter with his own name in 1:1 as was customary but he wanted to present the greatness and divine glory of the Son of God from first to last outshining all prophets and angels of God. He came as the climax and

48. περὶ τοῦ λόγου τῆς ζωῆς

49. ὁ Λόγος τοῦ Θεοῦ

closure of revelation and salvation history (Heb 1:1-2), the heir of all things (1:2) and the one through whom the world was created (1:2). The Son is "the radiance of the glory of God and the exact imprint of his nature"⁵⁰. Not only have all things been created through the Son, but he is also the one who "upholds the universe by the word of his power"⁵¹, the sustainer of the universe through his mere word. Jesus has solved the problem of sins by dying for them and establishing a purification for them (1:3). He has taken the seat of greatest honor to the right hand of God the Father (1:3) being greater than the angels (1:4-14) having "inherited a more excellent name" (1:3), the name of "Son" (1:5) who has to be worshiped by all of God's angels (1:6), the name of "God" ruling for ever (1:8-13).

The apostle Paul repeatedly points to the divinity of Christ. For example in Rom 9:5 he speaks of "the Christ who is God over all, blessed forever."⁵² According to Col 2:9 "the whole fullness of deity dwells bodily"⁵³ in Christ. In Ti 2:13 the waiting for Christ's second coming is called "waiting for our blessed hope, the appearing of the glory of our great God and Savior Jesus Christ".⁵⁴

The apostle Peter uses very similar words writing his second letter "to those who have obtained a faith of equal standing with ours by the righteousness of our God and Savior Jesus Christ"(2 Pt 1:1).⁵⁵

The synoptic Gospels present John the Baptist as the voice in

50. ὃς ὢν ἀπαύγασμα τῆς δόξης καὶ χαρακτήρ τῆς ὑποστάσεως αὐτοῦ

51. φέρων τε τὰ πάντα τῷ ῥήματι τῆς δυνάμεως

52. καὶ ἐξ ᾧ ὁ χριστὸς τὸ κατὰ σάρκα, ὁ ὢν ἐπὶ πάντων, θεὸς εὐλογητὸς εἰς τοὺς αἰῶνας•

53. ὅτι ἐν αὐτῷ κατοικεῖ πᾶν τὸ πλήρωμα τῆς θεότητος σωματικῶς

54. προσδεχόμενοι τὴν μακαρίαν ἐλπίδα καὶ ἐπιφάνειαν τῆς δόξης τοῦ μεγάλου θεοῦ καὶ σωτῆρος ἡμῶν Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ

55. ἐν δικαιοσύνῃ τοῦ θεοῦ ἡμῶν καὶ σωτῆρος Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ•

the desert of Is 40:3 who says "Prepare the way of the Lord" (Mt 3:3; Mk 1:2-3; Lk 3:4; cf. Jn 1:23). In Isaiah "Lord" is the covenant name of God. In the Gospels it is clear that John the Baptist prepares the way for Jesus who is stronger than John and comes after him, baptizes with the Holy Spirit and fire, saves the truly repentant and throws the others into the eternal burning fire of hell (Mt 3:11-12; Mk 1:8; Lk 3:16-17). In other words, these Gospels identify the Lord God of Isaiah 40 with Jesus of Nazareth as God incarnate, the Lord and Savior (cf. Mt 11:27; Lk 2:11). For further discussion of Christ as God and Man see the subject of Christology (chapter 4).

The Holy Spirit is God. In John 13-16 Jesus speaks to the disciples of his going to the Father and leaving them. This made the disciples sad (Jn 16:5-6). But Jesus wanted to encourage them by promising them that the Father would give them "another Helper"⁵⁶ to be with them forever (14:16). The word "paraklētos" means "helper" or "comforter" or "motivator".⁵⁷ He is "another" helper of the same kind, meaning he is of the same kind as Jesus. We have just seen that there are many sections in the New Testament that teach that Jesus is God. When Jesus promises another helper of the same kind, he does not mean that something less is given to the disciples but something equal. The Spirit is a person as Jesus is a person. And the Spirit is God as Jesus is God. In the same context (14:18) Jesus assures them:

I will not leave you as orphans; I will come to you.

While Jesus is leaving them according to his bodily and is going

⁵⁶ καὶ ἄλλον παράκλητον δώσει ὑμῖν

⁵⁷ See in John 14:16,26; 15:26; 16:7.

to the Father and will sit at the right hand of God, he is coming to them in the person of the Holy Spirit. Or as Jesus puts it in 14:23:

If anyone loves me, he will keep my word, and my Father will love him, and we will come to him and make our home with him.

Both the Father and the Son make their home in the believer who loves Jesus and keeps his word. If we ask, how they make their home in the believer, the answer is "through the Holy Spirit". The Holy Spirit is God and fully represents the other two persons of the Trinity. Though the word "spirit" in Greek is neuter (neither masculine, nor feminine), in John 14:26; 15:26 and 16:14 the Greek equivalent of the English "he"⁵⁸ is used, not "it".⁵⁹ This might be an additional pointer to the personality of the Holy Spirit. Often "a person" has been defined as someone who possesses intellect, emotions and will. The intellectual capacity of the Holy Spirit can be seen in 1 Cor 2:10-11,⁶⁰ his will is mentioned in 1 Cor 12:11⁶¹ and his emotions are involved in Eph 4:30. For further discussion of the Holy Spirit as God see the subject of Pneumatology (chapter 6).

There is one God.

As we have seen in section 2.1 it is one core truth of the Bible that there is only one God.

58. ἐκεῖνος

59. ἐκεῖνο

60. See also John 14:26; 15:26; Rom 8:16.26-27

61. Cf. Acts 16:6-7; 8:29; 13:2; 15:28.

2.2.3 How are the persons of the Trinity distinct from one another?

They are distinct from Eternity.

It is clear from the words of Jesus Christ in John 17:5.24 that the Son and the Father were distinct from each other before the foundation of the world. They are distinct from one another from eternity to eternity.⁶²

5 And now, Father, glorify me in your own presence with the glory that I had with you before the world existed... 24 Father, I desire that they also, whom you have given me, may be with me where I am, to see my glory that you have given me because you loved me before the foundation of the world.⁶³

If it is evident from this and other passages of the New Testament⁶⁴ that the persons of the Father and the Son can be seen as distinct from even before the foundation of the world, it can also be argued that this is the case with regard to the Holy Spirit. He was already there at the time of creation, because he had part in the creation of the world (Gn 1:2; Ps 33:6; see below). Because he is seen as God in the Old and New Testaments, he is eternal and was present even before creation.

62. Cf. Grudem, *Systematic Theology. An Introduction to Biblical Doctrine*, p. 249-252.

63. καὶ νῦν δόξασόν με σύ, πάτερ, παρὰ σεαυτῷ τῇ δόξῃ ἣ εἶχον πρὸ τοῦ τὸν κόσμον εἶναι παρὰ σοί... 24 πάτερ, ὃ δέδωκάς μοι, θέλω ἵνα ὅπου εἰμι ἐγὼ κάκεινοι ὧσιν μετ' ἐμοῦ, ἵνα θεωρῶσιν τὴν δόξαν τὴν ἐμὴν ἣν δέδωκάς μοι, ὅτι ἠγάπησάς με πρὸ καταβολῆς κόσμου.

64. See Eph 3:14-15; 1:3-4; Rom 8:29; Jn 1:1-5.14.18; Phil 2:5-11; 1 Pt 1:2; Jn 3:16-17; Gal 4:4; 1 Cor 8:6; Heb 1:2; Prv 8:22-31.

They are distinct in Creation and Salvation.

As soon as we come to the subject of creation and of salvation history, the three persons of the Trinity can be distinguished in their roles in creation and salvation.⁶⁵

Their distinction in creation.

1. God the Father spoke the creative words (Gn 1:3.6.9).
2. Through God the Son, the Word, everything was created (Jn 1:3; Col 1:16; Ps 33:6.9; 1 Cor 8:6; Heb 1:2).
3. God the Holy Spirit was "hovering" over the waters and had a part in creation (Gn 1:2; Ps 33:6).

Their distinction in salvation.

1. God the Father planned salvation and sent his Son (Jn 3:16; Gal 4:4; Eph 1:9-10).
2. God the Son obeyed the Father and accomplished salvation for us through his death and resurrection (Jn 6:38; Heb 5:7-10; 10:5-7).
3. God the Holy Spirit, sent by the Father and the Son, applies salvation to us (Jn 14:26; 16:7; 15:26) in:
 - (a) regeneration (Jn 3:5-8),
 - (b) sanctification (Rom 8:13; 15:16; 1 Pt 1:2),
 - (c) empowering us (Acts 1:8; 1 Cor 12:7-11),

65. With *ibid.*, p. 248-249.

- (d) bringing to completion the work that has been planned by the Father and begun by the Son.

Grudem presents the equality of the persons of the Trinity on the one hand and on the other, the differences in their relationship towards the world in a precise and fitting way:⁶⁶

Thus, while the persons of the Trinity are equal in all their attributes, they nonetheless differ in their relationships to the creation. The Son and Holy Spirit are equal in deity to God the Father, but they are subordinate in their roles. Moreover, these differences in role are not temporary but will last forever... (1 Cor. 15:28).

Grudem also speaks of the "ontological equality but economic subordination" of the Son and the Holy Spirit, that they are "equal in being, but subordinate in role" to the Father.⁶⁷ The word "economic" here is related to the word "economy" in the sense of "God's economy" or "God's plan" for redemption unfolding within salvation history with different roles for the three persons of the Trinity.⁶⁸

66. Grudem, *Systematic Theology. An Introduction to Biblical Doctrine*, p. 249.

67. *ibid.*, p. 251.

68. The Greek word οἰκονομία is used in the sense of "stewardship" or "(planned) house-holding" in Lk 16:2.3.4; 1 Cor 9:17; Eph 1:10; Eph 3:2; Eph 3:9; Col 1:25; 1 Tm 1:4. Sometimes the translation in the Vulgate is "dispensatio" which corresponds to the English "dispensation" from which the term "dispensationalism" has been coined. Eph 1:10 which talks of God's "economy", "plan", or "house holding" is of the utmost importance for the theological usage and understanding of this term. It connects the idea with salvation history and its climax in Christ. See Eph 1:7-10: "7 In him we have

2.2.4 According to Creeds and Church Fathers / Historical development

The creeds given in the appendix reflect the development of the history of doctrine in the first millennium of the church and especially for the greater part of the first five centuries. The creeds can be seen as a summary of biblical truths to be used as a safeguard against false teaching.

The Apostles' Creed - Against Gnosticism

The old trinitarian structure of the so called Apostles' creed (see section A.1) affirms God the Father as the creator who is also the Father of Jesus Christ, the Son through whom salvation comes. By proclaiming that the same God is creator and Savior the Christian faith was protected against some gnostic sects of the second century which proclaimed the creator God to be different from the Savior God (against e.g. Marcionism⁶⁹, Valentinians⁷⁰, and Basilidi-

redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of our trespasses, according to the riches of his grace, 8 which he lavished upon us, in all wisdom and insight 9 making known to us the mystery of his will, according to his purpose, which he set forth in Christ 10 as a plan for the fullness of time, to unite all things in him, things in heaven and things on earth.” 10 εἰς οἰκονομίαν τοῦ πληρώματος τῶν καιρῶν, ἀνακεφαλαιώσασθαι τὰ πάντα ἐν τῷ Χριστῷ, τὰ ἐπὶ τοῖς οὐρανοῖς καὶ τὰ ἐπὶ τῆς γῆς• ἐν αὐτῷ...

69. See e.g. Justin Martyr about Marcion in First Apology, 24 Philip Schaff, ANF01. The Apostolic Fathers with Justin Martyr and Irenaeus, Ante-Nicene Fathers (Grand Rapids, MI: Christian Classics Ethereal Library, 1886), <http://www.ccel.org/ccel/schaff/anf01.html>, p. 227.

70. See e.g. Irenaeus about the disciples of Valentinus in his Against Heresies 1,1,1 *ibid.*, p. 450.

ans⁷¹).

Gnosticism is derived from Greek γνῶσις "gnōsis", knowledge. See already Paul's statement in 1 Tm 6:20-21:

O Timothy, guard the deposit entrusted to you.
Avoid the irreverent babble and contradictions of
what is falsely called 'knowledge,' 21 for by pro-
fessing it some have swerved from the faith."

In Gnosticism not faith in God's word is central, but "knowledge". Salvation is related to "insight" or "knowledge". The system becomes philosophical. Matter is regarded as inferior, the spirit is the real thing. The creator of matter can not be seen as the highest God, but as inferior. God can not become flesh, a human being with flesh and blood. This would be seen as ridiculous. Similarly "resurrection" as the resurrection of the flesh or body is ridiculed (Acts 17:32) or interpreted "spiritually" (see 2 Tm 2:18). These and other verses in the New Testament show certain pre-gnostic teachings or tendencies, but the full-blown gnostic systems of the second century were another and even bigger challenge for orthodox Christianity. The precursor of what we know as the Apostles' creed was used to immunize the church against the virus or cancer of gnosticism. If the creator and the Savior are one God, then matter and the human body can be good (Gn 1:26-27.31 and God can become flesh (Jn 1:14; 1 Tm 3:16) and the blood of Christ as the blood of God can be precious enough to ransom a whole world (Acts 20:28; Jn 1:29; 19:34; 1 Jn 1:7; 2:2; Rv 5:9-10; Rom 3:25-26; 1 Pt 1:19-20).

71. See e.g. Irenaeus about Basilides in his *Against Heresies* 1,24 Schaff, ANF01. The Apostolic Fathers with Justin Martyr and Irenaeus, p. 499-501.

Rejection of Monarchianism

Tertullian uses the title "Monarchians" for those who want to defend the divine "monarchy" (rule of one) against polytheistic ideas.⁷² He denotes especially the modalistic monarchianism⁷³ (see below) with this phrase. In the history of the church two kinds of monarchianism have been distinguished, dynamic monarchianism and modalistic monarchianism.

Dynamic monarchianism or adoptionism. Theodotus the Tanner of Byzantium saw Christ as a mere man who was filled by a divine power (δύναμις) and so "adopted" by God. Therefore this view is called "dynamic monarchianism" or also "adoptionism". He came to Rome and propagated his theory there, but was excommunicated by Bishop Victor of Rome (192-202) in 190 C.E.⁷⁴ The dynamic monarchians upheld strict monotheism by denying the full divinity of Christ. They saw him as a mere man who was made special by the indwelling power of God or by being adopted by God.

Modalistic monarchianism or modalism or Sabbellianism. Modalistic monarchians presented Christ as a "mode" (Latin: *modus*) of God. Since about 215 Sabbellius from Libya was the leader

72. Friedrich Loofs, *Leitfaden zum Studium der Dogmengeschichte*, edition no. 4 (Halle a.S., 1906), 2 vols, p. 182.

73. Against Praxeas X. See Philip Schaff, ANF03. *Latin Christianity: Its Founder, Tertullian, Ante-Nicene Fathers* (Grand Rapids, MI: Christian Classics Ethereal Library, 2006), <http://www.ccel.org/ccel/schaff/anf03.html>, p. 1055.

74. See Heussi, *Kompandium der Kirchengeschichte*, §17s and Philip Schaff, *History of the Christian Church - Volume II Ante-Nicene Christianity A.D. 100-325* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Eerdmans, 1985), p. 574.

of the modalists in Rome. The one God has three manifestations or forms (μορφαί) or faces (πρόσωπα). Father and Son are seen as identical (νιοπάτωρ).⁷⁵ Sabellius was excommunicated by Bishop Callistus of Rome (217-222).⁷⁶ The modalists confessed the full deity of Christ but lost the distinction of the Father and the Son (and the Holy Spirit) as different persons. Their opponents therefore called them "patripassians", because in the last consequence the Father has suffered if Father, Son and Spirit are identical.

John 10:30 and 14:9 are often used in support of modalism. But John 10:30 is better understood to mean that Jesus and the father are one in purpose. And John 14:9 in its context clearly distinguishes between Jesus and the Father as well. We agree with Grudem that modalism loses a lot: modalism (1) denies the personal relationship within the Trinity; (2) the intercession of Son and Spirit is lost; (3) Modalism loses the heart of the doctrine of the atonement. Modern representatives of modalism are the "United Pentecostal Church" also called "Jesus Only".⁷⁷

The Nicene Creed - Against Arianism

The Nicene creed from 325 C.E. and the adjusted Nicene creed of Constantinople from 381 C.E. (see section A.2) are related to the Arian controversy and the question of the deity of Christ (and 381 C.E.: the deity of the Holy Spirit). Arius was presbyter in the

75. Heussi, *Kompndium der Kirchengeschichte*, §17x.

76. Loofs, *Leitfaden zum Studium der Dogmengeschichte*, p. 184-185.

77. "Some of the leaders who formed this group had earlier been forced out of the Assemblies of God when the Assemblies decided to insist on a trinitarian statement of faith for its ministries in 1916", Grudem, *Systematic Theology. An Introduction to Biblical Doctrine*, p. 242-243.

Church of Baukalis in Alexandria, Egypt. The controversy started about 318 C.E. when Arius was teaching about the Son of God that he had a beginning and came into being out of that which was not and was a perfect creation.⁷⁸ He wrote to Eusebius of Nicomedia:

We are persecuted because we have said: "The Son has a beginning, but God is without beginning."
We are persecuted because we have said: "He is out of that which was not."⁷⁹

Accordingly Arius taught that "there was a time when the Son did not exist".⁸⁰ The "Word" (Λόγος) is totally different from the essence of God.⁸¹ All this, of course, amounts to a clear denial of the full deity of the Son.⁸² Bishop Alexander of Alexandria excommunicated Arius at the Council of Alexandria in 318 C.E. But Arius had also his supporters, e.g. in the person of Eusebius of Nicomedia.⁸³ So the controversy went on and widened. The Arians used the term "only begotten" (John 1:14; 3:16.18; 1 John 4:9) to point out that the picture of the birth implies a start of origin. In the same way they understood Col 1:15 to mean that the word "first born" implies that

78. κτίσμα τέλειον Adolf von Harnack, *Lehrbuch der Dogmengeschichte* - Zweiter Band: Die Entwicklung des kirchlichen Dogmas I (Darmstadt, 1983), p. 201.

79. Translation Lanz. From the Greek original in *ibid.*, p. 197, note 3: Διωκόμεθα ὅτι εἵπομεν• Ἀρχὴν ἔχει ὁ υἱός, ὁ δὲ θεὸς ἀναρχός ἐστι. Διὰ τοῦτο διωκόμεθα, καὶ ὅτι εἵπομεν• Ἐξ οὐκ ὄντων ἐστίν.

80. καὶ ἦν ποτε ὅτε οὐκ ἦν See Heussi, *Kompndium der Kirchengeschichte*, §24e.

81. ἀλλότριος καὶ ἀνόμιος κατὰ πάντα τῆς τοῦ πατρὸς οὐσίας. See *ibid.*, §24e.

82. Jehovah's Witnesses can be understood as modern Arians.

83. Arius died in 336 C.E. See Grudem, *Systematic Theology. An Introduction to Biblical Doctrine*, p. 243.

the Son was at some point brought into existence by the Father.⁸⁴ To settle the Arian controversy the Roman emperor Constantine I called a council to Nicaea in Bithynia (325 C.E.). The vast majority of the Bishops present at the council came from the East. Athanasius was not a Bishop at that time, but he was there and influential behind the scenes.⁸⁵ He was the central figure of orthodoxy in this controversy. The council of Nicaea rejected certain Arian ideas in this part of the creed:

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

The words "begotten of the Father before all worlds... begotten, not made,"⁸⁶ reject the Arian idea that the eternal Son is a creature and the expression "being of one substance with the Father"⁸⁷ underlines the essential equality of the Father and the Son with regard to their divine essence which is also against Arian concepts. "Very God of very God"⁸⁸ confesses the full deity of the Son. In the version of the creed which was confessed in Constantinople in 381 C.E. (see section A.2) the following part confirms the deity of the Holy Spirit:

84. See Grudem, *Systematic Theology. An Introduction to Biblical Doctrine*, p. 243.

85. Athanasius became archbishop of Alexandria in 328 and died in 373 C.E. Heussi, *Kompendium der Kirchengeschichte*, §24i.

86. τὸν ἐκ τοῦ πατρὸς γεννηθέντα πρὸ πάντων τῶν αἰώνων ... γεννηθέντα, οὐ ποιηθέντα

87. ὁμοούσιον τῷ πατρί

88. θεὸν ἀληθινὸν ἐκ θεοῦ ἀληθεοῦ

And ... in the Holy Ghost, the Lord, and Giver of life; who proceedeth from the Father; who with the Father and the Son together is worshiped and glorified; who spake by the Prophets.

In a later development of the Western Church⁸⁹ the words "and the Son" (Latin: *filioque*) were added after "who proceedeth from the Father" affirming that the Holy Spirit goes forth from the Father and from the Son. This led to the schism between the Oriental and Occidental Churches in 1054 C.E. The Oriental Church (Eastern Orthodox Church) never accepted the "filioque" while it became part of the creed in the Occidental Church (Roman Catholic, and later in the Protestant churches as well). The Oriental church understands the procession ἐκπόρευσις of the Holy Spirit from the Father as "an eternal inner-trinitarian process (like the eternal generation of the Son)"⁹⁰ According to doctrine Grudem is in favor of the Western Church here (pointing to John 15:26; 14:26 and 16:7), but says at the same time that it is not right to split the whole church because of such a minor point of disagreement.⁹¹ One has to heartily agree with this.

89. The first trace of this phrase as part of the Nicene Creed is found according to Schaff at the third Council of Toledo in Spain, 589 C.E. Philip Schaff, *Creeds of Christendom, with a History and Critical notes. Volume I. The History of Creeds.*, vol. 1 (Christian Classics Ethereal Library, 1877), <http://www.ccel.org/ccel/schaff/creeds1.html>, p. 46.

90. *ibid.*, p. 46.

91. Grudem, *Systematic Theology. An Introduction to Biblical Doctrine*, p. 246-247.

The Nicene Creed - Against Subordinationism

Already Origen (ca. 185 - 254 A. D.) taught a kind of subordinationism long before the Arian controversy, but others did it as well. In the Arian controversy the atmosphere got so sensitive that the council then also wanted to reject subordinationism to make sure that the faith be orthodox.

In subordinationism the Son was eternal (not created) and divine, but still not equal to the Father in being or attributes. The Son was inferior or "subordinate" to the Father.

Orthodox doctrine has stated against subordinationism that the Son is equal to the Father in being, but subordinate to the Father in role or function.⁹² A statement in the Bible like the one in John 14:28 "... for the Father is greater than I" would then be understood as speaking of the area of role and function and not of divine essence. According to the divine essence the Son is proclaimed as "being of one substance with the Father".

2.2.5 Illustrations and analogies

Sometimes people try to give illustrations for the doctrine of the Trinity from the realm of nature or human experience. But often on closer scrutiny the illustration does not present a biblical Trinity but more something which has been rejected as heresy by the church. For example a "man who is both a farmer, the mayor of his town, and an elder in his church... but he is one man". Grudem gives this as an unfitting example because it would teach three roles or modes of the one man. This would be the false teaching of modalism.⁹³

92. Cf. Grudem, *Systematic Theology. An Introduction to Biblical Doctrine*, p. 245.

93. *ibid.*, p. 240-241.

The analogy of water as steam, fluid water and ice has shortcomings for similar reasons.

Perhaps it is best to refrain from these illustrations and to cling to the biblical pictures and stories. There we learn that God is God the Father. Jesus is his Son and God. The Holy Spirit is a holy "wind" or "breath" and as such invisible for us, but we can experience him as God. The three are presented in the baptism of Jesus. They are three different persons, every person acting his part, but they are one God. Perhaps it is no coincidence that there is no real counterpart to the mystery of the Trinity in nature. The incarnation of God who became man has to be seen as the greatest miracle of the Bible. This historical event has opened the door into the mystery of the Trinity for us. The only people who can enter into this palace of divine glories are those who have the Holy Spirit as their guide and the Holy Scriptures as their guide book and who step in by faith.

2.3 **We Can only Know God as far as He Makes Himself Known to Us.**

In the ten commandments God forbids us to make any image of him (Ex 20:4). This implies our inability to recognize God without his grace and help (1 Cor 2:14). We need God's revelation and his heart-transforming grace to know him truthfully.

2.3.1 **Transcendent - separate from us**

One key idea in the Bible is that God is creator and the rest is creation (Gn 1:1; 2:1). Pantheism, the idea that everything is God, is not in the Bible. There is a separation between God as creator on the one hand and all of creation on the other. One famous verse puts God's transcendence in these words (Eccl 5:2):

Be not rash with your mouth, nor let your heart be hasty to utter a word before God, for God is in heaven and you are on earth. Therefore let your words be few.

Fragile man cannot storm heaven, he is limited to his abode on earth (cf. Gn 11:1-9). God being in heaven is separate from us and at the same time superior.

2.3.2 **Immanent - close to us**

Another key idea in the Bible is that God is able and willing to be close to us, to be in our world and be with us in our world. The Bible starts with a paradise that had been planted by God for Adam and Eve. Gn 3:8 shows us God visiting this garden and Adam and Eve within it:

8 And they heard the sound of the Lord God walking in the garden in the cool of the day,⁹⁴ and the man and his wife hid themselves from the presence of the Lord God among the trees of the garden. 9 But the Lord God called to the man and said to him, “Where are you?”

It seems that God used to visit man in the garden. They were used to it. They knew immediately that it was God who was coming, but because they had sinned they hid themselves. The question of God, “Where are you?”, has been following mankind ever since. The whole of salvation history is God seeking man that he may repent and come home, home into the presence of God. The calling of Abram and his transformation into Abraham had the purpose that God's blessing would come to all nations (Gn 12:1-3). God's presence on earth in the tabernacle (Ex 25:8) and in the temple (1 Kgs 9:3) is an expression of God's promise (Lv 26:11-12):

11 I will make my dwelling among you, and my soul shall not abhor you. 12 And I will walk among you and will be your God, and you shall be my people.⁹⁵

When John speaks of the incarnation of God who becomes man in Jesus Christ he chooses words that resemble the language of the tabernacle (John 1:14):

And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we have seen his glory, glory as of the only Son

94. וַיִּשְׁמְעוּ אֶת-קוֹל יְהוָה אֱלֹהִים מְתַהַלֵּךְ בַּגֶּן לְרוּחַ הַיּוֹם.
95. וְהִתְהַלַּכְתִּי בְּתוֹכְכֶם וְהָיִיתִי לָכֶם לֵאלֹהִים וְאַתֶּם תִּהְיוּ לִי לְעָם.

from the Father, full of grace and truth.⁹⁶

As tabernacle (Ex 40:34-35) and temple (1 Kgs 8:10-11) were filled with God's glory when God took possession of them so Jesus Christ, the Word of God (John 1:1-3; 1 John 1:1-3; Rv 19:13), was full of God's glory. The body of Christ was (John 2:19-21) and still is (Eph 1:22-23) the temple, the address of God in this world. The consummation of all things at the end of time is again God dwelling with man, without temple and without distance in the New Jerusalem, the paradise of God (Rv 21:3.22; 22:1-4; 2:7).

The idea of God's immanence balances the other idea of God's transcendence. Both ideas are true. God is transcendent. We can not reach him by our own efforts. God is immanent. He comes and dwells amongst his chosen people. That is by his grace and by is grace only (Dt 7:7-8). This is the source of ultimate blessedness and eternal joy, knowing God, having fellowship with God and enjoying Him forever (Jn 17:3; Is 35:10; Rv 22:4).

2.3.3 God in different religions and philosophical systems

In Pantheism everything is God and there is no real difference between God and everything else. This will often imply the idea of a non-personal God.⁹⁷

96. Καὶ ὁ λόγος σὰρξ ἐγένετο καὶ ἐσκήνωσεν ἐν ἡμῖν, καὶ ἐθεασάμεθα τὴν δόξαν αὐτοῦ, δόξαν ὡς μονογενοῦς παρὰ πατρός, πλήρης χάριτος καὶ ἀληθείας•

97. Baruch Spinoza (1632-1677) is a representative of pantheistic thinking. See Spinoza, Opera - Werke, Lateinisch und Deutsch, Erster Band: Tractatus Theologico-Politicus, Gawlick, G.;Niewöhner, Fr. <ed> (Darmstadt, 1989) and Spinoza, Opera - Werke, Lateinisch und Deutsch, Zweiter Band: Tractatus de intellectus emendatione - Ethica, Gawlick, G.;Niewöhner, Fr. <ed>

In Deism God⁹⁸ is seen as the creator who has made the world and everything like a big clockwork machine and now lets it run without interfering with it and therefore without answering, for example, prayer.

Atheism is the idea that there is no God at all. The Gods worshiped by mankind are understood as a creation of the fertile imagination of people.⁹⁹

In Dualism there are two eternal principles often understood as opposite to each other or complementary, like light and darkness, good and evil,¹⁰⁰ the active and the passive principle, yin and yang.¹⁰¹

2.4 God is Spirit and anthropomorphisms

In his talk with the Samaritan woman Jesus affirmed:

God is spirit,¹⁰² and those who worship him must worship in spirit and truth.

(Darmstadt, 1989).

98. The Irishman John Toland (1670-1722) was an important Deist. See Heussi, *Kompendium der Kirchengeschichte*, §105 l.

99. The openly confessing modern Atheists go back to the 18th century. Baron Dietrich von Holbach (1723-1789) was one of the first. See *ibid.*, §105 r.

100. Zoroastrianism has certain dualistic tendencies. It is possible that Is 45:7 opposes some form of Zoroastrian dualism. See John D. W. Watts, *Isaiah 34-66, Word Commentary 25* (Waco: Word, 1987), p. 157.

101. Within Chinese philosophy Taoism can be understood as dualistic.

102. πνεῦμα ὁ θεός

In Lk 24:37 the disciples see Jesus risen from the dead and think he is perhaps a spirit. Jesus answers this misconception and says (Lk 24:39)

See my hands and my feet, that it is I myself. Touch me, and see. For a spirit does not have flesh and bones as you see that I have.

On the one hand God has revealed himself in Scripture as spirit. This implies that he does not have a human body or appearance. Accordingly phrases used in Scripture like God's "arm" (Ex 6:6; Is 53:1) or "hand" (Ex 6:1) or "mouth" (Dt 8:3) have been understood as anthropomorphisms. That means that Scripture uses language which we can understand to convey truths about God. When God redeems Israel from the slavery in Egypt with "a strong hand" or with "a stretched-out arm", we can understand that God takes personal action and uses his power to free his people. The fact that "man lives by every word that comes from the mouth of the LORD" points to God's ability to speak and sustain human life by his word.

On the other hand God has revealed himself in Scripture to his chosen people in a kind of human likeness (cf. Gn 1:26-27). It can happen that he comes in human form and appears like a man (Gn 18:1-2; cf. 1 Sm 3:10; Is 6:1; Ez 1:26; Rv 4:3; 5:1). At the same time God is spirit and fills heaven and earth (Jer 23:24). According to the promise that the pure in heart shall see God, there shall be a time that God's people will fully understand what it means that God has revealed himself as spirit and in a kind of human likeness (Mt 5:8; cf. Rv 22:4). It is possible that this mystery is related to the mystery of the Trinity.

2.4.1 God is distant - yet makes himself known

We have already seen from Eccl 5:2 that God is transcendent or distant. But at the same time, God has made himself known through general revelation and special revelation (see section 1.6). He draws people to himself (Jn 6:44) and wants them to seek him and in this regard is not far from anybody (Acts 17:26-28).

2.4.2 Using human language

Throughout the Holy Bible we see God using human language to share his truth and his will with his audience. In the Old Testament mostly Hebrew is used and in some sections Aramaic¹⁰³, like Hebrew a Semitic language. The New Testament is written in Greek with some Hebrew and some Aramaic words encountered here and there. The event of Pentecost with the gift of speaking spontaneously in languages not learned is a miraculous indication that God wants to use his New Testament church to speak all languages of this world to spread the Gospel to all nations (Acts 2:1-11; Mt 28:18-20). The fact that God would use human language and human imagery is an expression of His condescension into our world. The greatness of his creation reveals his enormous magnificence. His knowledge and power is beyond human imagination. Here and there are some hints that God could also use a heavenly language and a heavenly set of pictures which would leave us humans totally behind (Jn 3:12; 1 Cor 13:1). But his great love urges him to speak to us in the language of our hearts.

103. See Ezra 4:8-6:18; 7:12-26; Dn 2:4-7:28; Jer 10:11; Gn 31:47.

2.4.3 **Remember God is Spirit while using anthropomorphic terms**

We should use the anthropomorphic terms of the Bible like "the mighty arm of God" which delivered Israel out of Egypt. They are very illustrative and helpful in bringing God's powerful action to our minds. But at the same time we have to remember that God is spirit (Jn 4:24) and that God fills the heavens and the earth (Jer 23:24).

2.4.4 **The nature of language about God - masculine language and imagery**

God has revealed himself in Scripture in masculine language and imagery. He is King and Lord (Is 6:5), Father and Husband (Is 63:16; Hos 2:16-20) etc. The language and imagery is always masculine. He may say in Isaiah that he will comfort his people as a mother comforts her child (Is 66:13),¹⁰⁴, but this does not mean that God reveals himself as mother in Isaiah. In Isaiah 63:16 and 64:8 he is still called father. This masculine imagery is of course again anthropomorphic language. God is spirit. God is the creator of Adam and Eve as male and female in his image (Gn 1:26-27), but he himself is an eternal spirit and not a sexual corporal being.

Because God choose to reveal himself as King, Lord, Father and Husband etc., we should cling to this biblical masculine imagery and teach it knowing that it is anthropomorphic language. When it comes to fatherhood, Paul seems to understand the Fatherhood of God as the key role model for all fatherhood in heaven and on earth (Eph 3:14-15).

104. Or see the parable in Mt 23:37.

2.5 Naming and describing God

2.5.1 His names reveal what God is for us

The names of God in the Holy Scriptures are one important source to understand and recognize God. The revelation of the divine names is a precious gift of God to his people, therefore they are commanded to sanctify his name (Ex 20:7); Mt 6:9). Often the names of God show something which he personalises for us¹⁰⁵, for example the name "Father" makes us children of God and God's family or God's people.

2.5.2 God's Names in the Old Testament

אלה

According to Even-Shoshan¹⁰⁶ the Hebrew 'ēl is used 235 times in the OT and in most of the cases it denotes the true God, creator of the world. Just in a few verses it speaks of the gods of the Gentiles (Ex 34:14; Dt 32:12; Ps 44:20; 81:9.9; Is 44:17; Mal 2:11). Sometimes it is used as the second word in a Hebrew construct chain to denote something big as in Ps 36:6 (cedars of God = mighty cedars) and 80:10 (mountains of God = very big mountains). The Plural of 'ēl seems¹⁰⁷ to be אֱלִים 'ēlîm (Ex 15:11; Ps 29:1; 89:7; Dn

105. See "God, Names of" in M. Gladstone, N. Hillyer, and et al., *The Illustrated Bible Dictionary Part 1* (Wheaton, Illinois, 1980), p. 571-573.

106. See Abraham Even-Shoshan, *A New Concordance of the Bible* (Jerusalem, 1981), p. 61-62.

107. According to Fr. Brown, S. R. Driver, and Ch. A. Briggs, *Hebrew and English Lexicon of the Old Testament* (Oxford, 1980), p. 41-44, the relationship between 'ēl, 'ēlôah and 'ēlôhîm is not so clear. They all seem to be generic words for god that could be used for any god, that means for the true and only God on the one hand and also for the idols of the Gentiles on the

11:36.

It can be used standing absolutely on its own for the true God (Nm 12:13; 23:8.19.23; 24:4.16.23). Because 'ēl is a generic word which could mean any god, it is often specified with some other phrase. With the question "Who...?" it points to the one and true God who has no equal (Dt 3:24; 2 Sm 22:32). 'ēlī is my God (Ex 15:2; Ps 22:1). 'ēl Bethel is the God who has revealed himself there to Jacob (Gn 31:13; 35:1.3.7). God has revealed himself to the Fathers also as אֵל שַׁדַּי 'ēl šadday (God Almighty; Gn 17:1; 28:3; 35:11; 43:14; 48:3; Ex 6:3). 'ēl is used with the definite article to point to the one and only God (Gn 46:3; 2 Sm 22:31.33).

It is followed in a Hebrew construct chain by a word expressing some kind of quality:

'ēl 'ēmûnāh a God of faithfulness Dt 32:4,

'ēl 'ābīkā the God of your father Gn 49:25,

'ēl dē'ōt a God of knowledge 1 Sm 2:3,

'ēl 'ōlām the Everlasting God Gn 21:33.

'ēl is also combined with adjectives or participles:

'ēl 'elyôn God Most High Gn 14:18.19.20.22,

'ēl gāḏōl wənôrā' a great and awesome God Dt 7:21,

'ēl ḥay the living God Jo 3:10,

'ēl məḥōlēkā the God who gave you birth Dt 32:18,

'ēl mōšī'ām mīmīšrāyīm the God who brought them out of Egypt¹⁰⁸ Nm 23:22 (cf 24:8),

'ēl qannā' a jealous God Ex 20:5; 34:14; Dt 4:24; 5:9; 6:15; Jo 24:19,

'ēl raḥûm wəḥannûn a God merciful and gracious Ex 34:6,

other.

108. Translation Lanz.

'ēl rō'î a God of seeing me = a God who sees me, who looks after me¹⁰⁹ Gn 16:13,

hā'ēl haggādōl haggībōr wəhannōrā' the great, the mighty, and the awesome God Dt 10:17,

hā'ēl hanne'ēmān the faithful God Dt 7:9.¹¹⁰

אֱלֹהִים 'ēlōah

This word is another generic word used for God or the gods. According to Even-Shoshan¹¹¹ 'ēlōah is used 57 times in the OT and in most of the cases it denotes the true God, the God of Israel (see for example Dt 32:15; Job 19:26; 27:3; 40:2). In Dn 11:37.38.39 it is used for different gods of the Gentiles.

אֱלֹהִים 'ēlōhîm

According to Even-Shoshan¹¹² 'ēlōhîm is used 2603 times in the OT. It is a generic word and can denote the true God, creator of the world and also the gods of the Gentiles and their idols. It is the most often used generic word for God in the Old Testament. Even if it is grammatically a plural word, it can be used with a verb in the singular (like in Gn 1:1) denoting the one and true God. But it can also be used as a real plural, pointing to the different gods of the Gentiles (see Ps 96:5).

When God is called "the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob" (Ex 3:6) or "the God of Israel" (Gn 33:20) the word 'ēlōhîm is used (cf. also 2 Kgs 2:14).

109. Translation Lanz.

110. This list of idioms making 'ēl more precise is by no means complete.

111. See Even-Shoshan, *A New Concordance of the Bible*, p. 74-75.

112. See *ibid.*, p. 69-74.

Often the word 'ēlōhîm is combined with the special covenant name of God Yhwh which is nota generic word but a real name of God (often translated together "the Lord God"). For example in Gn 2 alone this is found in verses 4.5.7.8.9.15.16.18.21.22.

יְהוָה Yhwh

This name is the most important and most dominant name of God in the Old Testament. According to Even-Shoshan¹¹³ Yhwh is used 6639 times in the OT. We learn from Exodus that the Lord revealed the meaning of this name to Moses (Ex 3:13-15):

13 Then Moses said to God, "If I come to the people of Israel and say to them, 'The God of your fathers has sent me to you,' and they ask me, 'What is his name?' what shall I say to them?" 14 God said to Moses, "I am who I am."¹¹⁴ And he said, "Say this to the people of Israel, 'I am has sent me to you.'"¹¹⁵ 15 God also said to Moses, "Say this to the people of Israel, 'The Lord, the God of your fathers,¹¹⁶ the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob, has sent me to you.' This is my name forever, and thus I am to be remembered throughout all generations."

Because of the peculiarities of the Hebrew imperfect the phrase "I am who I am" could also be translated with "I was who I was" or "I will be who I will be". The LXX translates the

113. See Even-Shoshan, A New Concordance of the Bible, p. 440-447.

114. אֶהְיֶה אֲשֶׁר אֶהְיֶה

115. אֶהְיֶה שְׁלַחְנִי אֵלֵיכֶם:

116. יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵי אֲבֹתֵיכֶם

Hebrew with Ἐγώ εἰμι ὁ ὢν which is according to NETS "I am The One Who Is".¹¹⁷ It is very interesting that the statement in Rv 1:8 "who is and who was and who is to come"¹¹⁸ could be understood as a paraphrase of the name of God in Ex 3:14.

We are further told in Ex 6:2-3 that the meaning of the name of the Lord was not revealed to earlier generations:

2 God spoke to Moses and said to him, "I am the Lord. 3 I appeared to Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob, as God Almighty, but by my name the Lord I did not make myself known to them."

Because God revealed the meaning of his name to Moses through whom he also made the covenant with Israel at Mount Sinai, we can say that this name is the covenant name of God. It is the name under which God liberated Israel from Egypt and made them his own and chosen people (Ex 19:3-6; 20:2).

Because of the commandment that Israel should "not take the name of the Lord your God in vain" (Ex 20:7) the Jewish Masoretes did not use the covenant name of God in their reading of the Old Testament text but read ᾿ādōnāy instead which is "my Lords", the plural probably used to honor God's majesty. They did this by writing the four letters of God's name Yhwh in the main text but adding the vowels of ᾿ādōnāy to it. When later readers combined the letters of Yhwh with the vowels of ᾿ādōnāy they created the non-existent name of Jehovah for God.

The name Yhwh is also combined with the plural word for armies or hosts ("the Lord of hosts"¹¹⁹ ; 1 Sm 1:3.11; 4:4; 15:2;

117. Pietersma and Wright, A New English Translation of the Septuagint

118. ὁ ὢν καὶ ὁ ἦν καὶ ὁ ἐρχόμενος

119. The "hosts" can also be combined with "God": "God of hosts" (2 Sm 5:10) or "Lord God of hosts" (Amos 4:13).

17:45; 1 Kgs 18:15 etc.). The hosts are probably mainly the heavenly hosts (Jo 5:14; 1 Kgs 22:19; 2 Chr 18:18), but Israel's army is also part of God's armies (Ex 12:41). The title "Lord of hosts" celebrates God as almighty ruler of the world.¹²⁰

There are some special names which include the name Yhwh in the following verses:

Gn 22:14 Yhwh yīr'eh "The Lord will see"¹²¹,

Ex 17:15 Yhwh nīssī "The Lord is my banner",

Jer 23:6 and 33:16 Yhwh šīdḡēnū "The Lord is our righteousness."

Jgs 6:24 Yhwh šālôm "The Lord is Peace."

Ez 48:35 Yhwh šāmmāh "The Lord is there."

אֲדֹנָי 'ăḏōnāy

We have already seen that 'ăḏōnāy ("my Lords") is read for the covenant name of God. But it is also a name of God in its own right and used in Gn 15:2¹²² and onwards. According to Even-Shoshan¹²³ 'ăḏōnāy is used 425 times in the OT.

Other Names of God

The list of all the names of God in the OT is much longer. God is the "Holy one of Israel" (Ps 71:22; 78:41; 89:19; Is 1:4; 5:19 etc.),

120. The LXX translates the Hebrew phrase sometimes with κύριος σαβαωθ (Is 1:9) or with κύριος τῶν δυνάμεων (1 Kgs 18:15) or with κύριος παντοκράτωρ (2 Sm 7:8).

121. Translation Lanz.

122. Here 'ăḏōnāy is used together with Yhwh and therefore it is translated "O Lord God" following the Hebrew custom of the Masoretes and not "O Lord Lord".

123. See Even-Shoshan, A New Concordance of the Bible, p. 17-18.

he is "the First and the Last" (Is 44:6; 48:12), the "Ancient of days" (Dn 7:9), the "God of gods and Lord of lords", (Dt 10:17) etc.

2.5.3 God's Names in the New Testament

ὁ θεός *Theōs*

This word is the equivalent to the OT generic words for God we have seen before. It is used 1314 times in the NT.¹²⁴ It can denote the one and only true God and the gods of the Gentiles. Most of the time it means the true God (Mt 1:23). In some NT instances it points to the idols (e.g. 1 Cor 8:5). The English word "theology" (teaching about God) contains it in its first part.

ὁ κύριος *Kyriōs*

Kyriōs means "lord" and is used 719 times in the Greek NT¹²⁵. It can denote any lord and the LORD. Mary for example calls the supposed gardener in John 20:15 "Sir" (*Kyriē*). The owner of a slave is called his "master" (Col 4:1; Acts 16:16). In the title of Jesus in Rv 19:16 "King of kings and Lord of lords" it is clear that Jesus is the highest Lord above all the other rulers which might be called "lords" in this world, in heaven or on earth.

One of the most important functions of *Kyriōs* in the NT is in the way it is used as the equivalent of the OT *ʾădōnāy* for the covenant name of the God of Israel. When the NT quotes the OT (quite often, according to the LXX), *Kyriōs* is used for the name

124. According to Wiktionary, Concordance: New Testament Greek, [accessed May 14, 2013], http://en.wiktionary.org/wiki/Concordance:New_Testament_Greek.

125. According to *ibid*.

of God Yhwh in the OT.¹²⁶ This is combined with the fact that Jesus is also called Kyriōs (compare Ps 110:1 and Mt 22:44; Acts 2:34-36) which makes this a divine title of enormous importance in the New Testament and in the whole Bible. In Paul's key Christian confession that Jesus is "Lord" (1 Cor 12:3; Phil 2:9-11) it is clear that Paul understands Jesus to be Lord in the sense of being God, the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob (compare Phil 2:9-11 with Is 45:23-24). This fits his own conversion experience near Damascus where he saw a divine theophany and asked "Who are you, Lord?" (Acts 9:5), receiving the answer "I am Jesus, whom you are persecuting." From this day onward the fact that 'Jesus is Lord' was the foundation of his new life and new theology.

The idea that 'Jesus is Lord' is true for all writers of the Gospel books. In Jn 20:28 Thomas confesses Jesus as his Lord and his God. Fulfilling the words of Is 40:3 John the Baptist preached to prepare the way for the Lord in Mt 3:3; Mk 1:2-3 and Lk 3:4-6. And who comes after John? Jesus the Lord who is way mightier than even David (Mt 22:44; Mk 12:36; Lk 20:42).

We have seen above that the title of the OT "the Lord (God) of hosts" is sometimes translated by the LXX with κύριος παντοκράτωρ Kyriōs pantōkratōr, the Lord Almighty. This is reflected by Paul in 2 Cor 6:18. In the Revelation given to John this is used quite remarkably (Rv 1:8¹²⁷; Rv 4:8; Rv 11:17; Rv 15:3; Rv 16:7; Rv 16:14; Rv 19:6; Rv 19:15; Rv 21:22).

126. Compare e.g. Rom 10:13 and Joel 2:32.

127. κύριος, ὁ θεός, ... ὁ παντοκράτωρ and similar in the following verses in Rv.

ὁ πατήρ patēr

The word father is used 414 times in the NT¹²⁸ and quite a substantial number of times it denotes God as the heavenly father. We have seen that God is also seen as a father in the OT. So this is nothing new. But new is the focus and the emphasis Jesus Christ put on God as the Father. As the Father proclaims him as his beloved Son (Mt 3:17; 17:5), so the Son teaches the disciples to pray to God as "Our Father in heaven" (Mt 6:9) and he reveals God's name as the name of the Father (Jn 17:1.5.6.11; 17:21.24.25). Accepting Jesus, the Son of God, opens the door for us to become God's children (Jn 1:12; 3:3.5; Gal 3:26; Rom 8:14-16). This is an enormous privilege and one of the greatest joys of the New Covenant.

ὁ λόγος Lōgōs

It is especially John in his writings who presents Jesus as the "Word" in Jn 1:1-4.14, as the "Word of Life" in 1 Jn 1:1-3 and as "the Word of God" in Rv 19:13. The way John combines this teaching with "the beginning" shows that he wants this title to be understood in the context of Gn 1 as the word through which God the Father has created all things. Jesus as the Word is the means of God the Father to create the world and to reveal himself to the world. Peter comes close to this idea when he says that "the Spirit of Christ" was in the prophets (1 Pt 1:11) or when he insists that the prophecies point to the coming of Christ (2 Pt 1:16-21). In a way the whole of the New Testament agrees with this by claiming that the Old Testament prophecies had to be fulfilled in Christ (Mt 5:17-20; Lk 24:26-27.46-47; Jn 5:46).

128. According to Wiktionary, Concordance: New Testament Greek.

Other Names of God

As God is the "First and Last" in Isaiah (Is 44:6; 48:12), Jesus is the "First and Last" in Revelation (Rv 1:17; 2:8; 22:13). As God is "God of gods and Lord of lords" in Dt 10:17, God is "the King of kings and Lord of lords" in 1 Tm 6:15 and Jesus is "King of kings and Lord of lords" in Rv 19:16. Again, this list of the names of God is not a complete one.

2.6 God's Attributes

We now come to the attributes or qualities of God which are taught in Scripture. We will see that certain main attributes of God are consistent qualities of his being, they are consistently taught throughout salvation history, for example God's love and kindness. Still, there is a progress in revelation where many things become clearer and sharper by God's self-revelation through the Son.

2.6.1 God's attributes belong equally to all three persons of the Trinity.

This is especially true for the Trinity which is a deep divine mystery whose greatest and clearest revelation was left for the time of the New Covenant. The qualities or attributes of God describing the divine being are true for all three persons of the Trinity. As we have seen, orthodox faith claims that the three persons of the Trinity are equal according to their divine essence and only according to their role in salvation history subordinate. Here we are talking of the divine essence or divine being.

2.6.2 God's attributes are essential to his being.

The divine attributes we find in Scripture are essential to God's being. His truthfulness, for example, is such that he is not able to lie (Nm 23:19; Heb 6:18). God is Almighty, but he is almighty in agreement with his own essence or being. He always remains true to himself.

2.6.3 No one attribute is lifted up at the expense of others.

There is an inner harmony of God's attributes or qualities. For example his holiness and his love and his righteousness are in harmony with each other. There is an eternal, deep and harmonious unity and simplicity of God's divine essence which means that all his attributes agree and are at peace with each other.

2.6.4 Affirming God's attributes does not mean we fully know God.

On the one hand God has revealed himself to us in Scripture in a perfect way. But on the other hand we are limited in our understanding of God's revelation because of our own weakness in this time in the world (1 Cor 13:9-12).

2.6.5 God is different as compared to human qualities.

When the Scripture presents God's attributes, it uses a lot of words and pictures which we know from our own human world: righteous, loving, kind, strong etc. We will have to keep in mind that God is vastly greater than we are and that he is unlimited in his divine being in every respect. The words used sound similar to things

we know and this helps us to understand. But still there are great differences between God and us. We as temporary beings can not really understand what eternity is or what a being without beginning is. We as imperfect and sinful human beings can not really fathom how perfect and holy and loving God is.

2.7 Different Ways of Categorizing God's Attributes - Incommunicable Attributes

There are different ways of categorizing God's attributes. One possible way which we also follow here¹²⁹ is to distinguish between his communicable attributes and his incommunicable attributes which means that some of his attributes are exclusively divine and cannot be shared by any creature. These are the incommunicable attributes. But other divine attributes can be shared with some creatures up to a certain extent. These are the communicable attributes. We start with the incommunicable attributes which are the prerogative of the divine nature.

2.7.1 Independence and self-sufficiency

God does not need anybody or anything to exist or be happy. He is independent and self-sufficient (Acts 17:24-25):

24 The God who made the world and everything
in it, being Lord of heaven and earth, does not live in
temples made by man, 25 nor is he served by human

129. For this section see Grudem, *Systematic Theology. An Introduction to Biblical Doctrine*, p. 156-180.

hands, as though he needed anything, since he himself gives to all mankind life and breath and everything.

The idea that God is creator of everything and does not need his creation is also found similarly in Job 41:11 and Ps 50:10-12. Rv 4:11 presents the idea that everything was created out of the sheer will of God and that God therefore is worthy to be worshiped. But he does not depend on the adoration of his creatures. John 17:5 and 24 speak of the glory of the Son in the presence of the Father before the world came into being and of the love of the Father for the Son before the foundation of the world:

5 And now, Father, glorify me in your own presence with the glory that I had with you before the world existed... 24 Father, I desire that they also, whom you have given me, may be with me where I am, to see my glory that you have given me because you loved me before the foundation of the world.

While the above mentioned verses speak in a more negative way of God's independence that he does not need his creatures, the two verses in John give us a glimpse of the eternal love, glory and fellowship within the Trinity. God is in himself eternally glorious, loving and self-sufficient.

2.7.2 Unchangeableness

We as temporary creatures live in a constant flow of change. In contrast to this, God never does change (Ps 102:25-27):

25 Of old you laid the foundation of the earth,
and the heavens are the work of your hands.
26 They will perish, but you will remain;

they will all wear out like a garment.
 You will change them like a robe,
 and they will pass away,
 27 but you are the same, and your years have no end.

The idea that God never changes and stays forever the same is also proclaimed in Mal 3:6 and James 1:17.

2.7.3 Eternity

Moses proclaimed the eternity of the Lord God in these wonderful words (Ps 90:2):

2 Before the mountains were brought forth,
 or ever you had formed the earth and the world,
 from everlasting to everlasting you are God.¹³⁰

The impossibility to fathom the eternity of God is also taught in Job 36:26. For us temporary beings time starts with Gn 1:1, but the one who created everything "in the beginning" was of course before the beginning. He is beyond the dimensions of time and space which he himself created. He is not subordinate to those realities which are connected to everything created.

Rv 1:8 seems to look back to Ex 3:14 and to expose God as the one who is master of the past the present and the future, being himself not subjected to time. In John 8:58 Jesus hints to his own eternity as he does in 17:5 and 24. This is also how John starts his gospel: He points to the eternity of the Word (John 1:1-3.14).

130. וְיִמְעוֹלָם עַד-עוֹלָם אַתָּה אֱלֹהִים

2.7.4 **Omnipresence**

The most beautiful proclamation of the omnipresence of God is given to us by David (Ps 139:7-10):

7 Where shall I go from your Spirit?
Or where shall I flee from your presence?
8 If I ascend to heaven, you are there!
If I make my bed in Sheol, you are there!
9 If I take the wings of the morning
and dwell in the uttermost parts of the sea,
10 even there your hand shall lead me,
and your right hand shall hold me.

The teaching that God is everywhere in creation at the same time is also found in Jer 23:23-24 and in the NT with regard to the person of Jesus in Mt 28:18-20.

2.7.5 **Unity and simplicity**

Unity, of course, means that God is one, but also that he is not composed of different parts or elements. The same idea is conveyed by his simplicity. There is no dualism in God. He is one and he is "simple", he is not composed from different parts. There is no dualism in God with a fight between light and darkness. He is light and in him there is no darkness (1 Jn 1:5). He is love, eternal, steadfast and strong (1 Jn 4:8; Ex 34:6-7). The idea of the unity or simplicity of God is also related to the fact that if God were composed of different parts, then these parts were "before" the being of God and in consequence God would be not the first and not unchangeable. The unity and simplicity of God is thus related to his eternity and his unchangeableness.

2.8 Different Ways of Categorizing God's Attributes - Communicable attributes

We now come to those attributes of God which he can share up to a certain measure with his elect.¹³¹

2.8.1 Spirituality

In his answer to the question of the woman of Samaria about the right place of worship, Jesus said that from now on the place of worship would not be important but to worship God in spirit and truth, because God is spirit (Jn 4:21-24):

21 ... Woman, believe me, the hour is coming when neither on this mountain nor in Jerusalem will you worship the Father. 22 You worship what you do not know; we worship what we know, for salvation is from the Jews. 23 But the hour is coming, and is now here, when the true worshipers will worship the Father in spirit and truth, for the Father is seeking such people to worship him. 24 God is spirit, and those who worship him must worship in spirit and truth.

With the coming of the Spirit at Pentecost a new era has started where God is worshiped in spirit and truth. The gift of the Holy Spirit is what Jesus was speaking of to the woman (Jn 4:10.14; 7:37-39). Jesus here clearly teaches God's spirituality. He is eternal spirit (Heb 9:14). By giving us his Spirit he restores our spirituality (Gn 2:7; Jn 20:22; 1 Cor 15:44-45) to revive our spirit and make us

131. For this section see Grudem, *Systematic Theology. An Introduction to Biblical Doctrine*, p. 185-221.

alive again (Eph 2:1.6). God's spirituality is a good example of a communicable attribute because he grants us his Spirit and so lets us take part in his spirituality (1 Cor 2:10-12). Our human spirituality is realized on a deeper level (1 Cor 14:14; Rom 8:16). Through God's Spirit we can truly serve him (Phil 3:3) .

David had already recognized the implications of God's Spirit being everywhere, and that he could not flee anywhere from the Spirit's presence (Ps 139:7-10). Solomon knew that God was greater than all the heavens (1 Kgs 8:27). The temple could not contain God's full presence, but God could graciously accept this house as a place to make his name known. Because God is spirit, Israel was not allowed to make idolatrous images of God (Ex 20:4-6). Isaiah implies God's spirituality in his parallelism in Is 31:3.

2.8.2 **Invisibility**

Paul speaks of God when he says in 1 Tm 6:16:

... who alone has immortality, who dwells in unapproachable light, whom no one has ever seen or can see.¹³² To him be honor and eternal dominion. Amen.

God is invisible for mortal human beings (see the Greek original text). The same idea is often repeated in Scripture (Jn 1:18; 6:46; 1 Tm 1:17 ; 1 Jn 4:12; Ex 33:11.20-24.

Because God the Father is invisible, Christ the Son is important as the image of God to reveal God and His character (Col 1:15; Heb 1:3). To the request of Philip to show them the Father, Jesus could answer (Jn 14:9):

132. ὃν εἶδεν οὐδεὶς ἀνθρώπων οὐδὲ ἰδεῖν δύναται•

“Have I been with you so long, and you still do not know me, Philip? Whoever has seen me has seen the Father. How can you say, ‘Show us the Father’?”

God is invisible for us human beings as we are now. There are some promises for the future that the redeemed will see God (Mt 5:8; 1 Cor 13:12; Rv 22:3-4; 1 Jn 3:2).

The vision of God in 2 Cor 3:18 speaks of a spiritual contemplation of the Lord by faith and by the power of the Holy Spirit which happens now in the midst of troubles and sufferings (2 Cor 4:1-18) transforming us into his image.

2.8.3 Omniscient knowledge

When it comes to the subject of the omniscience of God, it is again David who contemplated this in great poetic depth (Ps 139:1-6):

1 O Lord, you have searched me and known me!
2 You know when I sit down and when I rise up;
you discern my thoughts from afar.
3 You search out my path and my lying down
and are acquainted with all my ways.
4 Even before a word is on my tongue,
behold, O Lord, you know it altogether.
5 You hem me in, behind and before,
and lay your hand upon me.
6 Such knowledge is too wonderful for me;
it is high; I cannot attain it.

One only has to multiply this knowledge of God with the number of human beings on the planet to get a glimpse of God's powerful mind. At the same time God's Spirit knows all of God and can not be searched by human intellect (1 Cor 2:10-16).

God knows everything (1 Jn 3:20), even the number of hairs on all human heads and all the sparrows under the sky (Mt 10:29-30). He does not only know the real future, but even the potential future (1 Sm 23:11-13; Mt 11:21.23; 2 Kgs 13:19), meaning what would happen, if a certain course of action would be taken. He knows the miracles of his creation in his perfect knowledge (Job 37:16), he knows the past and the future (Is 46:9-10; 42:8-9;

God's knowledge and ideas are totally supreme compared to ours (Is 55:9). Despite knowing everything, God can willingly decide to forget the forgiven sins of his people (43:25).

2.8.4 **Wisdom**

God not only has perfect knowledge, but he can use his knowledge and genius in perfect and divine wisdom (Job 9:4; 12:13), so that nobody can challenge him. He is so wise that he is called "the only wise God" (Rom 16:27). But he is happy to share his wisdom with people in need of it who ask in faith (James 1:5). To share in this wisdom, man needs the fear of the Lord (Ps 111:10). All works of God reflect his wisdom (Ps 104:24):

O Lord, how manifold are your works!
In wisdom have you made them all;
the earth is full of your creatures.

According to Eph 3:10 the church is a means to show "the manifold wisdom of God ... to the rulers and authorities in the heavenly places". On the one hand the "word of the cross is folly to those who are perishing" (1 Cor 1:18), but on the other the crucified Christ is "the power of God and the wisdom of God" for those "who are called, both Jews and Greeks" (1 Cor 1:24.30). God rules the whole world in his power and wisdom so that "all things work together

for good" for his chosen people (Rom 8:28). After showing God's ways with Israel in the past, present and future and writing one of the deepest sections of Holy Scripture (Rom 9-11) Paul closes his teaching with worshiping God (Rom 11:33):

Oh, the depth of the riches
and wisdom and knowledge of God!
How unsearchable are his judgments
and how inscrutable his ways!

2.8.5 Truthfulness and faithfulness

Truthfulness and faithfulness are very close in the Old Testament. People who speak the truth and cling faithfully to it, can be trusted. In this sense God is truthful and can be trusted, because he promises and then fulfills his promises. He is a God of faithfulness (Dt 32:4) who does not lie (Nm 23:19; Heb 6:18; Ti 1:2). He is "the only true God" (Jn 17:3; Jer 10:10-11). Believers can trust God because his words are true (2 Sm 7:28; Prv 30:5; God hates lying lips (Prv 12:22) and forbids false witness and lies (Ex 20:16; Eph 4:25).

2.8.6 Goodness

The fact that God is eternally good is celebrated more than once in the Old Testament (Ps 100:5; 106:1; 107:1). Goodness can be tasted and seen (Ps 34:8). God himself is the greatest good for a believer (Ps 73:25-26.28), but he also gives all kinds of good to the faithful (Ps 84:11); everything must work out for their good (Rom 8:28.32). Only God is really good (Lk 18:19). Because he is good, his law and holy will is good and perfect (119:68; Rom 12:2). The good God is the source of every truly good gift (Jas 1:17).

2.8.7 Love

One of the greatest sentences of the Holy Bible is John's short statement: "God is love" (1 Jn 4:8). One of the most famous Bible verses is John 3:16:

For God so loved the world, that he gave his only
Son, that whoever believes in him should not perish
but have eternal life.

The willingness of Jesus Christ to suffer and die proved to the world that he loves the Father (14:31). The love of the Father towards the Son is eternal and was already there before the foundation of the world (Jn 17:24). The loving relationship of the persons of the Trinity even before the foundation of the world shows us that God is love from eternity to eternity. We can only love God because he first loved us (1 Jn 4:19). We can not love the world and the Father (2:15). The love of God is to keep his commandments (1 Jn 5:3). The love of God towards us is revealed in Christ's death for us (Rom 5:8). This love of Christ is not only for all, but also very personal (Gal 2:20). God's loving character is also reflected in the fact that love of God and of our neighbor is central to God's law (Mt 22:37-38).

2.8.8 Mercy

When David had to choose the punishment for his sin, he preferred to "fall into the hand of the Lord, for his mercy is great; but let me not fall into the hand of man" (2 Sm 24:14). The mercy of God is the love of God for those who are in need. God revealed himself to Moses as merciful and gracious ('ēl raḥûm wəḥannûn; Ex 34:6). When we follow Jesus Christ through the Gospel, we see him as

a man of compassion and mercy who helped people in need (Mt 9:27,36). God became man in Jesus Christ so that he would be a merciful high priest to save people from their sins (Heb 2:14-18; 4:15-16). The merciful Christ teaches his disciples to be merciful (Mt 5:7) and so reflect this attribute of God in their lives.

2.8.9 **Grace**

When Moses wished to see God's glory, God taught him about his grace (Ex 33:19):

I will make all my goodness pass before you and will proclaim before you my name 'The Lord.' And I will be gracious to whom I will be gracious, and will show mercy on whom I will show mercy.

This shows the relationship between the covenant name of God and his sovereign grace and mercy. The name of God is "I am who I am" (Ex 3:14). Nobody can control God or His being. He is sovereign, and his grace and mercy are sovereign. God's grace is the root and source of election and salvation and to whom He shows mercy or not is totally his own choice (Rom 9:13-18):

13 As it is written, "Jacob I loved, but Esau I hated."
14 What shall we say then? Is there injustice on God's part? By no means! 15 For he says to Moses, "I will have mercy on whom I have mercy, and I will have compassion on whom I have compassion." 16 So then it depends not on human will or exertion, but on God, who has mercy. 17 For the Scripture says to Pharaoh, "For this very purpose I have raised you up, that I might show my power in you, and that my

name might be proclaimed in all the earth.” 18 So then he has mercy on whomever he wills, and he hardens whomever he wills.

People are chosen by God's grace and not on the basis of their own goodness or works (Rom 11:4-6):

4 But what is God's reply to him? “I have kept for myself seven thousand men who have not bowed the knee to Baal.” 5 So too at the present time there is a remnant, chosen by grace. 6 But if it is by grace, it is no longer on the basis of works; otherwise grace would no longer be grace.

This is also the meaning of the famous passage in Rom 3:23-25. On our human side there are the sins of all, on God's side there is His saving grace through faith in Jesus Christ. God's grace makes believers humble, because they are what they are not out of their own effort or strength but out of God's mercy and grace.

2.8.10 **Patience**

God's patience is expressed in his being "slow to anger" (Ex 34:6; Nm 14:18). Man can sin a lot and progress very far on his way of wickedness until God's anger will react and punish him. God is not easily and quickly provoked to act with punishment. Paul speaks in a similar way of God's patience when he pictures a sinner who abuses God's patience just to continue in his evil ways (Rom 2:4-5):

Or do you presume on the riches of his kindness and forbearance and patience, not knowing that God's

kindness is meant to lead you to repentance? 5 But because of your hard and impenitent heart you are storing up wrath for yourself on the day of wrath when God's righteous judgment will be revealed.

God's patience often describes His behavior before judgment takes place. It is meant to give people time to repent (1 Pt 3:20; 2 Pt 3:9).

2.8.11 **Humility and Meekness**

The incarnation of God becoming man is unique in all of history. It is the greatest miracle where innumerable other miracles stem from. It is an awesome truth that the resulting God-Man would be a master in humility and meekness (Mt 11:27-30):

27 All things have been handed over to me by my Father, and no one knows the Son except the Father, and no one knows the Father except the Son and anyone to whom the Son chooses to reveal him. 28 Come to me, all who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. 29 Take my yoke upon you, and learn from me, for I am gentle and lowly in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. 30 For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light.

What would our behavior be if we could say, "All things have been handed over to me"? How would we handle our enemies? Would we be poor or rich, serving or being served? When James and John used their mother to try to get the best government seats in the coming kingdom of Christ, Jesus taught them this lesson (Mt 20:25-28):

25 ... You know that the rulers of the Gentiles lord it over them, and their great ones exercise authority

over them. 26 It shall not be so among you. But whoever would be great among you must be your servant, 27 and whoever would be first among you must be your slave, 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.

Why are the principles of influence in the kingdom of God so different from those in the kingdoms of this world? Is it not because God is so different from us? Do we learn something here only about the humility of Christ or is there also something like the "humility and meekness of God"? What do we learn from Christ when he says, "Whoever has seen me has seen the Father" (Jn 14:9)? In the Old Testament David speaks of God's "gentleness" or "meekness"¹³³ in Ps 18:35.

The parallel in 2 Sm 22:36 uses "gentleness" (ESV)¹³⁴ It is Paul who puts a strong emphasis on the crucified Christ in 1 Cor 1:18-25. He speaks of "the foolishness of God" and "the weakness of God". At the same time Paul makes it clear that this is a dangerous truth. It is a weapon of God to "destroy the wisdom of the wise" (1 Cor 1:19) and "to bring to nothing things that are" (1 Cor 1:28). The fact that God might seem weak and that his message might seem foolish makes it possible to ignore God, to reject his message and walk into perdition.

In Rom 10:21 God looks weak enough when he waits for the

133. The Hebrew עֲנָוָה is from עָנָה which means "humility, meekness, condescension" according to Brown, Driver, and Briggs, *Hebrew and English Lexicon of the Old Testament*, p. 776.

134. The Hebrew וַעֲנִיתִי is a Hebrew Qal construct infinitive with suffix from the verb עָנָה which means in the Qal stem "1. be put down, become low, 2. be depressed downcast, 3. be afflicted" according to *ibid.*, p. 776.

repentance of Israel:

But of Israel he says, "All day long I have held out my hands to a disobedient and contrary people."

If you would see a father waiting for his children to come to him with arms held out, starting from 8.00 am and standing like this until 6 pm, what would you think? What would you think about his ability to control and teach his children, when you realize that they do not come, but laugh about him?

It is a dangerous truth that God might behave so humbly, so meekly and in seeming weakness. This theology of the cross is revealed in the deepest sense in the life of Jesus Christ. But there are traces of it throughout the pages of the Bible, starting already in Genesis. God used Joseph to save his family, even the brothers who sold him into slavery. How much was Joseph humbled, how deep down he let God have his way, before he was exalted and could save the chosen family? (Acts 7:9-14). How many years did Moses spend in exile before God used him to free his people from Egypt? (Acts 7:35-37). The people who are God's especially chosen people, often had to go through times of great trouble and persecution, before their calling was fulfilled and the times of blessing returned. Throughout history God shared the humiliation of his people and could be overlooked by the mighty rulers and people of the Gentiles. It is dangerous that God might hide himself in invisibility and seeming weakness, so that only those who are enlightened by faith seek him and are guided by him through the power of his promises.

2.8.12 Holiness

A central verse about God's holiness is found in Lv 19:2¹³⁵:

135. Cf. Lv 11:44-45; 1 Pt 1:16; Ex 19:4-6.

Speak to all the congregation of the people of Israel and say to them, You shall be holy, for I the Lord your God am holy.

This is another excellent example of "communicable attributes". God is holy.¹³⁶ We should be holy and so glorify our God.

One way that God taught His holiness was to make his mobile throne inaccessible to normal Israelites in the tabernacle and in the temple because it was in the most holy place where only the specially anointed high priest could enter once a year on the day of atonement (Ex 26:33; 29:44; 30:25-33).

Another part of this teaching of holiness was that the place of worship itself was holy and only people who had sanctified themselves were allowed to enter (Ps 24:3-4). There were even holy times set aside to worship God and seek his presence (Ex 20:11).

In the NT God educates his children in holiness so that they become holy and may be able to see him (Heb 12:10,14; 2 Cor 6:14-7:1). Gentiles are now together with the Jews in Christ in one holy temple (Eph 2:21; 5:26-27).

2.8.13 **Peace and Love for Order**

The church being the temple of the Holy Spirit also means that the church meeting should reflect God's character. When Paul writes to the Corinthians about the order of a service he builds it partly on the fact that God is a God of peace (1 Cor 14:31-33):

31 For you can all prophesy one by one, so that all may learn and all be encouraged, 32 and the spirits of

136. There are many verses teaching God's holiness: Ps 99:9; Ps 71:22; 78:41; Is 1:4; 5:19; 6:3; Rv 4:8 and more.

prophets are subject to prophets. 33 For God is not a God of confusion but of peace.¹³⁷

The opposite of peace here is confusion or disorder. God being a God of peace¹³⁸ also means that he dislikes disorder and loves good order.

When Paul calls Christ the peace in person (Eph 2:14), he can do this following Old Testament predictions about the coming Messiah as peace (Mi 5:5) or prince of peace (Is 9:6-7).

If people follow the guidance of the Holy Spirit, they will see peace as a part of the fruit of the Spirit in their lives (Gal 5:22).

2.8.14 Righteousness and Justice

Abraham build his intercession for Sodom and the cities around it (and especially for Lot) on the fact that God as the judge of the whole world will be just (Gn 18:25).¹³⁹ Moses praises the righteousness of God in his song (Dt 32:4):

The Rock, his work is perfect,
for all his ways are justice.
A God of faithfulness and without iniquity,
just and upright is he.

The righteousness of God also has the effect that his revelation is just (Ps 19:8; Is 45:19). Man can not really accuse God and be successful in it (Job 40:2.8; Rom 9:20-21).

137. οὐ γὰρ ἐστὶν ἀκαταστασίας ὁ θεὸς ἀλλὰ εἰρήνης

138. For God as a God of peace or Lord of peace see also Rom 15:33; 16:20; Phil 4:9; 1 Thes 5:23; Heb 13:20; 2 Thes 3:16.

139. The righteousness of God as judge is repeated many times throughout the Bible: Rom 1:18.32; Rv 15:3; 16:7; 19:2.

The climax of the revelation of God's righteousness is found in the sacrifice in the blood of Jesus Christ to atone for the sins of the world (3:21-26):

21 But now the righteousness of God has been manifested apart from the law, although the Law and the Prophets bear witness to it— 22 the righteousness of God through faith in Jesus Christ for all who believe. For there is no distinction: 23 for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God, 24 and are justified by his grace as a gift, through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus, 25 whom God put forward as a propitiation by his blood, to be received by faith. This was to show God's righteousness, because in his divine forbearance he had passed over former sins. 26 It was to show his righteousness at the present time, so that he might be just and the justifier of the one who has faith in Jesus.

The genitive of "God's righteousness" is explained by the apostle Paul in 3:26 in a two ways, first "so that he might be just" and second "and the justifier of the one who has faith in Jesus". The first relates to God himself being righteous, the second to his granting sinners a righteousness free of charge by faith only in the power of the blood of Christ.

2.8.15 Jealousy

The jealousy of God is God's love insofar as he wants to have an exclusive love-relationship with his chosen people. The background of this imagery is that God is seen as the husband and his chosen

people as wife. God loved Israel and liberated them out of the slavery in Egypt. God offered Israel the exclusive covenant relationship to be God's holy nation (Ex 19:4-6). The consequence is that Israel should have no other God in addition to God and that Israel should make no idolatrous images of God (Ex 20:5-6):

You shall not bow down to them or serve them,
for I the Lord your God am a jealous God,¹⁴⁰ visiting
the iniquity of the fathers on the children to the third
and the fourth generation of those who hate me, 6 but
showing steadfast love to thousands of those who love
me and keep my commandments.

Paul presents very similar ideas of the bride and bridegroom imagery in 2 Cor 11:2 with regard to Christ and the church in Corinth. The jealousy of God is a good example of the different aspects of God's love. When he punishes the idolatry of Israel, He fights for the undivided attention and love of his beloved "wife". The same is true for Paul's struggle to lead the Corinthians to a holy life in 2 Cor 10-13 and protect them from false apostles and false teachers.

2.8.16 Wrath

The wrath of God one response of God's holy character to the sins of people. One famous example is the idolatry of Israel with the golden calf and God's anger because of this sin when he said to Moses (Ex 32:8-10):

"8 They have turned aside quickly out of the way
that I commanded them. They have made for them-

140. God as 'ēl qannā', a jealous God, is also seen in Ex 34:14; Dt 4:24; 5:9; 6:15; Jo 24:19.

selves a golden calf and have worshiped it and sacrificed to it and said, "These are your gods, O Israel, who brought you up out of the land of Egypt!" 9 And the Lord said to Moses, "I have seen this people, and behold, it is a stiff-necked people. 10 Now therefore let me alone, that my wrath may burn hot against them and I may consume them, in order that I may make a great nation of you."

Because of the intercession of the mediator Moses, God did not destroy Israel in his wrath. But the Israelites continued to provoke God's wrath (Dt 9:7-8). In the renewal of the covenant in Deuteronomy they were warned of the danger of God's wrath (Dt 29:23).

When Josiah heard the words of the book of the law of God that had been found in the temple, he realized that the wrath of God was a real danger hovering over them and he repented and initiated reforms (2 Kgs 22:13).

Within the OT Ps 103:8-9 may help us to understand the framework for God's wrath or anger better:

8 The Lord is merciful and gracious,
slow to anger and abounding in steadfast love.
9 He will not always chide,
nor will he keep his anger forever.

While God's mercy, grace and love are ongoing and eternal, his anger is a temporary reaction to our sins. It will not be kept for ever. Comparatively, God may punish to the third and fourth generations, but He shows grace and mercy to a thousand generations (Ex 34:6-7; Is 54:8-10).

In the NT, God's wrath remains on those who do not trust the Son of God (Jn 3:36). According to Eph 2:3 all believers were spiritually dead and by nature children of wrath, like the rest of mankind,

before God had mercy on them and made them alive together with Christ.

It is interesting that the apostle Paul gives a summary of the content of his letter to the Romans in Rom 1:16-17 and then begins the exposition of the Gospel with the wrath of God being revealed from heaven "against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who by their unrighteousness suppress the truth" (Rom 1:18). From Rom 2:5-8 it becomes clear that there is a correspondence between the sins of an individual on the one hand and the wrath of God coming upon him on judgment day on the other:

5 But because of your hard and impenitent heart
you are storing up wrath for yourself on the day of
wrath when God's righteous judgment will be revealed.
6 He will render to each one according to his works: 7
to those who by patience in well-doing seek for glory
and honor and immortality, he will give eternal life; 8
but for those who are self-seeking and do not obey the
truth, but obey unrighteousness, there will be wrath
and fury.

This correspondence of evil works of men and God's wrath as an answer is also found in Col 3:6. God wants to show his wrath towards the "vessels of wrath prepared for destruction" (Rom 9:22).

God's wrath came upon the Jews in the wilderness because of their lack of faith (Heb 3:11) and also on them at the time of Paul because they wanted to hinder the spreading of the Gospel (1 Thes 2:16).

Salvation from God's coming wrath is granted through Jesus Christ (Rom 5:9; 1 Thes 1:10; 5:9).

When the the sixth seal was opened, John saw prophetically the events of judgment day (Rv 6:15-17):

Then the kings of the earth and the great ones and the generals and the rich and the powerful, and everyone, slave and free, hid themselves in the caves and among the rocks of the mountains, 16 calling to the mountains and rocks, "Fall on us and hide us from the face of him who is seated on the throne, and from the wrath of the Lamb, 17 for the great day of their wrath has come, and who can stand?"

All of mankind who are not redeemed by the blood of the lamb will want to hide themselves on the day of the wrath of God the Father and God the Son because they know that nobody can stand on this day. According to Rv 19:15 Jesus is the executor of God's wrath on that day by using the word of God that goes forth from his mouth like a sword (compare Is 11:4; 49:2). It is good to remember that the Lord Jesus loves righteousness and hates wickedness (Heb 1:9; Zec 8:17). Therefore the revelation of God's wrath in judgment will not be against the rules of justice and righteousness, but according to them (Rv 15:4; 16:7; 19:2.11).

There is one important piece of information found in 2 Pt 3:9-10 with regard to judgment day that we should take to heart:

9 The Lord is not slow to fulfill his promise as some count slowness, but is patient toward you, not wishing that any should perish, but that all should reach repentance. 10 But the day of the Lord will come like a thief, and then the heavens will pass away with a roar, and the heavenly bodies will be burned up and dissolved, and the earth and the works that are done on it will be exposed.

The coming of the day of the Lord has not happened yet according

to Peter because God wants nobody to perish but to reach repentance. This also means that repentance after this day is not possible. Otherwise this argument would be fruitless and the day could come any time, because people could repent afterwards. The seriousness of God's wrath on the day of judgment is that it implies a decision for all eternity (Rom 2:5-7; Dn 12:2-3; Rv 21:8; 20:10).

2.8.17 **Will**

God's will is powerful and effective with regard to creation, His sustaining and ruling the world and His salvation. All which has been created, has been created only because of God's will (Rv 4:11). Therefore God is worthy to be honored.

God rules the world both appointing governments and bringing them down according to his will (Dn 4:32; Rom 13:1).

Eph 1:11-12 tells us that God always works according to his will, also in the area of salvation:

11 In him we have obtained an inheritance, having been predestined according to the purpose of him who works all things according to the counsel of his will, 12 so that we who were the first to hope in Christ might be to the praise of his glory.

The passion and resurrection of Christ happened according to God's ordained plan (Acts 4:27-28). In the same way it could be God's will that a believer has to suffer while following Christ's example (1 Pt 3:17; 4:19).

A believer should humbly plan and live his life knowing that all depends on God's will (Jas 4:13-15).

2.8.18 **Freedom**

As creator and Lord of his creation God is free. He is not under any compulsion. In contrast to the nonexistence and inability of the idols Ps 115:3 states about God:

Our God is in the heavens; he does all that he pleases.¹⁴¹

God even rules over the hearts of the rulers of this world in their decisions (Prv 21:1; Dn 4:35; Rv 17:17). He is the King of kings (Dt 10:17), under no rule, but freely ruling everything (Dt 10:17; Rv 19:16).

2.8.19 **Omnipotence, Sovereignty**

The fact that God is omnipotent is overlapping with what has just been said about his freedom. Being the ruler of all, God is sovereign and has all power, is omnipotent. In the OT, "The LORD of hosts" (see section 2.5.2) is a name implying God's absolute power (Ps 24:8.10). The equivalent in the NT is "Lord Almighty" (2 Cor 6:18; Rv 1:8; see section 2.5.3).

In several places it is stated that nothing is impossible for God (Gn 18:14; Jer 32:17.27; Mk 14:36; Eph 3:20).

However, it is possible to misunderstand the biblical doctrine of God's omnipotence, if we think that God could do just anything, good or bad. The doctrine has to be understood within the biblical framework of God's ethical character. As far as a deed would be against God's character, he cannot do it. God cannot lie (Ti 1:2; Heb 6:18). He cannot deny his own faithful character (2 Tm 2:13). He cannot successfully be tempted to do something wicked (Jas 1:13).

141. כֹּל אֲשֶׁר-חָפֵץ עָשָׂה.

2.8.20 Perfection

We have already seen in Dt 32:4 that God is perfect in all He does. Ps 18:30 calls God's "way" perfect. In one of the most challenging sections of the Bible Jesus teaches his disciples to love even their enemies and pray for their persecutors. The reason is that they should reflect God's perfect love (Mt 5:45) in their lives and so prove to be true children of God (Mt 5:48):

You therefore must be perfect,
as your heavenly Father is perfect.¹⁴²

2.8.21 Joyfulness

In 1 Tm 6:15 Paul calls God "the blessed and only Sovereign"¹⁴³ while makariōs, the word here translated "blessed", means happy, joyful.¹⁴⁴ 1 Tm 1:11 presents the same idea. God is in himself joyful and happy. In Gn 1:31 God enjoys the quality of his "very good" creation. God will rejoice over his redeemed and transformed Jerusalem "as the bridegroom rejoices over the bride" Is 62:5.

Joy is so much part of God's being that people who are following the guidance of the Holy Spirit experience joy as part of the fruit of the Spirit (Gal 5:22).

142. Ἐσεσθε οὖν ὑμεῖς τέλειοι ὡς ὁ πατήρ ὑμῶν ὁ οὐράνιος τέλειός ἐστιν.

143. ὁ μακάριος καὶ μόνος δυνάστης

144. See W. Bauer, K. Aland, and B. Aland, *Griechisch-deutsches Wörterbuch zu den Schriften des Neuen Testaments und der frühchristlichen Literatur*, edition no. 6 (Berlin, 1988), p. 961.

2.8.22 **Beauty**

One reason why David¹⁴⁵ wanted to stay in the house of the Lord was that he was attracted by the beauty of the Lord (Ps 27:4):

One thing have I asked of the LORD,
that will I seek after:
that I may dwell in the house of the LORD
all the days of my life,
to gaze upon the beauty of the LORD
and to inquire in his temple.

The New Jerusalem is the ultimate place for a believer to see the beauty of God (Rv 22:4). That the beauty of God is more a spiritual beauty may be gathered from some references where believers are encouraged to be beautiful in the presence of God or Christ (1 Pt 3:4; Ti 2:10; Eph 5:27; Rv 19:8).

2.8.23 **Glorify**

The glory of God in addition to his own beautiful and glorious person is also his wealth and the splendor of his surroundings. It can be compared with the glory of a king like Solomon (Mt 6:29). The glory of king Solomon would be the glory of his person embedded in his royal surroundings: his clothes,¹⁴⁶ his servants, the greatness of his kingdom, the wealth of his palace, the width and breadth of his kingdom etc. Something like this is envisioned in the words of the Seraphim of Is 6:3:

Holy, holy, holy is the LORD of hosts;
the whole earth is full of his glory!

145. Compare also Asaph's enjoying the Lord in Ps 73:25.

146. Compare Ps 104:1-2; 24:10.

The Lord of hosts is the king of kings on his mighty throne (Is 6:1). His dominion is the whole earth which is filled with testimonies of his royal glory. God's own people make up an important part of God's glory (Is 43:7; 1 Pt 2:9; Mt 5:16; Phil 2:15)¹⁴⁷, especially in their future resurrection glory (Dn 12:3; Mt 13:43; 1 Cor 15:43). The beautiful way of the ongoing transformation of the faithful in the struggles of their lives is to contemplate Christ's glory. By seeing the glory of the Lord they themselves are changed into the likeness of Christ (2 Cor 3:18).

In the New Testament Jesus Christ is the revelation of the glory of God par excellence (Jn 1:14; 17:5.24; Heb 1:3; Lk 2:9; Mt 17:2), even in the New Jerusalem for all eternity (Rv 21:23).

147. I understand the "glory of God" in Rom 3:23 not as God's own glory, but as the "glory" or "honor" he gives to a human being. Because all humans have sinned, God cannot praise them, but has to condemn them. Only through God's grace in Christ can they reach a state where God can accept them as his beloved children.

Chapter 3

Creation

3.1 God Has Created Everything out of Nothing through His Word

"In the beginning, God created the heavens and the earth" (Gn 1:1). "Thus the heavens and the earth were finished, and all the host of them" (Gn 2:1). God created light just by speaking, "Let there be light" (Gn 1:3). And he continued to create through the power of his word (Gn 1:6.9.11.14.20.24.26). "By the word of the Lord the heavens were made, and by the breath of his mouth all their host" (Ps 33:6).

In the New Testament this creative word of God is identified with Jesus Christ who is the Word of God who became flesh (Jn 1:1-3.14):

1 In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. 2 He was in the beginning with God. 3 All things were made through him, and without him was not any thing made that

was made... 14 And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we have seen his glory, glory as of the only Son from the Father, full of grace and truth.

Because God the Father created everything through the "Word of God" (Rv 19:13) and "all things were made through him, and without him was not any thing made that was made" (Jn 1:3), there was nothing else before the beginning, before the foundation of the world than God himself. All that was created was created out of nothing through the Word of God, simply by God's speaking. That is impressive! As Hebrews 11:3 puts it:

By faith we understand that the universe was created by the word of God, so that what is seen was not made out of things that are visible.¹

According to the teaching of the Holy Scripture of the Old and New Testament God is from eternity to eternity, but the creation was created in the beginning out of nothing through God's word. All created things have a beginning, only God is without beginning and end.

According to biblical teaching there is a difference between the Creator and his creation. They are not one. Pantheism, the idea that everything is God, is not in the Bible.

God who has the power to create things simply by speaking, is almighty, sovereign, unstoppable. The Creator is independent, everything created depends on him.

1. πίστει νοοῦμεν κατηρτίσθαι τοὺς αἰῶνας ῥήματι θεοῦ, εἰς τὸ μὴ ἐκ φαινομένων τὸ βλέπομενον γεγενῆσθαι.

3.2 **God is the Sustainer of his Creation.**

God is not only the creator in the beginning, but also the sustainer of his creation all the time. After the catastrophe of the flood God promised stable conditions (Gn 8:21-22):

I will never again curse the ground because of man,
for the intention of man's heart is evil from his youth.
Neither will I ever again strike down every living creature
as I have done. While the earth remains, seedtime
and harvest, cold and heat, summer and winter, day
and night, shall not cease.

The seasons of the year are stable by the promise of God, which is the word of God. He is the giver of sunshine and rain (Mt 5:45). The whole Ps 104 is a praise of God the creator and sustainer of all his creations and all his creatures, but this part is especially famous (Ps 104:27-31):

27 These all look to you,
to give them their food in due season.
28 When you give it to them, they gather it up;
when you open your hand, they are filled with good
things.
29 When you hide your face, they are dismayed;
when you take away their breath, they die
and return to their dust.
30 When you send forth your Spirit, they are created,
and you renew the face of the ground.
31 May the glory of the Lord endure forever;
may the Lord rejoice in his works.

Because God has created everything in his great wisdom and he sustains everything with his great power, the psalmist wishes God

to enjoy his works. It is interesting that God may enjoy looking at this creation, that he may rejoice in his works.

In the New Testament we are not only told that all things have been created through Jesus Christ the Word of God, but also that all things are sustained by Jesus Christ the Lord (Col 1:15-17):

15 He is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of all creation. 16 For by him all things were created, in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or rulers or authorities—all things were created through him and for him. 17 And he is before all things, and in him all things hold together.²

In Christ "all things hold together" or he "upholds the universe by the word of his power" (Hebrews 1:2-3):

2 but in these last days he has spoken to us by his Son, whom he appointed the heir of all things, through whom also he created the world. 3 He is the radiance of the glory of God and the exact imprint of his nature, and he upholds the universe by the word of his power. After making purification for sins, he sat down at the right hand of the Majesty on high.³

What an idea that Jesus Christ is God who became man and as man still he would uphold the universe through his divine and powerful word. When the soldiers drove the nails into the hands and feet of Christ, Christ himself gave the soldiers their breath to use their

2. 1:17 καὶ αὐτός ἐστιν πρὸ πάντων καὶ τὰ πάντα ἐν αὐτῷ συνέστηκεν

3. 1:3 ὃς ὢν ἀπαύγασμα τῆς δόξης καὶ χαρακτήρ τῆς ὑποστάσεως αὐτοῦ, φέρων τε τὰ πάντα τῷ ῥήματι τῆς δυνάμεως, δι' αὐτοῦ καθαρισμὸν τῶν ἁμαρτιῶν ποιησάμενος ἐκάθισεν ἐν δεξιᾷ τῆς μεγαλωσύνης ἐν ὑψηλοῖς

muscles and he gave the atoms and molecules of the nails the firmness so that he could be wounded and crucified and shed his blood for us.

On the day of his coming he will use fire to dissolve the elements and let the heavens and the earth pass away which he sustained with all the creatures up to that day in his power (2 Pt 3:7.10-12).

3.2.1 God cares for his creation

God does not sustain his creation in a cool and detached way, he is attached to it, he cares for his creation. We have seen that God can enjoy his creation (Ps 104:31; Gn 1:31). Ps 145:8-10 teaches us God's mercy over all his creation:

8 The Lord is gracious and merciful,
slow to anger and abounding in steadfast love.
9 The Lord is good to all,
and his mercy is over all that he has made.
10 All your works shall give thanks to you, O Lord,
and all your saints shall bless you!⁴

In the New Testament the gospel is of course especially preached first to the Jews, then also to the Gentiles, but it is interesting that in Mk 16:15-16 the world wide gospel is the gospel for all creation:

15 And he said to them, "Go into all the world and proclaim the gospel to the whole creation. 16 Whoever believes and is baptized will be saved, but whoever does not believe will be condemned."

4.

9 טוב־יְהוָה לְכָל־רְחֻמָּיו עַל־כָּל־מַעֲשָׂיו:
10 יוֹדוּךָ יְהוָה כָּל־מַעֲשֶׂיךָ וְחַסִּדֶּיךָ יְבָרְכֻכָּה:

Of course, creation here means human beings who can hear the gospel, accept it and be baptized. But still the use of the word is interesting. If we combine this text with Rom 8:18-23, we see that the gospel successfully preached to all of mankind has implications for the whole of creation:

18 For I consider that the sufferings of this present time are not worth comparing with the glory that is to be revealed to us. 19 For the creation waits with eager longing for the revealing of the sons of God. 20 For the creation was subjected to futility, not willingly, but because of him who subjected it, in hope 21 that the creation itself will be set free from its bondage to decay and obtain the freedom of the glory of the children of God. 22 For we know that the whole creation has been groaning together in the pains of childbirth until now. 23 And not only the creation, but we ourselves, who have the firstfruits of the Spirit, groan inwardly as we wait eagerly for adoption as sons, the redemption of our bodies.

On the day of the second coming of Jesus Christ, Jesus will be revealed in his divine glory and with him the sons and daughters of God will be revealed (Col 3:3-4; 2 Cor 6:18; Rom 8:18-19). That is the day all of creation is waiting for. Because Adam had sinned, death and destruction came into the world (Rom 5:12). Adam had been created in the image of God and been appointed to rule the earth (Gn 1:26-28), therefore his sin had such a disastrous effect on all of his dominion.

When Christ the last Adam will come to rule the world together with his own, then "the creation itself will be set free from its bondage to decay and obtain the freedom of the glory of the

children of God" (Rom 8:21). The whole world will be born again (Rom 8:22; Mt 19:28). This remarkable hope for creation totally agrees with Ps 145:8-10 and with God's merciful character. God surely cares for his creation (cf. Is 11:6-9; 65:17-25).

3.2.2 God rules his creation in his providence

God has total control over the realm of nature, "Are not two sparrows sold for a penny? And not one of them will fall to the ground apart from your Father" (Mt 10:29).

God also has total control over the realm of human history and rules over all of heaven (Dt 10:17; Dn 2:20-21; 4:32.34-35; 5:21; Mt 28:18; Rom 13:1; Rv 19:16).

From these sections it is crystal clear that God has always been involved in his creation and kept control and will continue to do so until he ushers in his eternal kingdom of peace where he will finally be all in all (1 Cor 15:28). This biblical view is contrary to Deism where God is the creator who has made the world and everything like a big clockwork machine and now lets it run without interfering with it.

3.3 Angels, Messengers

3.3.1 In the Old Testament

Word used

The Hebrew word used for angels and messengers is מַלְאָךְ *malā'k*.⁵ It is used for somebody sent to perform a certain task or to deliver a certain message. The person sent can be a heavenly angel or a human messenger. Normally this is recognizable from the context. Both the heavenly angels and the human messengers are creatures, having been called into life by the creator.

The angel of the Lord

The angel of the Lord מַלְאָךְ יְהוָה *malāk ādōnay* is found quite often in the OT: Gn 16:7.9.10.11; 22:11.15; Ex 3:2; Nm 22:22.23; Nm 22:24.25.26.27.31; 22:32.34.35; Jdg 2:1.4; 5:23; 6:11.12.21.21.22; 13:3.13.15.16; 13:17.18.20.21.21; 2 Sm 24:16; 1 Kgs 19:7 (pointing back to "an angel" in 19:5); 2 Kgs 1:3.15; 19:35; 1 Chr 21:12.15; 21:16.18.30; Ps 34:7; 35:5.6; Is 37:36; Hag 1:13; Zech 1:11.12; 3:1.5.6; 12:8; Mal 2:7.

It has been suggested in Christian Systematic Theology that "the angel of the Lord" could be Jesus Christ appearing before his incarnation. The reasoning for this is as follows: In some contexts "the angel of the Lord" and God himself seem to be used interchangeably, "the angel of the Lord" appearing as a kind of reve-

5. The Hebrew text here and below is taken from Westminster Hebrew Institute, ed., Westminster Leningrad Codex, [accessed May 9, 2011], 2008, <http://www.crosswire.org/sword/modules/ModInfo.jsp?modName=WLC-Even-Shoshan>, *A New Concordance of the Bible* gives 212 occurrences in his concordance, p. 658f.

lation of God and human beings answering with adoration understanding that they encountered God. See for example Gen 16:7-14; Num 22:31; Judges 13:18-20; Zech 12:8. If God has revealed himself in the Old Testament in a visible appearance, then, it is argued, it would fit, that it is the second person within the Trinity to appear to man (compare Col 1:15).

By reflecting on this question it is important to note several things with regard to the phrase "the angel of the Lord". When you hear this phrase in English, it sounds like this might always be the same angel. But this is not the case, because at least in two cases the term denotes human beings. In Malachi 2:7 we read:

For the lips of a priest should guard knowledge, and people should seek instruction from his mouth, for he is the messenger of the Lord of hosts.

And Haggai 1:13 says about the prophet:

Then Haggai, the messenger of the Lord, spoke to the people with the Lord's message, "I am with you, declares the Lord."

Because of these verses it is clear that the term *malāk ădōnay* can not denote the same person in every instance.

Another important point is a peculiarity of Hebrew narrative in comparison to English narrative. When some person or object is introduced in English narrative, we first use the indefinite article "a", like: "Suddenly an angel appeared to her..." In all following occurrences we would use the definite article for the same angel: "Then the angel said to her ..." This is different in Hebrew narrative. Even if someone or something is introduced for the first time, it can have the definite article: "Suddenly the angel appeared to her

..." The idea behind it might be that it is "the" angel of this story, the angel in this context. In the phrase *malāk ādōnay* the first word is in the Hebrew "construct state" and therefore the whole term is always determined because of the name of God and therefore normally translated "The angel of the Lord".⁶

It is interesting to see how the Septuagint has dealt with this Hebrew speciality in translating the Hebrew into Greek, which seems to be closer to the English when it comes to the use of the definite article. Let us take the first appearance of our expression in the Bible, that is Gn 16:7.9.10.11. In 16:7 we have *αγγελος κυριου* *angēlōs kyriōu*⁷, without definite article, which could be translated into English as "an angel of the Lord". In Gn 16:9.10.11 we have *ο αγγελος κυριου* *hō angēlōs kyriōu* in every instance, which is "the angel of the Lord".

It is similar in Judges 2:1 and 2:4, first without definite article, then with. But in other passages of the LXX it is with definite article from the start, like in Nm 22:22 *ο αγγελος του θεου* *hō angēlōs tōu thēōu*. Here it is interesting, that the LXX prefers to use "God" for the Name of God in the Hebrew *יהוה* YHWH which is normally translated with *Kyriōs* = Lord.

What we can say with certainty is that the phrase "the angel of the Lord" does not point to one and the same angel or messenger in every passage of the Old Testament (the same is true for comparable passages in the New Testament, see below).

But it also sometimes becomes clear from the context that "the

6. Gesenius, E., and Cowley, Hebrew Grammar, p. 410.

7. The text of the LXX translation of the Old Testament is given according to Alfred Rahlfs, ed., *Septuaginta*, Ninth (Stuttgart: Deutsche Bibelstiftung Stuttgart, 1971). The digital text was taken from *Septuagint, Morphologically Tagged Rahlfs*, Sword Module 2.5, [Accessed December 22, 2011], July 2008, <http://www.crosswire.org/sword/modules/ModInfo.jsp?modName=LXX>.

angel of the Lord" is a self-revelation of God. Then God uses an angelic appearance to reveal something about himself, see for example Ex 3:2.6.14 or the way Jacob blesses Joseph in Gn 48:15-16:

The God before whom my fathers Abraham and Isaac walked, the God who has been my shepherd all my life long to this day, the angel who has redeemed me from all evil, bless the boys; and in them let my name be carried on, and the name of my fathers Abraham and Isaac; and let them grow into a multitude in the midst of the earth.

In these contexts God uses the words and the deeds of his messenger to reveal himself.

Because of the New Testament teaching that Jesus Christ is God and eternal (John 1:1-3), it is of course possible that he appeared in the Old Testament but the when and how is difficult to determine for us because this was not an emphasis in the Old Testament. The Trinitarian self-revelations of God belong more to the New Testament. If the New Testament (e.g. Rv 1:12-16) uses Old Testament texts (here: Dn 7:13; 10:5-6), then we can assume or even know that the person appearing in the Old Testament (in this case to Daniel) is identical with Jesus Christ in his pre-incarnate state.

Tasks and characteristics of angels in the OT

1. They are sent to deliver God's revelation, word, guidance or help to individual human beings.
 - (a) Guidance with a promise. For Hagar about the birth of Ishmael (Gn 16:7.9.10.11); for Abraham about sparing Isaac and about the promises for Isaac (Gn 22:11.15);

for Elijah (2 Kgs 1:3.15); for David with regard to the place of an altar to be built, the future place of the temple (1 Chr 21:18); to declare to man what is right for him (Job 33:23); Jacob saw "a ladder set up on the earth, and the top of it reached to heaven. And behold, the angels of God were ascending and descending on it" (Gn 28:12); Jacob sees the angels of God as a camp of God's soldiers (Gn 32:1-2). Later a representative of God's army camp fights with Jacob (Gn 32:24-30; Hos 12:3-4).

- (b) Guidance with a threat. Balaam (Nm 22:22.23.24.25; Nm 22:26.27.31; 22:32.34.35).
 - (c) Related to the call of persons. Moses (Ex 3:2); Gideon (Jgs 6:11.12.20.21.21.22.22); the parents of Samson (Jgs 13:3.6.9; 13:13.15.16; 13:17.18.20.21); Zechariah gets guidance for Joshua the high priest through a vision (Zec 3:1-10).
 - (d) Help or salvation in a difficult situation. To save Ishmael and Hagar from death by thirst (Gn 21:17-18); to arrange Isaac's marriage with Rebekah (Gn 24:7.40); Jacob blesses Joseph, "the God who has been my shepherd all my life long to this day, the angel who has redeemed me from all evil, bless the boys" (Gn 48:15-16); to save Elijah from death by hunger and thirst (1 Kgs 19:5.7); to save those who fear the Lord (Ps 34:7); to save Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego from fire (Dn 3:28); to save Daniel from the lions (Dn 6:22); to save the believer from harm (Ps 91:11).
2. They are sent to deliver God's revelation, word, guidance or help to the people of Israel.

- (a) Help and salvation. From Egypt (Nm 20:16); an angel guiding Israel to the promised land with the name of God in him (Ex 23:20-21.23); God threatens to only send an angel, but not go himself among them (Ex 32:34-33:2); the angel of his presence saved them (Is 63:9).
 - (b) God's word or guidance. At Bochim (Jgs 2:1.4); a command to curse Meroz (Jgs 5:23).
 - (c) Angels can talk to prophets who then deliver the message. Zechariah (1:9.13.14.19; 2:3.; 4:1.4.5; 5:5.10; 6:4.5).
3. They are sent to punish.
- (a) Individuals. David's wish for his enemies (Ps 35:5.6); people who do not fulfill their vows (Eccl 5:6).
 - (b) Israel. For David's sin in the census (2 Sm 24:16-17; 1 Chr 21:12.15.16.20.27.30).
 - (c) Gentile nations. Two angels go to Sodom and Gomorrah so that the cities be destroyed but Lot and his family be saved (Gn 19:1.15). God sent destroying angels to judge Egypt and save Israel (Ps 78:49); "And that night the angel of the Lord went out and struck down 185,000 in the camp of the Assyrians" (2 Kgs 19:35; Is 37:36; 2 Chr 32:21).
4. Angels in visions.
- (a) They can talk and explain things to the prophet who receives the vision (Zec 1:9.13.14.19; 2:3.; 4:1.4.5; 5:5.10; 6:4.5).

- (b) They are talked to in visions. By riders on horses (Zec 1:11) or by God himself (Zec 1:13).
 - (c) They talk to God or guided by God in favor of God's people. The angel of the Lord (Zech 1:12; 3:4).
- 5. An angel of the Lord may have great power and be used by God to reveal his own divine power and self. In the burning bush that was not consumed (Ex 3:2.6.14); apparent from the words with which Jacob blesses Joseph in Gn 48:15-16; the angel guiding Israel to the promised land (Ex 23:20-21); Jacob fighting with God while fighting with an angel (Hos 12:3-4); in Exod 14:19-20 we have another instance where God's self-revelation is mentioned together with an angel, because the pillar of cloud represented the presence of God.
- 6. Angels are God's powerful warriors and his army (Gn 32:1-2; Ps 103:20; 148:2; Is 37:35-36:). "The mountain was full of horses and chariots of fire all around Elisha" (2 Kgs 6:17).
- 7. Angels are called to praise God (Ps 103:20; 148:2.)
- 8. Angels are spirits (Ps 104:4 combined with Heb 1:7).
- 9. Angels can bless (Gn 48:16).
- 10. Humans are compared to angels with their qualities, especially David or his house.
 - (a) "18 If God puts no trust in his servants and attributes folly to his angels, 19 how much more to those who live in houses of clay, whose foundation is in the dust" (Idea of Eliphaz the Temanite Job 4:18-19).

- (b) David is as good or blameless in the sight of Achish of Gath as an angel of God (1 Sm 29:9).
- (c) David is like the angel of God to discern good and evil and has wisdom like the wisdom of the angel of God to know all things that are on the earth (idea of a wise woman of Tekoa 2 Sm 14:17,20).
- (d) "But my lord the king is like the angel of God; do therefore what seems good to you" (Words of Mephibosheth to David 2 Sm 19:27).
- (e) "The house of David shall be like God, like the angel of the Lord, going before them" (Zec 12:8);

11. Sometimes people claim that an angel has talked to them. Jacob (Gn 31:11); an old prophet makes a deceitful claim to another prophet (1 Kgs 13:18);

For human messengers

The word for heavenly messengers (angels) and for earthly, human messengers is the same in Hebrew. Only the context can make it clear, whether it is an "angel" or an "messenger". Here are verses which tell us of messengers who are men. Often the people sending them are humans, sometimes it is God. If the sender is clear, he is given in brackets.

Messenger מַלְאָךְ mal'āk or מַלְאָךְ הַמַּלְאָךְ hammal'āk singular without or with definite article: 2 Sm 11:19,22,23,25 (Joab); 1 Kgs 19:2 (Jezebel); 22:13 (Ahab); 2 Kgs 5:10 (Elisha); 6:32,32,33 (King of Israel); 10:8; 2 Chr 18:12 (Ahab); Job 1:14; Prv 13:17; Is 42:19 (God); Ez 23:40 (Oholah and Oholibah = Samaria and Jerusalem);

Hg 1:13 (the messenger of the Lord); Mal 1:1 מַלְאָכִי malā'ākî the name Malachi means "my messenger", so God's messenger; 2:7 (Levites are messengers of the Lord); 3:1 (God says: "my messenger" מַלְאָכִי malā'ākî and "the angel" or "the messenger of the covenant" וּמַלְאָךְ הַבְּרִית ūmal'āk habbərîṭ).

Messengers מַלְאָכִים mal'ākîm, plural. Often when messengers are sent, the plural is used. It seems that it was more usual to send more than one messenger. Again, when the sender is clear, he is given in brackets.

Gn 32:3.6 (Jacob); Nm 20:14 (Moses); 21:21 (Israel); 22:5 (Balak); 24:12 (Balak); Dt 2:26 (Moses); Jo 6:17 (Israel); 6:25 (Joshua); 7:22 (Joshua); Jgs 6:35.35 (Gideon); 7:24 (Gideon); 9:31 (Zebul); 11:12.13.14 (Jephthah); 11:17.19 (Israel); 1 Sm 6:21 (the men of Beth-shemesh); 11:3.4 (Jabesh); 11:7 (Saul); 11:9.9 (Jabesh); 16:19 (Saul); 19:11.14.15.16.20.20.21.21 (Saul); 23:27; 25:14.42 (David); 2 Sm 2:5 (David); 3:12 (Abner); 3:14 (David); 3:26 (Joab); 5:11 (Hiram king of Tyre); 11:1; 11:4 (David); 11:27 (David).

1 Kgs 20:2.5.9.9 (Ben-hadad king of Aram); 2 Kgs 1:2.3.5.16 (Ahaziah); 7:15 (King of Israel); 14:8 (Amaziah); 16:7 (Ahaz); 17:4 (Hoshea); 19:9.14.23 (Sennacherib king of Assyria); 1 Chr 14:1 (Hiram king of Tyre); 19:2 (David); 19:16 (Aram); 2 Chr 35:21 (Neco king of Egypt); 36:15.16 (God's messengers):

15 The Lord, the God of their fathers, sent persistently to them by his messengers, because he had compassion on his people and on his dwelling place. 16 But they kept mocking the messengers of God, despising his words and scoffing at his prophets, until the wrath of the Lord rose against his people, until there was no remedy.

Neh 6:3 (Nehemiah); Isa 14:32 (nation); 18:2 (Cush); 30:4 (Judah); 33:7 ("the ambassadors of peace weep bitterly"); 37:9.14 (Assyria's king Sennacherib); Isa 44:26 (God); Jer 27:3; Ezekiel 17:15 (Judah); 23:16 (Oholibah, meaning Jerusalem); 30:9 (God); Nahum 2:13 (Nineveh).

3.3.2 In the New Testament

Word used

The Greek word used for angels / messengers is ἄγγελος *angĕlōs*. It is used for somebody sent to perform a certain task or to deliver a certain message. The person sent can be a heavenly angel of God or a human messenger or in a few cases an angel of Satan, a fallen angel. Normally this is recognizable from the context. In the New Testament the word means heavenly angel most of the time. The heavenly angels of God, the human messengers and also the angels of Satan have been created by God.

First 'angel' used for heavenly angels.

Angel of the Lord. Only Matthew and Luke (in Lk and Acts) use the phrase ἄγγελος κυρίου *angĕlōs kyriōu* or ὁ ἄγγελος κυρίου *hō angĕlōs kyriōu* (with definite article) which resembles the language of the Old Testament and "the angel of the Lord" there (Mt 1:20.24; 2:13.19; 28:2; Lk 1:11; 2:9; Acts 5:19; 8:26; 12:7.23). In the New Testament the angel of the Lord is clearly different from Jesus Christ (see for example Luke 2:9-11 where the angel of the Lord points to the child in the manger).

Tasks and characteristics of angels in the NT

1. God and the angels. There are angels of God (Lk 12:8.9). "There is joy before the angels of God over one sinner who repents" (Lk 15:10). The disciples "will see heaven opened, and the angels of God ascending and descending on the Son of Man" (Jn 1:51).
2. Jesus and the angels.
 - (a) Because Jesus Christ has control over everything, his own will not be separated from God's love in Christ by anything, also not by angels (Rom 8:38). Jesus confesses his faithful ones before God's angels and denies those who deny him before them (Lk 12:8.9). Those who are denied can have no salvation because the angels will have to collect the elect at the end.
 - (b) The gospel proclaimed by Jesus and the disciples who were trained by him is greater than the law declared by angels (Heb 2:1-4).
 - (c) The angels serve Christ and worship him. They are "his angels". "Then the devil left him, and behold, angels came and were ministering to him" (Mt 4:11; cf. Mk 1:13). The devil even tried to tempt Jesus Christ by quoting Ps 91:11-12 pointing out that the angels have special care for the Son of God so he could throw himself down from the pinnacle of the temple (Mt 4:6; Lk 4:10). In Gethsemane an angel from heaven appeared to Jesus strengthening him (Lk 22:43). Jesus will come "with his angels in the glory of his Father, and then he will repay each person according to what he has done" (Mt 16:27; par. 25:31). "Let all God's angels worship him" (Heb 1:6).

- (d) When God the Father said from heaven: "I have glorified it, and I will glorify it again." the crowd misinterpreted the voice as thunder or as an angel who has spoken to Jesus (Jn 12:28-29).
- (e) After his crucifixion and resurrection Jesus appeared triumphant to angels (1 Tm 3:16). Jesus "went into heaven and is at the right hand of God with angels and authorities and powers subject to him" (1 Pt 3:22). Angels, numbering myriads of myriads and thousands of thousands, worship Jesus (Rv 5:11-12). A myriad in Greek is ten thousand, a myriad of a myriad would be 100 million. A thousand of a thousands would be a million. The phrase as it stands here gives the impression of many, many angels (cf. the "myriads of angels" in the heavenly Jerusalem in Heb 12:22).
- (f) Jesus as the unique and divine Son of God is "as much superior to angels as the name he has inherited is more excellent than theirs" (Heb 1:4.5). In comparison to this angels are only created spiritual beings serving him and his chosen ones (Heb 1:7.13).
- (g) The world to come will not be subjected to angels, but to him "who for a little while was made lower than the angels, namely Jesus, crowned with glory and honor because of the suffering of death, so that by the grace of God he might taste death for everyone" (Heb 2:5.7.9). The salvation Jesus brings as high priest is not for angels, but for the offspring of Abraham (Heb 2:16).
- (h) On judgment day Jesus will send his angels to "gather out of his kingdom all causes of sin and all law-breakers, and throw them into the fiery furnace" (Mt 13:39-42;cf.

13:49). On that day Jesus also "will send out the angels and gather his elect from the four winds, from the ends of the earth to the ends of heaven" (Mk 13:27; par. Mt 24:31).

3. The church and angels.

- (a) Hospitable people sometimes "entertained angels un-awares" (Heb 13:2).
- (b) Apostles "have become a spectacle to the world, to angels, and to men" (1 Cor 4:9).
- (c) The work of the grace of God in Christ in the church is so great the angels have the great desire to bend down to watch what is going on in the church (1 Pt 1:12). The possible invisible presence of angels at the gathering of the church causes Paul to write what he writes in 1 Cor 11:10.
- (d) Angels are "all ministering spirits sent out to serve for the sake of those who are to inherit salvation" (Heb 1:14). There can be a connection between certain angels and single believers (The angels of little believing children always see the face of God the Father who is in heaven, Mt 18:10. Acts 12:15: "Peter's" angel).
- (e) After death angels transport believers to paradise as they carried the poor man to Abraham's side (Lk 16:22).
- (f) Believers will judge angels (1 Cor 6:3).
- (g) In Acts 6:15 Stephen's face compared to an angel's face. Though Paul's condition was a trial to the Galatians, they received him "as an angel of God, as Christ Jesus" (Gal 4:14).

4. Angels are sent to deliver God's revelation, word, guidance or help to individual human beings.
 - (a) Mose: to call him to guide Israel out of Egypt (Acts 7:30.35.38 pointing to Ex 3).
 - (b) Joseph: to take Mary home as his wife because she is still a virgin and will be the mother of the redeemer (Mt 1:20.24); to take Mary and Jesus to Egypt to save them from Herod (Mt 2:13); to go back to Israel with Mary and Jesus (Mt 2:19).
 - (c) Gabriel appeared to Zechariah: to tell of the birth of John the Baptist, his significance and to give rules about him (Lk 1:11.13.18.19).
 - (d) Gabriel appeared to Mary (Lk 1:26.30.34.35.38; 2:21).
 - (e) The shepherds: to bring good news of a great joy that will be for all the people, that a Savior, who is Christ the Lord, is born for them (Lk 2:9.10.13.15).
 - (f) The women at the tomb: an angel of the Lord descended from heaven, caused an earthquake, rolled back the stone and scared away the soldier guards to make way for the women and told them that Jesus had risen and will show himself to the disciples in Galilee (Mt 28:2.5); Lk 24:23 (the women "had even seen a vision of angels, who said that he was alive"); Jn 20:12 (two angels asking Mary Magdalene: "Woman, why are you weeping?").
 - (g) Cornelius: to send for Peter to hear from him the word of salvation (Acts 10:3.7; 11:13).
 - (h) To free his people from prison: the apostles (Acts 5:19); Peter (Acts 12:7.8.9.10.11).

- (i) Philip: to "go toward the south to the road that goes down from Jerusalem to Gaza" (Acts 8:26)
 - (j) Paul: to tell him, "God has granted you all those who sail with you" (Acts 27:23).
- 5. Angels are sent to deliver God's revelation, word, guidance or help to the people of Israel. The law was "delivered by angels" (Acts 7:53) consisting of "living oracles" given by the angel (Acts 7:38) and was "a message declared by angels" (Heb 2:2). The law "was put in place through angels by an intermediary" (Gal 3:19).
- 6. They are sent to deliver God's revelation, word, guidance or help to the church of God of Israel and the Gentiles. An angel delivered "Revelation" to John and the other servants of God (Rv 1:1; 22:6).
- 7. Angels are sent to punish.
 - (a) Individuals. King Herod (Acts 12:23).
 - (b) The nations. See e.g. the seven trumpet angels (Rv 8:2.6.7.8.10.12.13; 9:1.13.14; 10:7; 11:15) or the the seven angels with the seven golden bowls full of the wrath of God (15:1.6.7.8; 16:1.2.3.4; 16:8.10.12.17; 17:1.7 + 19:9 + 21:9 + 22:8).
- 8. Angels in the book of Revelation.
 - (a) Single angels mentioned: 1:1; 22:6 (the angel who delivered Revelation to John and the others servants of God); 5:2 (a strong angel); 7:2 (another angel with the seal of the living God); 8:3.4.5 (another angel ...

was given much incense to offer with the prayers of all the saints on the golden altar before the throne); 10:1.5.8.9.10 (another mighty angel); another angel having great authority called, "Fallen, fallen is Babylon the great!" (18:1); 18:21 (one strong angel); 19:17 (one angel standing in the sun); 20:1 (an angel coming down from heaven); 21:17 (measure of an angel); 22:16 ("I, Jesus, have sent my angel to testify to you about these things for the churches.")

(b) Groups of angels:

- i. Four angels "standing at the four corners of the earth, holding back the four winds of the earth" (7:1).
- ii. The seven trumpet angels (8:2.6.7.8.10.12.13; 9:1; 9:13.14; 10:7; 11:15).
- iii. Four angels of judgment who are bound at the great river Euphrates and are released to kill a third of mankind at the time of the sixth trumpet (9:14-15).
- iv. Michael and his angels are fighting against the dragon and his angels and defeating them throwing them out of heaven down to the earth (12:7-9).
- v. Six times "another angel" is mentioned in Rv 14:6-20. The first three are counted (14:6-11). The last three are found in 14:15-20. These two passages are an inclusion enveloping the center piece which is about Jesus Christ and the saints who have faith in him (14:12-14). Another angel with an eternal gospel (14:6); another angel, a second saying, "Fallen, fallen is Babylon the great" (8);

another angel, a third saying, "If anyone worships the beast ... he also will drink the wine of God's wrath" (14:9-10); another angel came out of the temple, "calling ... to him who sat on the cloud, 'Put in your sickle, and reap...' (14:15); another angel, he too had a sharp sickle (14:17); another angel, the angel who has authority over the fire, called with a loud voice to the one who had the sharp sickle, "Put in your sickle and gather the clusters from the vine of the earth (14:18).

vi. The seven angels with the seven golden bowls full of the wrath of God (15:1.6.7.8; 16:1.2.3.4; 16:8.10.12.17; 17:1.7 + 19:9 + 21:9 + 22:8 (one of the seven angels who had the seven bowls). Is the angel of the waters in 16:5 the bowl angel number 3?

vii. Twelve angels at the gates of the New Jerusalem (21:12).

(c) All angels of God summed up together. They worship Jesus Christ as God and acknowledge his part in salvation (Rv 5:11; 7:11). Jesus will confess the name of the one who conquers before his Father and before his Father's angels (3:5).

9. Some additional information about angels.

(a) Angels are called angels of heaven, from heaven or in heaven (Mt 22:30; 24:36; Mk 12:25; 13:32; Heb 12:22 in the heavenly Jerusalem). There are twelve angels as guards at the gates of the New Jerusalem (Rv 21:12).

- (b) Numbers of angels. There are "myriads of myriads and thousands of thousands" (Rv 5:11-12). A myriad in Greek is ten thousand, a myriad of a myriad would be 100 million. A thousand of a thousands would be a million. The phrase as it stands here gives the impression of many, many angels. There are "myriads of angels" in the heavenly Jerusalem in Heb 12:22).
- (c) Angels as spirits: "He makes his angels winds" (or "spirits")⁸ (Heb 1:7). "Are they not all ministering spirits sent out to serve for the sake of those who are to inherit salvation?" (Heb 1:14).⁹
- (d) God's angels are holy and chosen. Mk 8:38 (holy); Lk 9:26 (holy); Acts 10:22 (a holy angel); Rv 14:10 (holy); 1 Tm 5:21 (chosen).
- (e) Angels as soldiers, part of God's armies. With the angel who proclaimed the Christmas message to the shepherds was "a multitude of the heavenly host (= army) praising God" (Lk 2:13.15). Michael and his angels are fighting against the dragon and his angels (Rv 12:7-9). "And the armies of heaven ... were following him on white horses" (Rv 19:14). The Father could have sent Jesus "more than twelve legions of angels" (Mt 26:53).
- (f) Angels are mentioned together with other "authorities" (Rom 8:38; 1 Pt 3:22; 2 Pt 2:11).

8. Ὁ ποιῶν τοὺς ἀγγέλους αὐτοῦ πνεύματα

9. οὐχὶ πάντες εἰσὶν λειτουργικὰ πνεύματα εἰς διακονίαν ἀποστελλόμενα διὰ τοὺς μέλλοντας κληρονομεῖν σωτηρίαν;

- (g) God's angels do not pronounce a blasphemous judgment against "the glorious ones" before the Lord (2 Pt 2:10-11; probably Satan and those powerful spiritual personalities who are connected with him, cf. Jude 1:8-9)
- (h) The angels have at least one language that can be spoken by those who have the gift of speaking in other tongues (1 Cor 13:1). But because they had nothing similar to the tower of Babylon in their history (Gn 11:1-9), they perhaps have only one language of their own.
- (i) While the Sadducees said "that there is no resurrection, nor angel, nor spirit", the Pharisees acknowledged that all. Therefore they acknowledged that it was possible that "a spirit or an angel spoke" to Paul (Acts 23:8-9).
- (j) If an angel from heaven would preach another gospel, he would be accursed (Gal 1:8). There were people in Colossae who judged their fellow believers "insisting on asceticism and worship of angels, going on in detail about visions" and were "puffed up without reason" in their sensuous minds (Col 2:18).

Secondly 'angel' used for human messengers.

Messenger(s) Mt 11:10 (John the Baptist as God's messenger); Lk 7:27 (John the Baptist as God's messenger); Lk 7:24 (John's messengers); 9:52 (messengers of Jesus); James 2:25 (messengers of Joshua).

The angels of the seven churches Rv 1:20; 2:1.8.12.18; 3:1.7.14.

Thirdly 'angel' used for fallen angels

Fallen angels Mt 25:41 (Satan's angels); 2 Cor 11:14 (Satan disguised as an angel of light); 12:7 (an angel of Satan); 2 Pt 2:4 (God did not spare angels when they sinned, but cast them into hell and committed them to chains of gloomy darkness to be kept until the judgment); Jude 6 (the angels who did not stay within their own position of authority, but left their proper dwelling, he has kept in eternal chains under gloomy darkness until the judgment of the great day); Rv 12:7.8 (Now war arose in heaven, Michael and his angels fighting against the dragon. And the dragon and his angels fought back, but he was defeated and there was no longer any place for them in heaven).

3.4 Gabriel and Michael, Archangels

There are two strong heavenly spiritual personalities mentioned with name in the Old and the New Testaments: Gabriel and Michael.

3.4.1 Gabriel

In the Old Testament

Gabriel (גַּבְרִיֵּאל *gabrî'ēl* 'man of God' or 'strength of God')¹⁰ is only mentioned in the Old Testament in the book of Daniel in 8:16 and 9:21. In both places his task is to help Daniel understand the vision granted to him. Dn 8:15-16:

15 When I, Daniel, had seen the vision, I sought to understand it. And behold, there stood before me one

10. Gladstone, Hillyer, and al., *The Illustrated Bible Dictionary* Part 1, p. 532.

having the appearance of a man. 16 And I heard a man's voice between the banks of the Ulai, and it called, "Gabriel, make this man understand the vision."

The vision which Gabriel has to explain to Daniel here is the vision of the ram and the goat. The ram with the two horns represents the kings of Media and Persia and "the goat is the king of Greece" (8:21).

In the second instance Daniel had read the book of the prophet Jeremiah and wanted to know more about the 70 years and turned to God in prayer, fasting and repentance (9:1-3). God answered him by sending Gabriel and giving him the message of the 70 weeks (9:21-24):

21 While I was speaking in prayer, the man Gabriel, whom I had seen in the vision at the first, came to me in swift flight at the time of the evening sacrifice. 22 He made me understand, speaking with me and saying, "O Daniel, I have now come out to give you insight and understanding. 23 At the beginning of your pleas for mercy a word went out, and I have come to tell it to you, for you are greatly loved. Therefore consider the word and understand the vision. 24 Seventy weeks are decreed about your people and your holy city, to finish the transgression, to put an end to sin, and to atone for iniquity, to bring in everlasting righteousness, to seal both vision and prophet, and to anoint a most holy place."

The revelation of God which Gabriel brings or explains to Daniel relates to great world powers in their own time like the kings of Media and Persia and Greece on the one hand and Israel, the people

of God with Jerusalem as the center on the other. It also relates to the ultimate fulfillment of all prophecies in the end times.

In the New Testament

In the New Testament Gabriel is only mentioned in the book of Luke bringing the news of the birth of John the Baptist to his father Zechariah and the news of the birth of Jesus the Christ to the virgin Mary. When Zechariah had trouble to believe the good news, Gabriel revealed his identity to underline the truth of his message (Lk 1:18-20):

18 And Zechariah said to the angel, “How shall I know this? For I am an old man, and my wife is advanced in years.” 19 And the angel answered him, “I am Gabriel, who stands in the presence of God, and I was sent to speak to you and to bring you this good news. 20 And behold, you will be silent and unable to speak until the day that these things take place, because you did not believe my words, which will be fulfilled in their time.”

Again Gabriel's message is related to the fulfillment of prophecies, to God's word being truthful and sure. Therefore he is also sent to Mary as a fulfillment of God's promises to the house of David (Lk 1:26-27):

26 In the sixth month the angel Gabriel was sent from God to a city of Galilee named Nazareth, 27 to a virgin betrothed to a man whose name was Joseph, of the house of David. And the virgin's name was Mary.

When Mary asks how it is possible for her as a virgin to give birth to Jesus Christ to be king of Israel, Gabriel again underlines that God's word surely will happen (Lk 1:35-37):

The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you; therefore the child to be born will be called holy - the Son of God. 36 And behold, your relative Elizabeth in her old age has also conceived a son, and this is the sixth month with her who was called barren. 37 For nothing will be impossible with God.

Gabriel seems to be entrusted with "high profile" revelations which are very important for salvation history. According to his messages God rules the nations and world powers in such a way that he will ultimately bring about the kingdom of God with his Christ at the top ruling Israel and the world for ever.

3.4.2 Michael

In the Old Testament

Michael (מִיכָאֵל *mīkā'ēl* 'who is like God?')¹¹ is only mentioned in the Old Testament in the book of Daniel in 10:13.21 and 12:1 which is in the last vision of the book which stretches from 10:1 to 12:13. At that time Daniel was mourning for three weeks before God desiring to understand more of the visions which God had sent to him. His prayer was answered and God sent to him such a strong heavenly personality (10:5-6)) that he lost all his strength and fell

11. M. Gladstone, N. Hillyer, and et al., *The Illustrated Bible Dictionary* Part 2 (Wheaton, Illinois, 1980), p. 997.

down on his face. A comparison with Rv 1:13-15 shows that it is possible that this was Jesus Christ in his pre-incarnate state.

If we accept that Jesus Christ revealed himself to Daniel in his divine power, then it is interesting what he says about himself and about Michael (10:12-13)

Fear not, Daniel, for from the first day that you set your heart to understand and humbled yourself before your God, your words have been heard, and I have come because of your words. 13 The prince of the kingdom of Persia withstood me twenty-one days, but Michael, one of the chief princes, came to help me, for I was left there with the kings of Persia,¹² 14 and came to make you understand what is to happen to your people in the latter days. For the vision is for days yet to come.

Daniel's desire to understand more was granted from the first of the 21 days and Christ would have come then to bring him more understanding, but "the prince of the kingdom of Persia" hindered his coming for three weeks. Only the help from "Michael, one of the chief princes" made his coming now possible. All this points to spiritual battles going on within the invisible world which have an influence on what happens on earth.

At the time of the vision ("In the third year of Cyrus king of Persia" 10:1) Persia was the dominant world power in that part of the world where the Jews lived. And while Cyrus was the human king of Persia with enormous power, there was also this "prince of the kingdom of Persia" who would withstand the divine Christ for

12. וְשָׂרָא מַלְכוּת פָּרְסָא עֹמֵד לְנִגְדִי עֲשָׂרִים וְאַחַד יוֹם וְהִנֵּה מִיכָאֵל אֶחָד הַשָּׂרִים
הָרָאשִׁים בָּא לְעֻזְרָנִי וְאֲנִי נִוְתַרְתִּי שָׁם אֶצֶל מַלְכֵי פָּרְסָא:

21 days and would then oppose Michael instead. Michael is also called "prince", but even "one of the chief princes". In the New Testament he is called "archangel" which fits this description here.

In 10:20-11:1 Christ gives more information about himself and Michael:

Do you know why I have come to you? But now I will return to fight against the prince of Persia; and when I go out, behold, the prince of Greece will come. 21 But I will tell you what is inscribed in the book of truth: there is none who contends by my side against these except Michael, your prince. 11:1 And as for me, in the first year of Darius the Mede, I stood up to confirm and strengthen him.

Michael is called "your prince" pointing him to be especially related to the people of God Israel. Michael and the divine Christ are also companions in battle. In 10:13 and 10:21 Michael helps Christ and in 11:1 Christ helped Michael.

Having delivered his revelation to Daniel, the divine Christ will continue to fight the prince of Persia and after that fight he will confront the prince of Greece. As Greece will supplant Persia as world power (see 8:20-22), we here get a glimpse of the spiritual battles behind the scenes of world history. Salvation history is not only driven by human beings, but by armies of God on the one hand ("Lord of hosts"; cf. Joshua 5:13-15) and other spiritual beings opposing God on the other (cf. Is 24:21; 27:1).

While in 10:13 Michael is only one of the chief princes which are several, in 10:21 he is unique, "there is none who contends by my side against these except Michael, your prince." When it comes to spiritual battles and spiritual war, the prince Michael has a key role side by side with the divine Christ.

In the New Testament

In the NT Michael is mentioned twice. In Jude 1:9 we hear of him as an archangel:

But when the archangel Michael, contending with the devil, was disputing about the body of Moses, he did not presume to pronounce a blasphemous judgment, but said, "The Lord rebuke you."

As we know from Daniel Michael is especially Israel's heavenly prince. Therefore it is no surprise that he would be the angel who would contend with the devil about the body of Moses. We see Moses and Elijah in glory on the mount of transfiguration speaking with the transfigured Jesus (Lk 9:30-31). Elijah went alive to heaven as we read in 2 Kgs 2:1-14. That the glorified Moses can talk to Jesus on the mount, presupposes some graceful work of God on his body which the devil was opposed to, but Michael contended successfully for.

In Revelation 12 the dragon who is Satan tried to devour the Christ-child after his birth, but failed to do so. On the contrary the "child was caught up to God and to his throne" (12:5). Consequently a war broke out in heaven (12:7-9):

7 Now war arose in heaven, Michael and his angels fighting against the dragon. And the dragon and his angels fought back, 8 but he was defeated and there was no longer any place for them in heaven. 9 And the great dragon was thrown down, that ancient serpent, who is called the devil and Satan, the deceiver of the whole world - he was thrown down to the earth, and his angels were thrown down with him.

When it comes to battle, Michael as archangel seems especially apt to fight the enemies of God. We have seen that in Daniel 10-12 and we see it here. Whenever there is a change in the dominating world power, there is also a kind of spiritual battle in the background, in the invisible world. Within Revelation this war in 12:7-9 prepares the way for a beast rising out of the sea (12:17-13:1):

12:17 Then the dragon became furious with the woman and went off to make war on the rest of her offspring, on those who keep the commandments of God and hold to the testimony of Jesus. And he stood on the sand of the sea. 13:1 And I saw a beast rising out of the sea, with ten horns and seven heads, with ten diadems on its horns and blasphemous names on its heads. 2 And the beast that I saw was like a leopard; its feet were like a bear's, and its mouth was like a lion's mouth. And to it the dragon gave his power and his throne and great authority.

The four wild beasts representing the four world powers of Daniel 7 are here seen in one beast as we see the four world powers united in Daniel 2 in one great image. The seven heads sum up the complete sequence of world powers since God's people became a separate people (Egypt, Assyria, Babylonia, Media and Persia, Greece, Rome, the seventh after Rome and this beast of Rv 13 as number eight and a repetition of the one of the seven, see Rv 17:7-11). This beast triumphs over everything in the world, it even overcomes the saints. People worship the dragon and the beast saying, "Who is like the beast, and who can fight against it?" (13:4) This rhetorical question expects the answer: "Nobody!"

It is interesting that this whole built-up of Satan-worship and beast-worship is based on lies. The truth is implied in the name of

the archangel Michael: "Who is like God?" This rhetorical question expects the answer: "Nobody!" It is of high significance that this Michael with his angels threw Satan and his angels out of heaven in chapter 12. The whole of what Satan, the beast and the other beast (13:11ff) do in chapter 13 is one big bluff, one big lie for a short time performance ending in the final defeat and eternal condemnation of the main actors (Rv 20:10).

3.4.3 Archangels

The New Testament speaks only twice of archangels (ὁ ἀρχάγγελος *hō archangēlos*), once in Jude 9 which we already have seen talking about the archangel Michael and once in 1 Thes 4:16-17:

16 For the Lord himself will descend from heaven with a cry of command, with the voice of an archangel, and with the sound of the trumpet of God. And the dead in Christ will rise first.¹³ 17 Then we who are alive, who are left, will be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air, and so we will always be with the Lord.

Because what we have here happens at the time of the last trumpet (cf. 1 Cor 15:52), we can say that we have the same action mentioned in Mt 24:30-31:

30 Then will appear in heaven the sign of the Son of Man, and then all the tribes of the earth will mourn, and they will see the Son of Man coming on the clouds

13. ὅτι αὐτὸς ὁ κύριος ἐν κελεύσματι, ἐν φωνῇ ἀρχαγγέλου καὶ ἐν σάλπιγγι θεοῦ, καταβήσεται ἀπ' οὐρανοῦ, καὶ οἱ νεκροὶ ἐν Χριστῷ ἀναστήσονται πρῶτον

of heaven with power and great glory. 31 And he will send out his angels with a loud trumpet call, and they will gather his elect from the four winds, from one end of heaven to the other.

In Matthew Jesus sends his angels to gather the elect at the sound of the trumpet call. Paul adds that there will also be the voice of an archangel heard. If we combine both, we get the information that an archangel will "oversee" or command the work of the angels while they collect God's people from everywhere. The name of the archangel is not mentioned. But if we remember that Michael stands for God's people we can at least assume that it will be his voice.

The sound of the trumpet could be a call to gather God's people for a feast or to gather them for battle (Nm 10:9-10). If we combine this with Rv 19:14 and 17:14, we can assume that it is a call for battle. Then Michael would not only oversee the gathering of God's people from all over the earth, but also their incorporation as a battle force in God's heavenly armies. That would fit his job description as far as we have seen him in action in other places.

In the two places in the New Testament the word archangel is used in the singular. Once it is clearly used for Michael, in the other verse it very well could be Michael again. So according to this, there could be just one archangel. But we have seen in Daniel 10:13 that Michael is called "one of the chief princes"¹⁴ which is translated in the LXX with εἰς τῶν ἀρχόντων τῶν πρῶτων *hēis tōn archōntōn tōn prōtōn* "one of the first rulers" which is quite close to the term "archangel". Therefore Daniel 10:13 suggests a plurality of archangels.

14.

אַחַר הַשָּׁרִים הָרְאִשִּׁים

Within Jewish tradition there is such a plurality of archangels, "the angels of the presence' who stand before God's throne praising him and interceding for men (Tobit 12:15; Jubilees 2:2; 1 QH 6:13; 1 QSb 4; Testament of Levi 3:5,7; cf. Lk 1:19; Rev. 8:2)."¹⁵ They are presented either as four: Gabriel, Michael, Sariel (Uriel) and Raphael, or as seven: Gabriel, Uriel, Raphael, Raguel, Michael, Sariel (or Saraqael) and Remiel.

On the backdrop of Jewish tradition Revelation 8:2 could perhaps point to seven archangels:

Then I saw the seven angels who stand before God,
and seven trumpets were given to them.¹⁶

It is interesting that they are mentioned in the context of the prayer of the saints (Rv 8:3-5) which would also agree with Tobit 12:15 and Testament of Levi 3:7.¹⁷

3.5 Cherubim

In the Old Testament

A cherub (כְּרוּב *kərûḇ*), plural cherubim (כְּרוּבִים *kərûḇîm*) is a heavenly spiritual being found most of the time or always in the presence of God. Perhaps it would not be correct to call them a

15. Gladstone, Hillyer, and al., *The Illustrated Bible Dictionary Part 1*, p. 532 article "GABRIEL".

16. 8:2 καὶ εἶδον τοὺς ἑπτὰ ἀγγέλους οἱ ἐνώπιον τοῦ θεοῦ ἐστήκασιν, καὶ ἐδόθησαν αὐτοῖς ἑπτὰ σάλπιγγες.

17. F. E. Gaebelein, *The Expositor's Bible Commentary: Hebrews, James, 1,2 Peter, 1,2,3 John, Jude, Revelation*, vol. 12, Morris, L. and Burdick, D. W. and Blum, E. A. and Barker, G. W. and Blum, E. A. and Johnson, A. F. (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Zondervan, 1981), p. 488-489.

kind of angels, because angels or messengers are often sent by God somewhere to do something or to convey a message to somebody there, while cherubim simply stay in the presence of God or protect the area of God's presence so that people who are uninvited are not able to come to God's throne.

1. Cherubim protecting paradise. The first time cherubim are mentioned in the Bible is in Gn 3:24:

He drove out the man, and at the east of the garden of Eden he placed the cherubim and a flaming sword that turned every way to guard the way to the tree of life.¹⁸

The cherubim and the sword are placed by God to hinder man to reach paradise and the tree of life in paradise. For Adam and Eve paradise was the place where they first lived and could meet God (Gn 3:8). So even here the cherubim guard a place which was related to the presence of God.

2. Cherubim in the tabernacle and on the ark of the covenant
 - (a) Two cherubim of gold on the two ends of the mercy seat of the ark of the covenant (Ex 25:18.19.20.22; 37:7.8.9; The voice of the Lord spoke "from between the two cherubim" to Moses (Nm 7:89). The Lord of hosts is enthroned on the cherubim of the ark of the covenant representing a heavenly reality on earth (1 Sm 4:4; 2 Sm 6:2; 1 Chr 13:6). So Hezekiah could pray to God and say: "O Lord the God of Israel, who

18. וַיִּגְרֹשׁ אֶת-הָאָדָם וַיִּשְׁכֵּן מִקְדָּם לְנֹעַן אֶת-הַכְּרֻבִּים וְאֵת לַהֵט הַחֶרֶב.
הַמִּתְהַפֶּכֶת לְשָׁמֹר אֶת-דֶּרֶךְ עֵץ הַחַיִּים:

is enthroned above the cherubim, you are the God, you alone, of all the kingdoms of the earth; you have made heaven and earth" (2 Kgs 19:15; cf. Is 37:16). Similarly in Ps 80:1 and 99:1).

- (b) cherubim skillfully worked into the ten curtains of the tabernacle (Ex 26:1; 36:8;;
- (c) cherubim skillfully worked into veil of the most holy (Ex 26:31; 36:35;

3. Cherubim in the temple of Solomon

- (a) Two cherubim of olivewood overlaid with gold in the inner sanctuary, each ten cubits high (1 Kgs 6:23-28; 2 Chr 3:10.11.12.13). The priests "brought the ark of the covenant of the Lord to its place in the inner sanctuary ... underneath the wings of the cherubim (1 Kgs 8:6-7; cf. 2 Chr 5:7.8). The idea of "the golden chariot of the cherubim that spread their wings and covered the ark of the covenant of the Lord" in 1 Chr 28:18 can be understood with Keil: "The cherubim, not the ark, are the chariot upon which God enters or is throned; cf. Ps. xviii. 11, xcix. 1, Ex. xxv. 22."¹⁹
- (b) engraved figures of cherubim around all the walls of the house, in the inner and outer rooms (1 Kgs 6:29; 2 Chr 3:7).
- (c) carvings of cherubim on the two doors of the entrance to the inner sanctuary overlaid with gold (1 Kgs 6:32;

19. C. F. Keil, *I & II Kings, I & II Chronicles, Ezra, Nehemiah, Esther*, Martin, James <trans>; Taylor, Sophia <trans>; Harper, Andrew <trans> (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Eerdmans, 1986), p. 294 under 1 Chr 28:11-19.

- (d) cherubim worked on the veil between the holy place and the most holy (2 Chr 3:14);
 - (e) carvings of cherubim on the two doors of the entrance to the nave overlaid with gold (1 Kgs 6:35);
 - (f) The ten stands of bronze for the sea of cast metal had panels. And on the panels were lions, oxen, and cherubim (1 Kgs 7:29). "And on the surfaces of its stays and on its panels, he carved cherubim, lions, and palm trees" (1 Kgs 7:36).
4. God riding on a cherub to come and save David (2 Sm 22:11; Ps 18:10; cf. 1 Chr 28:18).
5. Cherubim in the visions of Ezekiel
- (a) The cherubim in the vision of Ezekiel's calling (1:1-3:27) are there not mentioned as cherubim, but later identified as such (see 10:15; cf. 10:20):

And the cherubim mounted up. These were the living creatures that I saw by the Chebar canal.²⁰
 - (b) Cherubim in the rest of the book are found mentioned in these verses: Ez 9:3; 10:1.2.2.3.4.6.7.7.7.8.9.9.9.14; 10:15.16.16; 10:18.19.20; 11:22; 28:14.16; 41:18.18; 41:18.18.20.25.

First when the cherubim are introduced they are called "living creatures". The word for "living creature" is חַיָּיָה *hayyāh* which is

20. וַיֵּרָמוּ הַכְּרוּבִים הַהֵם הָיָה הַחַיָּה אֲשֶׁר רָאִיתִי בְּנֶהֱרַב-כְּבָר :

also the normal word for an animal. A human being can also be called "a living creature" or "a living being".

The word living creature is used 15 times for the cherubim in Ezekiel. Nine times it is living creatures in the plural (Ez 1:5.13.13; 1:14.15.15.19.19.; ; 3:13) and six times it is used with the singular, three times in the phrase "for the spirit of the living creature was in the wheels"²¹ (KJV; Ez 1:20.21.) or "for the spirit of the living creature was in them",²² also meaning the wheels (KJV; Ez 10:17).

In Ez 1:22 the singular may be deliberate with a real singular meaning (KJV):

And the likeness of the firmament upon the heads of the living creature was as the colour of the terrible crystal, stretched forth over their heads above.²³

Again in Ez 10:15.20 the singular may be deliberate with a real singular meaning (KJV):

15 And the cherubims were lifted up. This is the living creature that I saw by the river of Chebar²⁴ ... 20 This is the living creature that I saw under the God of Israel by the river of Chebar; and I knew that they were the cherubims.²⁵

If the singular in these verses is deliberate, then the idea is perhaps that the four living creatures are so much one that they act like

21. כִּי רוּחַ הַחַיָּה בְּאִפְּנֵי:

22. כִּי רוּחַ הַחַיָּה בָּהֶם:

23. וְרָמוֹת עַל-רָאשֵׁי הַחַיָּה רָקִיעַ כְּשֵׁין הַקֶּרַח הַנוֹרָא נָטוּי עַל-רָאשֵׁיהֶם מִלְּמַעְלָה:

24. וַיִּרְמּוּ הַכְּרוּבִים הֵיא הַחַיָּה אֲשֶׁר רָאִיתִי בְּנַהֲר־כְּבָר:

25. הֵיא הַחַיָּה אֲשֶׁר רָאִיתִי תַּחַת אֱלֹהֵי-יִשְׂרָאֵל בְּנַהֲר־כְּבָר וְאָנֹכִי כִּי כְּרוּבִים הָיָה:

one living creature. Their choreography and their movements are guided by "the spirit of the living creature ... in them", by one spirit making them one. It may well be that the word "cherub" mentioned in Ps 18:10 and 2 Sm 22:11 also designates a "chariot" of cherubim as in 1 Chr 28:18 and that we have to think of something like Ez 1 for those verses as well. In agreement with this it is mentioned in 9:3 that "the glory of the God of Israel had gone up from the cherub on which it rested to the threshold of the house" (notice the singular "cherub"; cf. 10:4).

The cherubim had "the likeness of four living creatures".²⁶ Their appearance and what they carry is described thus (1:5-6.10.15.18.22 + 25-28):

... they had a human likeness, 6 but each had four faces, and each of them had four wings ... 10 As for the likeness of their faces, each had a human face. The four had the face of a lion on the right side, the four had the face of an ox on the left side, and the four had the face of an eagle ... 15 Now as I looked at the living creatures, I saw a wheel on the earth beside the living creatures, one for each of the four of them ... 18 And their rims were tall and awesome, and the rims of all four were full of eyes all around ... 22 Over the heads of the living creatures there was the likeness of an expanse, shining like awe-inspiring crystal, spread out above their heads ... 25 And there came a voice from above the expanse over their heads ... 26 And above the expanse over their heads there was the likeness

5 ומתוֹכָה דְּמֹות אֲרֻבַּע חַיֹּות וְזֶה מִרְאִיָּהוֹן דְּמֹות אָדָם לְהִנָּה: 6 וְאֲרֻבַּעַה
פָּנִים לְאַחַת וְאֲרֻבַּע כְּנָפַיִם לְאַחַת לָהֶם:

26. 5 ומתוֹכָה דְּמֹות אֲרֻבַּע חַיֹּות וְזֶה מִרְאִיָּהוֹן דְּמֹות אָדָם לְהִנָּה: 6 וְאֲרֻבַּעַה
פָּנִים לְאַחַת וְאֲרֻבַּע כְּנָפַיִם לְאַחַת לָהֶם:

of a throne, in appearance like sapphire; and seated above the likeness of a throne was a likeness with a human appearance. 27 And upward from what had the appearance of his waist I saw as it were gleaming metal, like the appearance of fire enclosed all around. And downward from what had the appearance of his waist I saw as it were the appearance of fire, and there was brightness around him. 28 Like the appearance of the bow that is in the cloud on the day of rain, so was the appearance of the brightness all around. Such was the appearance of the likeness of the glory of the Lord. And when I saw it, I fell on my face, and I heard the voice of one speaking.

This is all very significant and a very powerful vision. We have seen above that God is known in the OT as the one who is enthroned above the cherubim and that he could ride on them like on a chariot sitting on a mobile throne as the mobile ark of the covenant also shows us. The ark of the covenant was carried by the sons of Kohath from the tribe of Levi (Nm 4:15). God himself was enthroned over the cherubim of the ark. That was the shadow of the heavenly reality (Ex 25:9.40; Heb 8:5; 10:1).

In his vision Ezekiel now sees something which is closer to the heavenly reality. But still he is very careful in his words, often talking of "the likeness" of something. And at the same time this revelation of God to Ezekiel to make him his prophet corresponds to God's self-revelation through the tabernacle and the temple of Solomon. When God calls Ezekiel to be a prophet, his voice comes from above the cherubim (Ez 1:25) as Moses heard God's voice "from above the mercy seat that was on the ark of the testimony, from between the two cherubim" (Nm 7:89).

Ezekiel sees "the appearance of the likeness of the glory of the Lord" (1:28) above the expanse which is another word for heaven (cf. Gn 1:6-8).

The four living creatures carry his throne. The word for "living creature" is חַיָּיָה *ḥayyāh* which is also the normal word for an animal. A human being can also be called "a living creature" or "a living being". The four faces of the living creatures (a face of a human, a lion, an ox and of an eagle) represent the top creatures in their realms. God created Adam in his image and made him ruler of the earth (Gn 1:26-28). The lion was the king of the wild animals, the eagle of the birds in the air and the ox was the strongest animal among the domesticated animals of the Israelites (in India it might have been an elephant). Four as a symbolical number represents the four directions of the earth.

It is remarkable that the lion and the ox are found together with the cherubim as part of the ten stands of bronze for the sea of cast metal in the temple of Solo-mon (1 Kgs 7:29.36). If we add that the priests who would cleanse themselves with the water of the sea of cast metal were humans, we have lions, oxen, cherubim and humans together in the court of the temple of Solomon with palm trees which all resembles the garden of paradise. First we see the cherubim blocking the way to paradise and the tree of life in Gn 3:22-24. Then we find them in the tabernacle and in the temple of Solomon as part of God's presence among human beings again, as part of paradise regained for Israel, God's chosen people. The fact that "the rims of all four were full of eyes all around" (1:18) helps the cherubim as guards in the presence of God to be fully alert. No uninvited person will be able to pass them. Ez 10:12 underlines the same truth: "And their whole body, their rims, and their spokes, their wings, and the wheels were full of eyes all around - the wheels that the four of them had" (10:12).

In Ez 1:26-28 the glory of the Lord on his throne above the four living creatures and above the expanse / heaven was seen as "a likeness with a human appearance" and with "the appearance of the bow that is in the cloud on the day of rain".

Ezekiel was called to preach also judgment, but he was called by God who created man in his own image and who here reveals himself in his glory looking like a man and who has made his covenant at the time of Noah with man and all flesh to sustain the world in spite of man's sinfulness (Gn 8:20-9:17).

God loves man. The cherubim not only blocked man from entering paradise and God's presence in Genesis, they here carry God's throne to Ezekiel who is called Son of man in this book all the time and at the end of this book we have a vision of God in the New Jerusalem living with man (Ez 48:35):

And the name of the city from that time on shall be,
The Lord is there.²⁷

In Ezekiel's vision of the glory of the Lord above the cherubim in 9:1 to 11:25 many things are just the same as in Ez 1. But there are also differences. For example with regard to the four faces of the cherubim we read in 10:14:

And every one had four faces: the first face was the face of the cherub, and the second face was a human face, and the third the face of a lion, and the fourth the face of an eagle.

In comparison to 1:10 the face of the ox has been dropped and supplanted by "the face of the cherub". Or another possibility is that

27.

וְשֵׁם־הָעִיר מִיּוֹם יְהוָה | שְׁמָהּ:

the face of a cherub is like the face of an ox. Then both visions would still be identical with regard to the faces (cf. 10:22).

Cherubim are spiritual heavenly beings who are only visible for us as far as God grants us to see them in a vision. Perhaps they have the power to appear as they like according to the intension of the vision granted by God. Within Ezekiel they have one set of four faces in 1:10, another set of four faces in 10:14 and only two faces in the carving in 41:18-19.

If we should understand that the face of the ox has been supplanted by the face of a cherub, then the question is what is the place of a cherub in heaven? We have seen that a man, a lion, an eagle and an ox represent top positions in their own realm of creation. What about cherubim? If they are not angels (= messengers), but to be seen separate from them because they never leave the presence of God, what is their position? Maybe they represent the top position among the spiritual heavenly beings. The one fact alone that they have the honor to be permanently in the presence of God, gives us food for thought.

In his vision of a future temple Ezekiel saw a pattern on the walls (41:17-20.25):

And on all the walls all around, inside and outside, was a measured pattern. 18 It was carved of cherubim and palm trees, a palm tree between cherub and cherub. Every cherub had two faces: 19 a human face toward the palm tree on the one side, and the face of a young lion toward the palm tree on the other side. They were carved on the whole temple all around. 20 From the floor to above the door, cherubim and palm trees were carved; similarly the wall of the nave... 25 And on the doors of the nave were carved cherubim

and palm trees, such as were carved on the walls.

Here the carved cherubim have only two faces, one of a human and one of a lion, perhaps because that makes the carving and the pattern easier.

In the lament over the king of Tyre he is compared in his former innocent state to "an anointed guardian cherub" (28:14; cf. 28:16) "in Eden, the garden of God" or "on the holy mountain of God". Here again the idea is that cherubim belong to the presence of God.

In the New Testament

The four living creatures in Revelation have some similarities with the seraphim of Is 6 and others with the cherubim in Ezekiel:

And around the throne, on each side of the throne, are four living creatures, full of eyes in front and behind: 7 the first living creature like a lion, the second living creature like an ox, the third living creature with the face of a man, and the fourth living creature like an eagle in flight. 8 And the four living creatures, each of them with six wings, are full of eyes all around and within, and day and night they never cease to say, "Holy, holy, holy, is the Lord God Almighty, who was and is and is to come!" 9 And whenever the living creatures give glory and honor and thanks to him who is seated on the throne, who lives forever and ever, 10 the twenty-four elders fall down before him who is seated on the throne and worship him who lives forever and ever.

The term "four living creatures" (τέσσαρα ζῷα *tēssara zōa*) is taken straight from Ez 1:5. The fact that the four are like a lion,

an ox, a man and an eagle reminds us of Ez 1:10, but the difference is that in Ezekiel everyone of the four had the four faces, but here the four individual living creatures are one like a lion, the second like an ox, the third with the face of a man, and the fourth like an eagle in flight. The face is only mentioned with the human face. The others are likened to the whole animal.

That they are "full of eyes in front and behind" can be compared to Ez 1:18 and 10:12. In Ezekiel they have four wings each (Ez 1:6; 10:21), but here in Revelation they have six wings (Rv 4:8) like the seraphim in Is 6:2. The "Holy, holy, holy ..." is also taken from Is 6:3.

When the four living creatures praise God as holy, the 24 elders fall down before God and praise him (Rv 4:9-10). This connection between the four living creatures and the 24 elders is also seen further down in the book. They worship Jesus Christ together (5:6.8.11.14) and God the Father in 19:4 as here in 4:6-9. They are also seen as next to the throne of God together in 7:11 and 14:3.

The powerful position of the four living creatures in heaven is also underlined by the fact that they told the four riders on the four horses to start their race when the lamb opened the first four seals (Rv 6:1.3.5.6.7) and one of them "gave to the seven angels seven golden bowls full of the wrath of God" (15:7).

3.6 Seraphim

In the Old Testament

The word used in Is 6:2.6 שֶׁרָפִיִּים śerāpîm is only used here for a spiritual flying heavenly being. The same Hebrew word is used for "fiery" or poisonous serpents in Nm 21:6.8 and Dt 8:15 and for a flying serpent in Is 14:29 and 30:6. Often in Bible translations

the word seraphim is not translated, but only transcribed as in English. The related verb *śāraṇ* means to burn. The only place to get information about the seraphim is Is 6:2-7:

2 Above him stood the seraphim. Each had six wings: with two he covered his face, and with two he covered his feet, and with two he flew. 3 And one called to another and said:

“Holy, holy, holy is the Lord of hosts; the whole earth is full of his glory!”

4 And the foundations of the thresholds shook at the voice of him who called, and the house was filled with smoke.

5 And I said: “Woe is me! For I am lost; for I am a man of unclean lips, and I dwell in the midst of a people of unclean lips; for my eyes have seen the King, the Lord of hosts!”

6 Then one of the seraphim flew to me, having in his hand a burning coal that he had taken with tongs from the altar. 7 And he touched my mouth and said: “Behold, this has touched your lips; your guilt is taken away, and your sin atoned for.”

The seraphim cover their face not to see God directly. They cover their feet to cover the part of the body which might be related to shame (Ex 20:26). Their voice is so powerful that the temple or palace of God is shaken by it and the house filled with smoke. Their message is that God almighty, the Lord of his heavenly armies, is very, very, very holy. This implies ethical perfection (Lv 19:1-37).

At the same time God's dominion covers the whole of heaven (Lord of hosts = Lord of the heavenly armies) and earth ("the whole

earth is full of his glory"). God is not only a local god or a local deity. He rules supreme. There is no competition for Him.

The seraphim are ethical beings who proclaim the ethical supremacy of God and his unlimited power over everything. Isaiah feels his sin and impurity and is sure that he has to die.

But one seraph acts as a priest by taking a burning coal from the altar, touch his mouth and cleanse him from his sins. The power of atonement comes from the altar where blood has been shed. Later Isaiah would reveal the source of atonement as being the blood of Christ (Is 52:13-53:12).

In the New Testament

The four living creatures in Revelation have some similarities with the seraphim of Is 6 and others with the cherubim in Ezekiel. They have the six wings in common with the seraphim (Is 6:2; Rv 4:8) and what they say resembles the first half of what the seraphim say in Is 6:3:²⁸

Holy, holy, holy, is the Lord God Almighty,
who was and is and is to come!²⁹

The "Holy, holy, holy" is identical here and there. "The Lord of hosts" in Isaiah is "the Lord God Almighty" here: Because of the power of his heavenly armies nothing can stop God. He is ruling everywhere. "Who was and is and is to come" is a typical Revelation translation of the name of God which God revealed to Moses in Ex 3:14 (compare the LXX translation with Rv 1:4.8).

28. קדוש קדוש קדוש יהוה צבאות מלא כל-הארץ קבוֹדוֹ:

29. Ἅγιος ἅγιος ἅγιος κύριος, ὁ θεός, ὁ παντοκράτωρ, ὁ ἦν καὶ ὁ ὢν καὶ ὁ ἐρχόμενος. The LXX has for Is 6:3 ἅγιος ἅγιος ἅγιος κύριος σαβαωθ πληρης πασα η γη της δοξης αυτου

Because of the way that Revelation four combines elements of the OT cherubim with other elements of the seraphim we think that it is possible that the שָׂרָפִים śārāpîm of Is 6:2-7 "are another form of the cherubim".³⁰

3.7 Satan

3.7.1 In the Old Testament

Word used. The word "Satan" שָׂטָן śāṭān means 1. 'adversary' in the Old Testament, and 2. especially 'Satan'.³¹

It can denote a human adversary: David for the philistines (1 Sm 29:4); the sons of Zeruiah for David, 2 Sm 19:22. At the time of 1 Kgs 5:4 there was "neither adversary nor misfortune" for Solomon. But after his unfaithfulness towards the Lord, "the Lord raised up an adversary against Solomon, Hadad the Edomite" (1 Kgs 11:14) and "God also raised up as an adversary to him, Rezon the son of Eliada (1 Kgs 11:23.25). David requested from God as punishment for his wicked enemy that God may "appoint a wicked man against him" and "let an accuser stand at his right hand" (Ps 109:6).

It can also be a heavenly angel appointed by God to be an adversary for somebody as in the case of Balaam (Nm 22:22.32):

22 But God's anger was kindled because he went, and the angel of the Lord took his stand in the way as his adversary. Now he was riding on the donkey, and his two servants were with him ... 32 And the angel of the Lord said to him, "Why have you struck your donkey

30. Brown, Driver, and Briggs, Hebrew and English Lexicon of the Old Testament, p. 501.

31. *ibid.*, p. 966.

these three times? Behold, I have come out to oppose you because your way is perverse before me.

In the rest of the places where 'Satan' is used, the word denotes a spiritual non-human personality who is an adversary to Job (1:6.7.8.9.12; 2:1.2.3.4.6.7), to Israel and David (1 Chr 21:1) and to the high priest Joshua (Zec 3:1.2).

In the book of Job "the sons of God" gathered in God's presence who seem to be heavenly spiritual personalities (Gn 6:2.4; Job 1:6; 2:1; 38:7; Ps 82:1.6) and Satan came among them (1:6; 2:1). The Lord asked Satan whether he had also a look at God's "servant Job, that there is none like him on the earth, a blameless and upright man, who fears God and turns away from evil?" (1:8). Satan accused Job of not fearing God for God's own sake, but for his personal profit: "But stretch out your hand and touch all that he has, and he will curse you to your face" (1:11). The Lord then allowed Satan to touch everything what Job had, but not touch Job himself.

When Job consequently lost everything he had, "Job did not sin or charge God with wrong" (1:22). On another day when the sons of God came together, the Lord again asked whether Satan had a look at Job who still feared God and turned away from evil and held fast his integrity (2:3). Satan answered, "Skin for skin! All that a man has he will give for his life. But stretch out your hand and touch his bone and his flesh, and he will curse you to your face" (2:4-5). In answer to this accusation, the Lord permitted Satan to let Job become ill, but not to kill him (2:6).

These two encounters of the Lord with Satan set the stage for the rest of the book of Job, during which Job suffers a lot, has a deep desire that God may explain his difficult situation, comes almost to his breaking point, but finally encounters God in a new and deeper

way and is fully restored by God's mercy. Satan does not enter the stage again after chapter 2. God wins in the end, and Job wins.

In the book of Job Satan is the adversary of Job and in a way also of God. Because Job is an exemplary human being, Satan is also the adversary of the whole of the human race and of God as the creator and redeemer of the human race. At the same time Satan has access to God, and the Lord speaks to him. In a way the initiative of the drama of the book of Job lies with the Lord who points out Job to Satan.

In 1 Chr 21:1 Satan targets Israel and David by inciting David to number Israel. We learn from 2 Sm 24:1 that "the anger of the Lord was kindled against Israel, and he incited David against them, saying, 'Go, number Israel and Judah.'" Again the picture which we get is that Satan is not a kind of counter-deity, but a creature of God under the full control and jurisdiction of God Almighty. In consequence of the sin of David, "the Lord sent a pestilence on Israel, and 70,000 men of Israel fell" (1 Chr 21:14).

But when David humbled himself and asked God to spare the people and kill him who had sinned, God had mercy on him and on Israel and told David through the prophet Gad "that David should go up and raise an altar to the Lord on the threshing floor of Ornan the Jebusite" (1 Chr 21:18). And (21:26-27):

David built there an altar to the Lord and presented burnt offerings and peace offerings and called on the Lord, and the Lord answered him with fire from heaven upon the altar of burnt offering. 27 Then the Lord commanded the angel, and he put his sword back into its sheath.

God forgave David's sin, stopped the plague and even showed him

the place of the future temple. God used Satan to initiate the crisis, but afterwards God's grace gave Israel more than before the crisis. This is very similar to the book of Job.

In Zec 3:1-3 Satan targets the high priest Joshua and thereby the whole spiritual structure of restored Judah insofar as it had returned from the captivity in Babylon:

1 Then he showed me Joshua the high priest standing before the angel of the Lord, and Satan standing at his right hand to accuse him. 2 And the Lord said to Satan, "The Lord rebuke you, O Satan! The Lord who has chosen Jerusalem rebuke you! Is not this a brand plucked from the fire?" 3 Now Joshua was standing before the angel, clothed with filthy garments.

In this vision of the prophet Zechariah the filthy garments of Joshua are related to his sins. Joshua's time in the Babylonian captivity was not a sinless time. He is like a burning piece of wood which has been "plucked from the fire" and so saved from being totally consumed. But the traces of his past are clearly visible. Satan can rightly accuse him. He really sinned. But again the Lord wins "who has chosen Jerusalem" (3:2). Because of God's love for Jerusalem, the poor and downtrodden Jerusalem, the sins of the high priest Joshua are forgiven, he is cleansed and his calling and his office as high priest are affirmed. Satan is defeated and left to be rebuked by the Lord.

Why is this possible? God brings a future servant and a future salvation of which Joshua and his fellows are only a sign (3:8-9):

Behold, I will bring my servant the Branch. 9 For behold, on the stone that I have set before Joshua, on a

single stone with seven eyes, I will engrave its inscription, declares the Lord of hosts, and I will remove the iniquity of this land in a single day.

God's servant (Is 42:1-12; 49:1-13; 50:4-11; 52:13-53:12), the righteous Branch of the family of David (Jer 23:5-6; 33:15-16) shall come and solve the problem of sin on one day for ever by his death at the cross (Is 53:4-6; Zec 9:9-11; 12:10; 13:7). This affirms the election of Israel (Is 49:6) and of Jerusalem (Is 2:1-5; 11:10) and defeats Satan for ever. Satan the "accuser" has lost his job when sins are forgiven and people are clothed with the righteousness of God for free as Joshua is clothed here "with pure vestments". We shall see in the New Testament that the blood of Christ is the main means to destroy Satan's hold on mankind.

How can we understand Is 14:3-23 and Ez 28:11-19? Within church history these two sections or parts of them (Is 14:12-14; Ez 28:12-15) have been used to explain how Satan has fallen into sin. One famous example is Augustin in his "City of God" (XI,15):³²

As for what John says about the devil, "The devil sinneth from the beginning" they who suppose it is meant hereby that the devil was made with a sinful nature, misunderstand it; for if sin be natural, it is not sin at all. And how do they answer the prophetic proofs, -

32. Philip Schaff, NPNF1-02. St. Augustin's City of God and Christian Doctrine, Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers (Grand Rapids, MI: Christian Classics Ethereal Library, 1890), <http://www.ccel.org/ccel/schaff/npnf102.html>, p. 308. This is later taken up by Thomas Aquinas, Summa Theologica (Christian Classics Ethereal Library, n.d.), <http://www.ccel.org/ccel/aquinas/summa.html>, p. 421, TREATISE ON THE ANGELS, Question 64, Article 5.

either what Isaiah says when he represents the devil under the person of the king of Babylon, "How art thou fallen, O Lucifer, son of the morning!" or what Ezekiel says, "Thou hast been in Eden, the garden of God; every precious stone was thy covering," where it is meant that he was some time without sin; for a little after it is still more explicitly said, "Thou wast perfect in thy ways?"

The problem with the use of these two sections is that they are about two kings, the king of Babylon (Is 14:4) and the king of Tyre (Ez 28:11) and not about Satan in the first instance. Someone could perhaps argue that as Satan is the father of lies and a murderer from the beginning (Jn 8:44), so all liars and murderers are his children. And if the king of Babylon and the king of Tyre are judged by God because of their sins, it is really the nature of the devil in their lives which is condemned. So Isaiah and Ezekiel really speak about the nature of the devil reflected in the lives of those two kings.

But still the fact remains that the text speaks of those two kings and does not mention Satan. Or to put it in another way: If God wanted to tell us about how Satan had fallen into sin, he could have revealed it more clearly and with the name of Satan given. Perhaps this is an opportunity to refrain and do not know too much where Scripture seems to be silent (Dt 29:29):

The secret things belong to the Lord our God, but the things that are revealed belong to us and to our children forever, that we may do all the words of this law.

By the way the name "Lucifer" which is often used for Satan is taken from the Latin translation of Is 14:12 (KJV): "How art thou fallen from heaven, O Lucifer, son of the morning!" Lucifer means

"one who carries light" or "O Day Star" (ESV). In Is 14:12 it is really used for the king of Babylon who has fallen from being a world ruler feared by all to a mere dead and weakened human being in Sheol in afterlife.

3.7.2 In the New Testament

In comparison to the Old Testament the personality of the devil or Satan is much more referred to in the New Testament under different names or titles.

Satan the Hebrew word which we know from the OT to mean "adversary" is also used as a name transcribed into Greek ὁ Σατανᾶς *hō Satanas*. The adversary can be an adversary in court who accuses his opponents with false or with correct accusations. Satan is as an adversary also the accuser (see below).

1. Satan as opponent of Jesus Christ who triumphs over Satan. Satan as dragon tried to devour the Christ-child at birth (Rv 12:4.9). Jesus was "in the wilderness forty days, being tempted by Satan" (Mk 1:13). Satan offered Jesus "all the kingdoms of the world and their glory" if Jesus would worship him (Mt 4:8-10). But Jesus tells him to go away with Dt 6:13.

Because Jesus had power to cast out demons, his enemies claimed that Jesus worked through Beelzebul, the prince of demons. Jesus explained to them that if Satan would drive out Satan, then his kingdom would be near its end (Mt 12:26; Mk 3:23.26; Lk 11:18). Jesus can drive out demons because he has bound Satan first (Mt 12:28-29; Mk 3:27; Lk 11:22). Jesus recognized that Satan was at work in Simon Peter when

Peter denied the future passion and death of Jesus (Mt 16:23; Mk 8:33).

2. In Christ the church overcomes Satan. "The God of peace will soon crush Satan under your feet" (Rom 16:20; cf. Gn 3:15). A married couple should "not deprive one another, except perhaps by agreement for a limited time, that you may devote yourselves to prayer; but then come together again, so that Satan may not tempt you because of your lack of self-control" (1 Cor 7:5). We should forgive each other "in the presence of Christ, so that we would not be outwitted by Satan; for we are not ignorant of his designs" (2 Cor 2:11).
3. The use of Satan in church discipline. The church can deliver a convicted, but unrepentant sinner "to Satan for the destruction of the flesh, so that his spirit may be saved in the day of the Lord" (1 Cor 5:5) which seems to imply that Satan gets the permission to bring some kind of illness or accident over this person resulting in the death of the body but that somehow this person comes to repentance and thus his spirit is saved at the coming of the Lord Jesus Christ. Hymenaeus and Alexander have rejected faith and a good conscience and so have made shipwreck of their faith, whom Paul has "handed over to Satan that they may learn not to blaspheme" (1 Tm 1:20).
4. Satan's work among the disciples of Jesus. Peter's rejection of the cross of Jesus was Satan's work (Mt 16:23; Mk 8:33). "Satan entered into Judas called Iscariot, who was of the number of the twelve" (Lk 22:3). Jesus tells Peter, "Simon, Simon, behold, Satan demanded to have you, that he might sift you like wheat, but I have prayed for you that

your faith may not fail. And when you have turned again, strengthen your brothers" (Lk 22:31-32). After Jesus gave Judas a morsel of bread, "Satan entered into him. Jesus said to him, 'What you are going to do, do quickly.'" (Jn 13:27).

Satan had filled the heart of Ananias "to lie to the Holy Spirit" and to keep back for himself "part of the proceeds of the land" (Acts 5:3). Paul wanted to visit the Thessalonians, but "Satan hindered" him (1 Thes 2:18). Paul said in 2 Cor 12:7 that because of his great experience of divine revelations, "there was given to me a thorn in the flesh, the messenger of Satan to buffet me, lest I should be exalted above measure." In the process of the selection for which widows should be supported by the church's collected money, Paul advises "younger widows" to "marry, bear children, manage their households, and give the adversary no occasion for slander. For some have already strayed after Satan" (1 Tm 5:14-15).

In Thyatira "that woman Jezebel" was tolerated by the leadership of the church who called herself 'a prophetess' and was 'teaching and seducing the servants' of Jesus 'to practice sexual immorality and to eat food sacrificed to idols'. The people who accepted her teaching claimed that they "have ... learned ... the deep things of Satan" (Rv 2:20,24).

5. Satan's work among ordinary people. Satan tries to hinder people to have faith and become saved. If somebody hears the gospel, but "does not understand it" (Mt 13:19), "Satan immediately comes and takes away the word that is sown in them (Mk 4:15). Jesus sent Paul to the Gentiles "to open their eyes, so that they may turn from darkness to light and from

the power of Satan to God, that they may receive forgiveness of sins and a place among those who are sanctified by faith in me" (Acts 26:18)³³ which implies that Gentiles who have not yet come to Jesus are still under the dark authority of Satan.

To deceive people "Satan disguises himself as an angel of light" (2 Cor 11:14). In the last days "the coming of the lawless one" will happen "by the activity of Satan with all power and false signs and wonders, and with all wicked deception for those who are perishing, because they refused to love the truth and so be saved" (2 Thes 2:9). Rv 2:9 speaks of the "slander of those who say that they are Jews and are not, but are a synagogue of Satan" (similar Rv 3:9). Rv 2:13 states that at that time "Satan's throne" was in Pergamum.

Illness can be caused by Satan and the healing is seen as a liberation from the pain caused by Satan (Lk 13:16).

6. God's judgment of Satan. In a vision Jesus "saw Satan fall like lightning from heaven" (Lk 10:18). Satan is bound for thousand years in the abyss (Rv 20:2).

The devil. This word ὁ διάβολος *hō diabolōs* is the normal Greek translation of the Hebrew word "Satan" שָׂטָן *śāṭān* in the LXX as far as the adversary of God and his people is meant. It means "accuser, Devil"³⁴

33. ἀνοῖξαι ὀφθαλμοὺς αὐτῶν, τοῦ ἐπιστρέψαι ἀπὸ σκοτόντος εἰς φῶς καὶ τῆς ἐξουσίας τοῦ Σατανᾶ ἐπὶ τὸν θεόν, τοῦ λαβεῖν αὐτοὺς ἄφεσιν ἁμαρτιῶν καὶ κλῆρον ἐν τοῖς ἡγιασμένοις πίστει τῇ εἰς ἐμέ.

34. Max Zerwick and Mary Grosvenor, *An Analysis of the Greek New Testament* (Rome, 1981), p. 7 under Mt 4:1.

1. The devil as opponent of Jesus Christ who triumphs over the devil. "Jesus was led up by the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted by the devil" (Mt 4:1; par Lk 4:1-2). After Jesus had fasted "forty days and forty nights" he really became hungry and the devil said to Jesus, "If you are the Son of God, command this stone to become bread" (Lk 4:3; par Mt 4:3). The devil took Jesus "to the holy city and set him on the pinnacle of the temple" and encouraged him to throw himself down (Mt 4:5; par Lk 4:9) and "to a very high mountain and showed him all the kingdoms of the world and their glory" promising to give all that to Jesus if he worships the devil (Mt 4:8; par Lk 4:5-7), but Jesus overcame him with Dt 6:13.16 and 8:3 and the devil left him (Mt 4:11; Lk 4:13).

The devil is the enemy of Jesus (Mt 13:37-39). Illness can be an influence of the devil and accordingly when Jesus healed people, he liberated them from this influence (Acts 10:38). Jesus himself partook of flesh and blood, "that through death he might destroy the one who has the power of death, that is, the devil, and deliver all those who through fear of death were subject to lifelong slavery" (Heb 2:14).

"The reason the Son of God appeared was to destroy the works of the devil" (1 Jn 3:8).

2. In Christ the church overcomes the devil. By being "strong in the Lord and in the strength of his might" and putting "on the whole armor of God" believers are "able to stand against the schemes of the devil" and they wrestle successfully "against the rulers, against the authorities, against the cosmic powers over this present darkness, against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly places" (Eph 6:10-12).

Believers overcome the devil "by the blood of the Lamb and by the word of their testimony" while not loving their lives even unto death (Rv 12:10-11).

If a servant of the Lord corrects "his opponents with gentleness", then "God may perhaps grant them repentance leading to a knowledge of the truth, and they may escape from the snare of the devil, after being captured by him to do his will" (2 Tm 2:26). Older women in the church "are to be reverent in behavior, not slanderers or slaves to much wine" (Tit 2:3).

If believers submit themselves to God and resist the devil, and he will flee from them (Jas 4:7). In times of persecution the adversary of Christians, "the devil prowls around like a roaring lion, seeking someone to devour" and Christians should resist him, firm in their faith, "knowing that the same kinds of suffering are being experienced by your brotherhood throughout the world" (1 Pt 5:8-9). The devil can cause persecution and cause some Christians to be thrown into prison, if God permits this. This is a test of believers and gives them an opportunity to be faithful to God and be crowned for this (Rv 2:10).

3. The devil's work among the disciples of Jesus. He made Judas "a devil" (Jn 6:70) and put it into his heart to betray Jesus (Jn 13:2). By remaining angry with somebody and not willing to forgive and for reconciliation, believers can give "opportunity to the devil" (Eph 4:26-27).

An overseer in church "must not be a recent convert, or he may become puffed up with conceit and fall into the condemnation of the devil". "He must be well thought of by outsiders, so that he may not fall into disgrace, into a snare

of the devil" (1 Tm 3:6.7). Female deacons "must be dignified, not slanderers, but sober-minded, faithful in all things" (1 Tm 3:11) whereby the word for slanderer is *hō diabōlōs* in the plural: If they were slanderers or accusers they would be in this point similar to the devil.

4. The devil has a certain "glory" and belongs to "the glorious ones" of Jude 1:8 as 1:9 shows: "But when the archangel Michael, contending with the devil, was disputing about the body of Moses, he did not presume to pronounce a blasphemous judgment, but said, 'The Lord rebuke you.'" (Jude 1:8-9; cf. 2 Pt 2:10-11).
5. The devil has angels of his own (Mt 25:41; Rv 12:9).
6. The devil has human beings who belong to him and are of his kind, his children. "The ones along the path are those who have heard. Then the devil comes and takes away the word from their hearts, so that they may not believe and be saved" (Lk 8:12).

Judas, one of the twelve was "a devil" (Jn 6:70). The devil put it into the heart of Judas Iscariot, to betray Jesus (Jn 13:2) Murderers and liars are children of the devil who was a murderer of human beings from the beginning and is the father of lies (Jn 8:44).

Elymas the magician was a "son of the devil" an "enemy of all righteousness, full of all deceit and villainy" (Acts 13:10). As the devil is an accuser or slanderer "in the last days there will come times of difficulty. For people will be ... slanderous" (again *hō diabōlōs* in the plural). The

tendency of the devil to accuse and slander will be shared by a great part of mankind in the last days (2 Tm 3:3).

"Whoever makes a practice of sinning is of the devil, for the devil has been sinning from the beginning. The reason the Son of God appeared was to destroy the works of the devil" (1 Jn 3:8; cf. 3:10).

7. God's judgment of the devil. The devil and his angels are thrown out of heaven and down to the earth in Rv 12:9.

As Eph 2:2 calls him "the prince of the power of the air" (which might be understood as the first heaven, in contrast to the third heaven of paradise and the New Jerusalem, see 2 Cor 12:2-3) and Eph 6:12 places the spiritual enemies of the church "the rulers ... the authorities ... the cosmic powers over this present darkness ... the spiritual forces of evil" *expressis verbis* "in the heavenly places" the time of the devil and his angels to be totally thrown out of heaven seems to be still a future one, even if he has been "thrown out" of a certain area according to John 12:31 and destroyed according to Heb 2:14 and been disarmed with his army according to Col 2:15).

That the devil is thrown out of heaven, results in joy for heaven and those who live in heaven, but also in a woe to the earth and sea, "for the devil has come down to you in great wrath, because he knows that his time is short" (Rv 12:12).

Then the devil is bound and thrown into the abyss for thousand years (Rv 20:2). Having been freed he rebels again and is thrown "into the lake of fire and sulfur where the beast and the false prophet were, and they will be tormented day and

night forever and ever" (Rv 20:10). The cursed of mankind go into the fire which was originally "prepared for the devil and his angels" (Mt 25:41).

Beelzebul. Scribes from Jerusalem, Pharisees, accused Jesus to have Beelzebul and to cast out demons by this "ruler of demons" (Mk 3:22; Mt 12:24.27; Lk 11:15.18.19; cf. Mt 9:34). Jesus warns his disciples that as people have called Jesus Beelzebul, they will also do with his disciples (Mt 10:25).³⁵

The great dragon. The great red dragon (ὁ δράκων ἡ drakōn) had seven heads and ten horns, and on his heads seven diadems (Rv 12:3). That "his tail swept down a third of the stars of heaven and cast them to the earth" (12:4 could point to the angels of the devil who fell because of his influence.³⁶ He wanted to murder the Christ-child, but failed in this.

Michael and his angels fought the dragon and his angels and threw them for ever out of heaven and down to earth (12:7.9.). Finding himself on earth the dragon pursued the woman who had given birth to the Christ-child, but she was protected (Rv!12:13-16). The woman seems to be representing Israel as the people of God (Cf. Rv 12:1 with Gn 37:9-10). Having failed to kill the child and the woman, the dragon became furious "and went off to make war on the rest of her offspring, on those who keep the commandments of God and hold to the testimony of Jesus" (Rv

35. According to Walter Bauer, Wörterbuch zum Neuen Testament (Berlin, 1971), p. 275, Beelzebul goes back to the "Lord of the flies" "Baal-zebub, the god of Ekron" in 2 Kgs 1:2.3.6.16.

36. So with Aquinas, Summa Theologica, First Part, Q 63, Article 9, p. 424.

12:17). The motif of Rv 12 seems to be taken from Gn 3:15: The dragon or snake with his offspring versus the woman and her offspring.

The "beast rising out of the sea, with ten horns and seven heads, with ten diadems on its horns and blasphemous names on its heads" (13:1 is like a copy of the dragon formed in his image (cf. 12:3). "To it the dragon gave his power and his throne and great authority" with the consequence that the people of the earth worshiped the dragon and the beast thinking them invincible (Rv 13:2.4) especially because one of the beasts seven heads "seemed to have a mortal wound, but its mortal wound was healed" imitating the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ, the lamb (compare 13:3 with 5:6).

Then a second beast joined them "rising out of the earth. It had two horns like a lamb and it spoke like a dragon" (Rv 13:11). This false prophet looked "like a lamb" imitating again Jesus Christ, but in reality he spoke like a dragon making the Satanic triad complete. This triad causes a demonic revival intoxicating the governments of all nations to fight God himself (Rv 16:13-14.16):

13 And I saw, coming out of the mouth of the dragon and out of the mouth of the beast and out of the mouth of the false prophet, three unclean spirits like frogs. 14 For they are demonic spirits, performing signs, who go abroad to the kings of the whole world, to assemble them for battle on the great day of God the Almighty ... 16 And they assembled them at the place that in Hebrew is called Armageddon.

After this battle "the dragon, that ancient serpent, who is the

devil and Satan" is seized and bound for a thousand years (Rv 20:2). After the thousand years he "was thrown into the lake of fire and sulfur where the beast and the false prophet were, and they will be tormented day and night forever and ever" (Rv 20:10).

Many visions in Revelation have an OT background. If we look for relevant sections in the OT we find such sections as Ez 29:3 where God says, "Behold, I am against you, Pharaoh king of Egypt, the great dragon that lies in the midst of his streams, that says, 'My Nile is my own; I made it for myself.'" (compare also or Ez 32:2). According to our understanding of Rv 17:9-10 six of the seven heads of the beast are the kings of Egypt, Assyria, Babylon, Persia, Greece and Rome. So the idea of the king of Egypt as a dragon fits this picture.

But there is another important OT parallel in Is 27:1:³⁷

In that day the Lord with his hard and great and strong sword will punish Leviathan the fleeing serpent, Leviathan the twisting serpent, and he will slay the dragon that is in the sea.³⁸

If we combine God's action against the dragon here with God's judgment at the time of the end of the earth in Is 24:19-22 we get a very striking parallel to the history of "the great dragon" in Revelation:

The earth is utterly broken, the earth is split apart,
the earth is violently shaken.

37. LXX: τη ημερα εκεινη επαξει ο θεος την μαχαιραν την αγιαν και την μεγαλην και την ισχυραν επι τον δρακοντα οφιν φευγοντα επι τον δρακοντα οφιν σκολιον και ανελει τον δρακοντα

38. בַּיּוֹם הַהוּא יַפְקֹד יְהוָה בְּחַרְבּוֹ הַקָּשָׁה וְהַגְדֹּלָה וְהַחֲזָקָה עַל לַוְיָתָן נָחֵשׁ בָּרֶחַ וְעַל לַוְיָתָן נָחֵשׁ עֲקֹלֶתָיו וְהָרַג אֶת־הַתַּנִּין אֲשֶׁר בַּיָּם:

The earth staggers like a drunken man; it sways like a hut;
 its transgression lies heavy upon it, and it falls,
 and will not rise again.
 On that day the Lord will punish the host of heaven, in heaven,
 and the kings of the earth, on the earth.
 They will be gathered together as prisoners in a pit;
 they will be shut up in a prison,
 and after many days they will be punished.

The "pit" as prison here is the abyss of Rv 20:1 and the "many days" the prisoners are in prison are the thousand years of Rv 20:2.3.4.5.6.7.

The ancient serpent of Rv 12:9.14.15; 20:2 connects the agency of the dragon and Satan with the work of the serpent in Gn 3:1-15. We have seen that Rv 12:1-17 can especially be understood on the backdrop of Gn 3:15 (cf. Rom 16:20; Lk 10:17-20).

The father of lies. The devil "is a liar and the father of lies" (Jn 8:44). As such he is the the deceiver of the whole world (Rv 12:9; 20:3.8.10). All liars are like children from their father the devil (Jn 8:44).

The accuser of our brothers. We have seen that the name "Satan" comes from the Hebrew and means an adversary, and can also denote an accuser in court. The same is true for the Greek word for "devil". After Satan is thrown out of heaven a voice proclaims in Rv 12:10-11 that Satan has no longer access to the presence of God to accuse anybody (KJV):

Now is come salvation, and strength, and the kingdom of our God, and the power of his Christ: for the accuser of our brethren is cast down, which accused

them before our God day and night. And they overcame him by the blood of the Lamb, and by the word of their testimony; and they loved not their lives unto the death.

The tempter. In Mt 4:3 the devil is called "the tempter" when he starts his temptation of Jesus. When the devil tests or tempts somebody, he wants him to fail. When God tempts somebody, he wants him to pass. The devil is a tester with evil intention. He looks for the weak spots in somebodies life to bring him to fall.

Having no news about the Thessalonians, Paul could bear it no longer and sent Timothy to learn about their faith, "for fear that somehow the tempter had tempted you and our labor would be in vain" (1 Thes 3:5). But Paul received good news from Timothy.

Paul advised married couples not to deprive one another, "except perhaps by agreement for a limited time, that you may devote yourselves to prayer; but then come together again, so that Satan may not tempt you because of your lack of self-control" (1 Cor 7:5).

The evil one.

1. The evil one influences individual people and the whole world to be evil like him.
 - (a) If people do not speak the truth, if their "yes" is not a "yes" and their "no" is not a "no", but if they are lying, they do it under the guidance of the evil one (Mt 5:37).
 - (b) The evil one fights the influence of the word of God by taking it away from those who hear it without understanding (Mt 13:19).

- (c) As Jesus, the Son of Man, sows the seed of the children of his kingdom into the field of this world, so the evil one sows the weeds as his own children among them to generate confusion.
 - (d) Cain is counted by John as one 'who was of the evil one and murdered his brother'. And why? 'Because his own deeds were evil and his brother's righteous' (1 Jn 3:12).
 - (e) John testifies, "We know that we are from God, and the whole world lies in the power of the evil one" (1 Jn 5:19).
2. God protects and saves his own from the evil one so that they can overcome him.
- (a) The Lord's faithfulness implies that he "will establish you and guard you against the evil one" (2 Thes 3:3).
 - (b) The request not to lead us into temptation goes hand in hand with the request to deliver us from the evil one (Mt 6:13).
 - (c) Jesus did not ask the Father to take his disciples out of the world, but to keep them from the evil one while they live in this world (Jn 17:15).
 - (d) The "shield of faith" helps disciples to "extinguish all the flaming darts of the evil one" (Eph 6:16).
 - (e) John writes to young men who 'have overcome the evil one', who 'are strong, and the word of God abides in you, and you have overcome the evil one' (1 Jn 2:13.14).
 - (f) "We know that everyone who has been born of God does not keep on sinning, but he who was born of God

protects him, and the evil one does not touch him. We know that we are from God, and the whole world lies in the power of the evil one." (1 Jn 5:18.19).

The enemy.

1. As Jesus, the Son of Man, sows the seed of the children of his kingdom into the field of this world, so the devil as his enemy sows the weeds as his own children among them to generate confusion (Mt 13:25.28.39).
2. In fulfillment of Ps 110:1 Jesus now sits at the right hand of God the Father and waits that the Father will put his enemies under his feet, the devil included, and as the last enemy death at the time of the resurrection (Mt 22:44; Mk 12:36; Lk 20:43; Acts 2:35; 1 Cor 15:25.26; Heb 1:13; 10:13).
3. Jesus told his disciples, "Behold, I have given you authority to tread on serpents and scorpions, and over all the power of the enemy, and nothing shall hurt you" (Lk 10:19).

The god of this world. It is probable that Paul is speaking of Satan in 2 Cor 4:3-4:

3 And even if our gospel is veiled, it is veiled only to those who are perishing. 4 In their case the god of this world has blinded the minds of the unbelievers, to keep them from seeing the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God.³⁹

39. ἐν οἷς ὁ θεὸς τοῦ αἰῶνος τούτου ἐτύφλωσεν τὰ νοήματα τῶν ἀπίστων εἰς τὸ μὴ ἀνγάσσειν τὸν φωτισμὸν τοῦ εὐαγγελίου τῆς δόξης τοῦ Χριστοῦ, ὃς ἐστὶν εἰκὼν τοῦ θεοῦ.

If this assumption is correct, then the devil uses his influence on religions, philosophies, ideologies and the "Zeitgeist" to blind unbelievers so that they do not come to Jesus Christ for light and salvation.

The ruler of this world. In Jn 12:31-33 Jesus explains that his death implies God's "judgment of this world", that is that "the ruler of this world"⁴⁰ is cast out and thus the way is cleared that Jesus "will draw all people" to himself. In the further development of the passion narrative Jesus said that he could "no longer talk much" with the disciples, "for the ruler of this world" was coming (Jn 14:30).⁴¹ He had no claim on Jesus, but Jesus would do exactly as the Father had commanded him, even to die as an atonement for the sins of the world (Jn 1:29).

One work of the Holy Spirit is (Jn 16:8-11) that

he will convict the world concerning sin and righteousness and judgment: 9 concerning sin, because they do not believe in me; 10 concerning righteousness, because I go to the Father, and you will see me no longer; 11 concerning judgment, because the ruler of this world is judged.⁴²

In all three places where this phrase is used, Jesus is dominant and the "ruler of this world" is overcome by Jesus. He tries to, but cannot defeat Jesus. He loses his ground and is consequently judged

40. νῦν κρίσις ἐστὶν τοῦ κόσμου τούτου, νῦν ὁ ἄρχων τοῦ κόσμου τούτου ἐκβληθήσεται ἔξω•

41. οὐκέτι πολλὰ λαλήσω μεθ' ὑμῶν, ἔρχεται γὰρ ὁ τοῦ κόσμου ἄρχων• καὶ ἐν ἐμοὶ οὐκ ἔχει οὐδέν

42. περὶ δὲ κρίσεως, ὅτι ὁ ἄρχων τοῦ κόσμου τούτου κέριται.

and defeated which opens the door for world missions and people of the world entering the flock of Jesus (Jn 10:16; 12:20-24).

The prince of the power of the air. In Eph 2:1-3 Paul speaks of the sinners of the whole world who are influenced and guided by a spirit who has his dominion in the air:

1 And you were dead in the trespasses and sins 2 in which you once walked, following the course of this world, following the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that is now at work in the sons of disobedience⁴³ - 3 among whom we all once lived in the passions of our flesh, carrying out the desires of the body and the mind, and were by nature children of wrath, like the rest of mankind.

Seeing the whole testimony of the New Testament about the devil and consulting Eph 6:10-12 we can identify this evil spiritual personality with the devil. He and the "cosmic powers over this present darkness" which are related to him, "the spiritual forces of evil" have their place nowadays as in the days of Paul "in the air" or "in the heavenly places". From here this evil and powerful spirit guides mankind in its rebellion against God and his love. And from here the evil one attacks believers with his flaming darts (Eph 6:16).

We do not have to assume that they have access to the heavenly city which according to Rv 21:12-22:5 is well fortified. And according to Jn 12:31 and 16:11 the glorification of the Son in crucifixion, resurrection and ascension triggered that the "the ruler of

43. ἐν αἷς ποτε περιπατήσατε κατὰ τὸν αἰῶνα τοῦ κόσμου τούτου, κατὰ τὸν ἄρχοντα τῆς ἐξουσίας τοῦ ἀέρος, τοῦ πνεύματος τοῦ νῦν ἐνεργοῦντος ἐν τοῖς υἱοῖς τῆς ἀπειθείας•

this world" was judged and cast out of a certain area. We may understand that this was the New Jerusalem, God's city in heaven with the throne presence of God, banning the accuser from God's presence (cf. Col 2:15; Heb 2:14-15; Rv 21:27; 22:3; Gal 4:26; Heb 12:22-24).

The king of a dark kingdom or of a dark area of authority. Jesus speaks of the kingdom of Satan (Mt 12:26; Lk 11:18) as opposed to the kingdom of God (Mt 12:28; Lk 11:20). Speaking to Jesus the devil claims to have the authority over the kingdoms of the world and all their glory and to be able to give it all to Jesus, if Jesus would worship the devil (Lk 4:5-7; Mt 4:8-9). Jesus answered with Dt 6:13 and so defeated the devil (Mt 4:10; Lk 4:8).

Paul speaks in Col 1:13 of God the Father who "has delivered us from the domain of darkness and transferred us to the kingdom of his beloved Son."⁴⁴ This domain of darkness or dark area of authority stands in contrast to the kingdom of the beloved Son of God which belongs to the light (Col 1:12).

According to Eph 6:12 believers have to wrestle "against the rulers, against the authorities, against the cosmic powers over this present darkness, against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly places" which affirms the idea of a dark kingdom or of dark forces of evil government.

We have seen that in the New Testament there are many names or titles for Satan or the devil which show him to be the evil spiritual leader of a whole system of wickedness with his own angels, with powerful forces in the heavenly places or in the air exercising an enormous influence on mankind as far as men prefer to stay in a

44. ὃς ἐρρύσατο ἡμᾶς ἐκ τῆς ἐξουσίας τοῦ σκοτοῦ καὶ μετέστησεν εἰς τὴν βασιλείαν τοῦ υἱοῦ τῆς ἀγάπης αὐτοῦ

state of disobedience and rebellion towards their creator. Often the word "world" is used to denote this system of rebellion toward the Creator (e.g. Jn 12:31; 14:30; 16:11; 15:18; Eph 6:12) or the word "this age" (1 Cor 2:8; Eph 2:2).

3.8 Other words for spiritual authorities.

In addition to the devil or Satan as the leader of the evil system of rebellion toward God the Creator, there are other words used which point to spiritual forces which are part of Satan's kingdom or area of authority. We do not have much detailed information about these spiritual forces, therefore it is not necessary for us to go into details. Here is a table to give an overview over different words used.

| | | | | | | | | |
|----------|--------------------------|-----------|----------------------------------|-----------------------------------|----------------------|---------------|----------------------------|--------------------------|
| thrónoi | kyniōtētes | angēloi | archai | exousiai | dynamēis | kōsmōkratōres | pneumatika tēs pōnērias | dōxai |
| θρόνοι | κυριότητες | ἀγγέλους | ἀρχαὶ | ἐξουσίαι | δυνάμεις | κοσμοκράτορες | πνευματικὰ τῆς πονηρίας | δόξαι |
| thrones | dominions | angels | rulers | authorities | powers | world-rulers | spiritual evil forces | glorious ones |
| | Eph 1:21 | Rom 8:38 | Rom 8:38 Eph 1:21 Eph 3:10 | Eph 1:21 Eph 3:10 Eph 6:12 | Rom 8:38 Eph 1:21 | | | |
| Col 1:16 | Col 1:16 | | Col 1:16 Col 2:15 | Col 1:16 Col 2:15 1 Pt 3:22 | | Eph 6:12 | Eph 6:12 | |
| | 2 Pt 2:10f Jude 1:8-9 | 1 Pt 3:22 | | | 1 Pt 3:22 | | | 2 Pt 2:10f Jude 1:8-9 |

3.9 Demons and Unclean Spirits

3.9.1 In the Old Testament

The LXX translates the following Hebrew words with the Greek word for demon.⁴⁵

Words used

שֵׁד *šēd*, pl. שְׁדִּים *šēdîm*. n. m., demon.⁴⁶ Moses said in his song (Dt 32:17), "They sacrificed to demons that were no gods, to gods they had never known, to new gods that had come recently, whom your fathers had never dreaded."⁴⁷ Psalm 106:37-38 speaks of human sacrifices to the demons:

37 They sacrificed their sons
and their daughters to the demons;
38 they poured out innocent blood,
the blood of their sons and daughters,
whom they sacrificed to the idols of Canaan,
and the land was polluted with blood.

שְׂעִיר *šā'îr*, pl. שְׂעִירִים *šā'îrîm*. , n.m. satyr, demon (with he-goat's form, or feet).⁴⁸ In Isaiah 13:21 we read about the devastated place of Babylon, "But wild beasts of the desert shall lie there; and

45. The LXX also uses the Greek word for demon to translate Ps 91:6 and Is 65:3. But there it is not quite clear, why that was done.

46. Brown, Driver, and Briggs, *Hebrew and English Lexicon of the Old Testament*, p. 993f.

47. יִזְבְּחוּ לַשְּׂדִים לֹא אֱלֹהִים אֱלֹהִים לֹא יִדְעוּם חַדָּשִׁים מִקֶּדֶב כִּזְאוֹ לֹא שְׂעָרִים אֲבֹתֵיהֶם:

48. *ibid.*, p. 972.

their houses shall be full of doleful creatures; and owls shall dwell there, and satyrs shall dance there" (KJV).⁴⁹ Similarly we learn about the devastated country of Edom in Is 34:14, "The wild beasts of the desert shall also meet with the wild beasts of the island, and the satyr shall cry to his fellow; the screech owl also shall rest there, and find for herself a place of rest."⁵⁰

In Lv 17:3-4 there is a rule for sacrificing animals:

3 If any one of the house of Israel kills an ox or a lamb or a goat in the camp, or kills it outside the camp, 4 and does not bring it to the entrance of the tent of meeting to offer it as a gift to the Lord in front of the tabernacle of the Lord, bloodguilt shall be imputed to that man. He has shed blood, and that man shall be cut off from among his people.

The purpose of this rule is stated in 17:7:

So they shall no more sacrifice their sacrifices to goat demons, after whom they whore. This shall be a statute forever for them throughout their generations.

King Jeroboam of Northern Israel brought many changes (2 Chr 11:14-15 KJV):

14 For the Levites left their suburbs and their possession, and came to Judah and Jerusalem: for Jeroboam and his sons had cast them off from executing

49. וְרִבְצוּ-שָׁם צִיִּים וּמָלְאוּ בְתֵיהֶם אֲחִים וְשָׁכְנוּ שָׁם בְּנוֹת יַעֲזָה וְשַׁעֲרִים יִרְקְדוּ-שָׁם:

50. וּפְגָשׁוּ צִיִּים אֶת-אֲחֵיהֶם וְשַׁעֲרֵי עַל-רֵעֵהוּ יִקְרָא אֶד-שָׁם הַרְגִיעָה לִילִית וּמִצְאָה לָהּ מְנוּחַ:

the priest's office unto the Lord: 15 And he ordained him priests for the high places, and for the devils, and for the calves which he had made.⁵¹

אֱלִיל 'ēlîl, pl. אֱלִילִים 'ēlîlîm. n.m. insufficiency, worthlessness, esp. pl. worthless gods, idols (Lv 19:4; 26:1; Is 2:8.18.20.20; 10:10.11; 19:1.3; 31:7.7; Ez 30:13; Hb 2:18; Ps 97:7).⁵² The Hebrew text of Psalm 96:5⁵³ "For all the gods of the peoples are worthless idols, but the Lord made the heavens." was translated in the LXX⁵⁴ in this way:

For all the gods of the nations are demons, but the Lord made the heavens.

It may be that the apostle Paul's statement in 1 Cor 10:20 has to be understood on the backdrop of this interpretation of Ps 96:5 through the LXX.

3.9.2 In the New Testament

1. God's oneness is acknowledged by demons. "You believe that God is one; you do well. Even the demons believe - and shudder!" (Jas 2:19).
2. Jesus has full authority over demons.

51. וַיַּעֲמֵד-לוֹ כְּהֹנִים לְבָמֹת וּלְשָׁעִירִים וּלְעִזִּים אֲשֶׁר עָשָׂה:

52. Brown, Driver, and Briggs, Hebrew and English Lexicon of the Old Testament, p. 47.

53. כִּי | כָּל-אֱלֹהֵי הָעַמִּים אֱלִילִים וַיַּהֲזֶה שָׁמַיִם עָשָׂה:

54. οτι παντες οι θεοι των εθνων δαιμονια ο δε κυριος τους ουρανους εποησεν English translation by Lanz.

- (a) His authority of future judgment of the demons and unclean spirits (Mt 8:29).
- (b) His authority to send demons away from a certain area (Mk 5:10) and send them into the abyss (Lk 8:31).
- (c) His authority to let the demons enter the great herd of about 2000 pigs (Mt 8:30-33; Mk 5:11-13; Lk 8:32-33).
- (d) Jesus cast out demons.
 - i. By the Spirit of God (Mt 12:28) or by the finger of God (Lk 11:20) which was a sign that the kingdom of God had come upon Israel.
 - ii. With a word Jesus cast out the spirits of those who were oppressed by demons (Mt 8:16).
 - iii. And he did not allow them to speak and thus make his identity known (Mk 1:23.26.27; 1:32-34; 3:11-12; Lk 4:33.35.36.41).
 - iv. Throughout all Galilee (Mk 1:39); on his way to Jerusalem (Lk 13:32). That Jesus could cast out demons was known "throughout all Syria" (Mt 4:24).
 - v. Where there was one demon: the little daughter of a Syrophoenician woman (Mk 7:25.26.29.30; Mt 15:22).
 - vi. Where there were multiple demons in a person: Seven demons left Mary Magdalene (Mk 16:9; Lk 8:2; cf. Mt 12:43-45). There was a man or two men with many demons called "Legion" (Lk 8:27.29.30; 8:33.35.36.38; Mt 8:28.33; Mk 5:2.8; 5:13.15.16.18).

- vii. Where after the casting out of the demon the person who was ill in some way, got healed, because the illness had been caused by the demon. A mute man could speak (Mt 9:32-33). A man who was blind and mute, was healed (Mt 12:22; cf. the mute man of Lk 11:14). A father asked Jesus to heal his son who was an epileptic and suffered terribly. For often he fell into the fire, and often into the water. The son was healed (Mt 17:15.18; Lk 9:42). In Mk 9:25 Jesus rebuked the unclean spirit, "You mute and deaf spirit, I command you, come out of him and never enter him again." See also Lk 6:18.
 - (e) Jesus gave his disciples the authority to cast out unclean spirits or demons (Mt 10:1.8; Mt 12:27; Mk 3:14-15; Mk 6:7.13; Mk 16:17; Lk 9:1; Lk 10:17; Lk 11:19; Acts 5:16; 8:7).
 - (f) Someone was casting out demons in the name of Jesus who was not following Jesus. Jesus ordered not to stop him (Mk 9:38-39; Lk 9:49-50).
3. The wrong understanding of some people in the NT of John the Baptist and of Jesus.
- (a) The enemies of John the Baptist accused him of having a demon (Mt 11:18; Lk 7:33).
 - (b) The enemies of Jesus accused him to drive out demons "by the prince of demons" (Mt 9:34; Mt 12:24.27; Mk 3:22.30; Lk 11:15.18). In Jn 7:20 the crowd said to Jesus, "You have a demon! Who is seeking to kill you?" In Jn 8:48-49.52 the "Jews" said, "Are we not right in

saying that you are a Samaritan and have a demon?", and Jesus rejected their accusation. In Jn 10:19-21 "there was a division among the Jews ... Many of them said, 'He has a demon, and is insane; why listen to him?' Others said, 'These are not the words of one who is oppressed by a demon. Can a demon open the eyes of the blind?'"

- (c) When some of the Epicurean and Stoic philosophers conversed with Paul in Athens, some said, "He seems to be a preacher of foreign divinities" (= "demons": a demon here means something like a powerful spiritual personality) "because he was preaching Jesus and the resurrection" (Acts 17:18).
- (d) Jesus predicts that "on that day" many false prophets will claim to have cast out demons in the name of Jesus, but that he never knew them (Mt 7:22).

4. Gentiles and demons.

- (a) Paul warns the Corinthians of partaking of sacrifices offered to idols because "what pagans sacrifice they offer to demons and not to God. I do not want you to be participants with demons. You cannot drink the cup of the Lord and the cup of demons. You cannot partake of the table of the Lord and the table of demons" (1 Cor 10:20).
- (b) Paul knew in his time of an information of the Holy Spirit "that in later times some will depart from the faith by devoting themselves to deceitful spirits and teachings of demons, 2 through the insincerity of liars whose consciences are seared, 3 who forbid marriage

and require abstinence from foods that God created to be received with thanksgiving by those who believe and know the truth" (1 Tm 4:1-3).

- (c) In Rv 9:20 "the rest of mankind, who were not killed by these plagues, did not repent of the works of their hands nor give up worshiping demons and idols".
 - (d) Demons "coming out of the mouth of the dragon and out of the mouth of the beast and out of the mouth of the false prophet" start a demonic revival "performing signs" and going abroad to the kings of the whole world, "to assemble them for battle on the great day of God the Almighty" (Rv 16:13-14).
 - (e) The place of the judged and punished Babylon becomes a kind of prison of demons and unclean spirits (Rv 18:2).
5. An unclean spirit outside its "host" (man or animal) does not feel well: "It passes through waterless places seeking rest, but finds none". It may try to reenter its former host. "Then it goes and brings with it seven other spirits more evil than itself, and they enter and dwell there, and the last state of that person is worse than the first" (Mt 12:43-45; cf. par Lk 11:24-26).

This overview of the many verses of the NT, especially the gospels, which talk about demons, shows that there is a lot of information. But what is not told, is also of significance. As soon as we ask the gospels, why anybody of those who got liberated by Jesus, was demon-possessed in the first place, we very soon realize that we have not much information about that. It becomes very clear that

the intention of the gospels is to glorify Jesus by showing his authority over the demons, but not to satisfy our human curiosity.

3.10 Anthropology - about Man

The creation of man is already mentioned in the first chapter of the Bible. There man is the last of God's creations which switches God's view of his creation from "good" to "very good". During the first five days God saw that his creations were good: on the first day the light (Gn 1:4), on the third day the earth and the seas (1:10), and plants (1:12), on the fourth day the sun, moon and stars (1:18), on the fifth day living creatures in the waters and the birds in the air of heaven (1:21), and on the sixth day first the living creatures of the earth (1:25). But later on the sixth day when God had created man "in his image", we are told (1:31):

And God saw everything that he had made, and behold, it was very good.

It seems as if the creation of man in God's image was the crowning masterpiece of God's creation leading his creative works to completion and perfection. With the creation of man everything was raised to the level of "very good". This shows us that the subject of this chapter "humanity" is a special one. No other creature in Gn 1 gets this title of honor that it has been created in the image of God. The destiny of humanity is linked to the glory of God the Creator. But as high as the calling of man was, so deep was his fall into sin. First we shall deal with humanity in innocence and then with humanity in sin. Both subjects taken together will show us the need for salvation and for a savior thus paving the way for christology and soteriology.

3.10.1 Humanity in Innocence – Our Privileges

The Holy Scriptures tell us that after the creation of man there was a time when man remained innocent and sinless. We shall first focus on this time of humanity in innocence. One main source of information about this time are the first chapters of Genesis.

Created by God – all humans not just Adam and Eve

The Hebrew word for the first man "Adam" ('āḏām) points to the fact that Adam was formed by God "of dust from the ground" or "from the earth" ('āḏāmāh; Gn 2:7).⁵⁵ "Adam" is both the name of the first human individual (Gn 2:23.25; 3:8.9.12; 4:1) and of the whole human race (see Gen 5:1-2; 1:27; 2:5; 6:1.3; Eccl 7:29; 12:1). God is not only the creator of Adam and Eve, but also of all their children after them (Ex 4:11; Is 17:7; 45:12; Zec 12:1). God created man for his own glory (Is 43:7; Eph 1:6.12.14; 1 Cor 10:31). Therefore the purpose of those men who acknowledge God in their life is to glorify him. Believers who know how precious it is to be in God's presence have good reasons to praise him (Ps 16:11; 27:4; 73:25-26; 84:1-2.10; Jn 10:10).⁵⁶ It is a normal thing for a believer to rejoice in the Lord (Rom 5:2-3; Phil 4:4; 1 Thes 5:16-18; James 1:2; 1 Peter 1:6.8). And God rejoices over his people (Is 62:5; Zep 3:17-18).⁵⁷ It is reasonable to glorify God (Rv 4:11; Rom 11:36; Mk 12:30).

55. וַיִּצְרֵם יְהוָה אֱלֹהִים אֶת-הָאָדָם עָפָר מִן-הָאֲדָמָה

56. See Grudem, *Systematic Theology. An Introduction to Biblical Doctrine*, p. 441.

57. See *ibid.*, p. 441.

Physical being - made from dust of the earth

According to Gn 2:7 man is a physical being, formed of the dust of the earth:

Then the Lord God formed the man of dust from the ground and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life, and the man became a living creature.⁵⁸

He was taken from the ground or earth and his destiny was to cultivate the earth (Gn 2:5.15; 3:17-19). The material body of man links him with the earth. He was created to fill the earth and rule it with the creatures on it (Gn 1:26-28). All further developments of agriculture, business, science, education and government are somehow related to the ability of man to cultivate and govern the earth which was given to him by the Creator before man's falling into sin.

Spiritual being – infused with God's spirit

According to the same verse Gn 2:7 which we have quoted above man is also a spiritual being. His material body was formed of dust from the ground, but he was not alive yet. This happened by God's breathing "into his nostrils the breath of life" so that "man became a living creature". God's breathing is related to God's Spirit (see subsection 6.1.3). The two parts form a third part as a holistic unity: The material body plus "the breath of life"⁵⁹ from God's breathing result in their being united in the third part "a living creature" or "a

58. וַיִּצָּרְ יְהוָה אֱלֹהִים אֶת-הָאָדָם עָפָר מִן-הָאֲדָמָה וַיִּנְּחָהוּ בָאָפֶסֶת נְשָׁמַת חַיִּים. וַיְהִי הָאָדָם לְנֶפֶשׁ חַיָּה:

59. Hebrew: נְשָׁמַת חַיִּים LXX: πνοή ζωης

living soul".⁶⁰ The Bible speaks of body, soul and spirit of man (1 Thes 5:23).

This brings us to the question of *monism*, *dichotomy* or *trichotomy*. *Monism* is the view that man is basically one element, namely his body. A man's body is his person, soul and spirit are just other expressions to refer to a person. According to this view there is no separate existence for any soul after the body dies. We will see that this does not really fit the biblical data. *Dichotomy* is the view that man is made up of two basic parts, body on the one hand and soul or spirit on the other, understanding that soul and spirit are used as synonyms. *Trichotomy* holds that there are three parts in man, body, soul and spirit and that soul and spirit have to be distinguished.⁶¹ We think that dichotomy is a useful view to understand much of the biblical teaching about man, because often the words soul and spirit are used in an overlapping and a kind of synonymous way. But we also think that in certain contexts it is more helpful to distinguish between soul and spirit (1 Thes 5:23; Heb 4:12; 1 Cor 15:44-50). Especially the text in 1 Cor 15 shows with its eschatological force that there has to be a great difference between soul and spirit, because Paul clearly distinguishes between the body of the first Adam as a "soul-body" and the body of the last Adam as a "spiritual body". Soul and spirit can not be understood as synonyms here, but stand in the same contrast as the list of word

60. Hebrew: נֶפֶשׁ חַיָּיָה *nepeš hayyāh* Greek of the LXX: ψυχὴν ζῶσαν *psychēn zōsan*. The Hebrew word *pnēš* means beside other things "that which breathes, the breathing substance or being = ψυχή, anima, the soul, the inner being of man", also "living being, life, self, person, desire, appetite, emotion, and passion" according to Brown, Driver, and Briggs, *Hebrew and English Lexicon of the Old Testament*, p. 659.

61. Cf. Grudem, *Systematic Theology. An Introduction to Biblical Doctrine*, p. 472-3. Grudem himself is in favor of dichotomy, p. 481.

pairs in 1 Cor 15:42-43.

In this context we could ask where the human souls come from after God had created Adam's soul as described in Gn 2:7. Grudem explains that there are two main views in Christian tradition trying to give an answer:

Creationism is the view that God creates a new soul for each person and sends it to that person's body sometime between conception and birth. Traducianism, on the other hand, holds that the soul as well as the body of a child are inherited from the baby's mother and father at the time of conception. Both views have had numerous defenders in the history of the church, with creationism eventually becoming the prevailing view in the Roman Catholic Church. Luther was in favor of traducianism, while Calvin favored creationism.⁶²

Pre-existentialism is a popular view today, but it has no support in Scripture. It is widespread combined with the idea of reincarnation found in Eastern religions as Hinduism and Buddhism. In favor of traducianism the following verses could be used: Gen 1:27; 5:1ff; Heb 7:10, in favor of creationism: Ps 127:3; 139:13; Isa 42:5; Zec 12:1; Heb 12:9. Perhaps this question is a good example where we could say: "We do not know for sure." Maybe sometimes we have questions which were not really asked in the Bible and therefore are not really answered there.

I personally would prefer traducianism. This is related to Paul's statement in Acts 17:26 "And he made from one man every nation of mankind..." If we understand man as a holistic unity of body,

62. Grudem, *Systematic Theology. An Introduction to Biblical Doctrine*, p. 484. Grudem himself is against traducianism, p. 485.

soul and spirit and combine it with the idea that we all are children of Adam and Eve, then things fit better together on the background of traducianism. After Adam's and Eve's sin there is a tradition of sinning in mankind (cf. Rom 5:12; Ps 51:5). If we follow traducianism, all is inherited from the parents, including the spirit. It is easier to understand that all of man is corrupted by sin (2 Cor 7:1), if all of it is inherited from already corrupted parents. If creationism is correct and God creates every spirit afresh, why does this person then stand in a tradition of sin? Therefore I prefer the view that the whole framework of human existence is given as coming from Adam and Eve, including the spiritual part of humanity.

The body is the material part of man, the spirit the immaterial and the soul is the mediator between both, belonging as well to the body as to the spirit. The "place" of the soul within the body is in the blood (Lv 17:11).⁶³ As far as the soul belongs to the body, it can die with it (Lv 21:11; 24:17; Nm 6:6; 19:11; 23:10; Jgs 16:30; Ez 18:4,20.) As far as the soul belongs to the spirit, it leaves the body when someone dies (Gn 35:18; 2 Sm 1:9). The resurrection of the only son of the widow in Zarephath in answer to the prayer of the prophet Elijah shows us that the soul can return to the body (1 Kgs 17:21-22):

21 Then he stretched himself upon the child three times and cried to the Lord, "O Lord my God, let this child's life come into him again." 22 And the Lord listened to the voice of Elijah. And the life of the child came into him again, and he revived.

The word translated here with "life" is the *nepeš* or soul. When the soul returned to the boy, he became alive again. David praises God

63.

כִּי נַפֶּשׁ הַבָּשָׂר בָּדָם הוּא

for healing him from an almost fatal disease in Ps 30:2-3:

2 O Lord my God, I cried to you for help, and you
have healed me. 3 O Lord, you have brought up my
soul from Sheol; you restored me to life from among
those who go down to the pit.

David almost died. He speaks about his recovering from the illness and says that God brought his soul up from Sheol. There seems to be implied in this poetic language that the soul of somebody who dies goes down into Sheol which is seen as a pit. In Acts 20:9-10 Eutychus is dead, but his soul (translated here with life) is still in him:

9 And a young man named Eutychus, sitting at
the window, sank into a deep sleep as Paul talked still
longer. And being overcome by sleep, he fell down
from the third story and was taken up dead. 10 But
Paul went down and bent over him, and taking him in
his arms, said, "Do not be alarmed, for his life is in
him."

We can understand the fact that "he was taken up dead" in the way that he was really dead and they would have buried him. But Paul sensed that his soul had not yet left his body. He trusted in God that this boy would live and that it was not necessary to start lamenting and burying him. So Paul continued with the church service. And God revived the boy to the great comfort of the congregation. Jesus taught that man cannot kill the soul (Mt 10:28):

And do not fear those who kill the body but cannot

kill the soul.⁶⁴ Rather fear him who can destroy both soul and body in hell.

Man can only kill the body. God can let the soul and the body of man get lost in hell. Therefore we should take God much more seriously than man. It seems that Jesus speaks in Mt 10:28 of the soul as far as it belongs to the spirit. In Rv 6:9 we find a similar use of the word "souls"⁶⁵ for the martyrs in the presence of God in heaven (see also: section 8.9).

Made in the image of God

The greatest honor of man in creation is that he is made "in the image of God".⁶⁶

In the Old Testament We read about this in Gn 1:26-27:

26 Then God said, "Let us make man in our image, after our likeness."⁶⁷ And let them have dominion over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the heavens and over the livestock and over all the earth and over every creeping thing that creeps on the earth." 27 So God created man in his own image, in the image of God he created him;⁶⁸ male and female he created them.

64. καὶ μὴ φοβείσθε ἀπὸ τῶν ἀποκτεννόντων τὸ σῶμα τὴν δὲ ψυχὴν μὴ δυναμένων ἀποκτείνειν•

65. εἶδον ὑποκάτω τοῦ θυσιαστηρίου τὰς ψυχὰς τῶν ἐσφαγμένων διὰ τὸν λόγον τοῦ θεοῦ καὶ διὰ τὴν μαρτυρίαν ἣν εἶχον.

66. For this section cf. Grudem, Systematic Theology. An Introduction to Biblical Doctrine, p. 442-450.

67.

נַעֲשֶׂה אָדָם בְּצַלְמֵנוּ כְּדֹמֵינוּ

68.

וַיְבָרֵא אֱלֹהִים אֶת-הָאָדָם בְּצַלְמוֹ בְּצֶלֶם אֱלֹהִים בָּרָא אֹתוֹ

Man made in the image and likeness of God is destined to have a dominating role on earth. That seems to be part of his being made in God's likeness.

Words used. The Hebrew word here translated with image is צֶלֶם "šelem" and is used in Gn 5:3 and 9:6 in a similar way as in 1:26-27. In addition to this the word is used for two-dimensional pictures of human beings (Ez 23:14) and for three-dimensional images of the tumors and the mice with which God had plagued the Philistines (1 Sm 6:5.11) and for images of idols (2 Kgs 11:18; 2 Chr 23:17; Ez 7:20; 16:17; Amos 5:26), for the "shadow" of a man (Ps 39:6) and for the fact that God rejects the picture of the wicked on the day when they are judged (Ps 73:20).⁶⁹

The Hebrew word דְּמוּת "dāmût" in Gn 1:26 means "likeness"⁷⁰ and is used for the likeness between God and Adam and Seth in Gn 1:26 and 5:1.3 in a very similar way as "šelem" is used. It is also used in the following OT verses. Is 40:18 tells us that man cannot create or produce a likeness which really and truly resembles God. In 2 Kgs 16:10 King Ahaz sent a "likeness" of the altar at Damascus to Uriah the priest, probably meaning a "model" of the altar so that this altar could be copied and used in Jerusalem. It is also used for the likeness of oxen (2 Chr 4:3), of the venom of a serpent (Ps 58:5), of a great multitude (Is 13:4). Ezekiel uses it very often in his careful language to report the "likenesses" he had seen in his visions of the cherubim and of the glory of the Lord (Ez 1:5.10.13.16; 1:22.26.28; 8:2; 10:1.10.21.22). In Ez 23:15 it is used for the pictures of Babylonians on the wall. It is in total agreement

69. See Brown, Driver, and Briggs, *Hebrew and English Lexicon of the Old Testament*, p. 853-4.

70. See *ibid.*, p. 198.

with the teaching of the likeness of God and man in Genesis 1 that Ezekiel's vision of the glory of the Lord has its consummation in the revelation of God in "a likeness with a human appearance" (Ez 1:26-28):

26 And above the expanse over their heads there was the likeness of a throne, in appearance like sapphire; and seated above the likeness of a throne was a likeness with a human appearance. 27 And upward from what had the appearance of his waist I saw as it were gleaming metal, like the appearance of fire enclosed all around. And downward from what had the appearance of his waist I saw as it were the appearance of fire, and there was brightness around him. 28 Like the appearance of the bow that is in the cloud on the day of rain, so was the appearance of the brightness all around. Such was the appearance of the likeness of the glory of the Lord. And when I saw it, I fell on my face, and I heard the voice of one speaking.

In Dn 10:16 Daniel says that in his vision "one in the likeness of the children of man touched my lips". Reading Daniel's vision, one gets the impression that this is a revelation of God. It seems also that John's vision of the divine Jesus Christ in Rv 1:9-20 points back to Dn 10:4-21 so to say identifying the divine person who appeared to Daniel with Jesus Christ (so with Keil⁷¹). Then this would be another example of a self-revelation of God where he chose to reveal himself "in the likeness ... of man".

71. C. F. Keil, Ezekiel, Daniel, Martin, James <trans>; Easton, M. G. <trans> (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Eerdmans, 1983), p. 410.

Even after the fall man is still made in the image of God.

In Gn 5:3 "šelem" "image" is used for the resemblance between Adam and his son Seth:

When Adam had lived 130 years, he fathered a son in his own likeness, after his image, and named him Seth.

The idea is that Seth inherited the image of his father who was created in the image of God so that Seth (and all the other descendants of Adam) inherit the honor to be born in the image of God. That this understanding is intended becomes clear when we look at Gn 9:6:

Whoever sheds the blood of man, by man shall his blood be shed, for God made man in his own image.

This proves that even after falling into sin man's quality of being made in God's image is not lost. This quality sets him apart from all animals which can be slaughtered and eaten. But to kill a human being is a capital offense because every human being resembles God the Creator. "The fact that man is in the image of God means that man is like God and represents God."⁷²

In the New Testament

Words used. The LXX translates the Hebrew word דְמוּת *dəməūt* in Gn 1:26 with the Greek word ὁμοίωσις *hōmōiōsis* "likeness". The LXX translates the Hebrew word "šelem" in Gn 1:26 with εἰκὼν *ēikōn* "image". We can follow both words in the New

72. Grudem, *Systematic Theology. An Introduction to Biblical Doctrine*, p. 442.

Testament and see where the subject of man being created in the image of God is taken up.⁷³

Man created in the image or likeness of God in the New Testament. The fact that man is made in the likeness of God is given as a reason in the New Testament that we should not speak ill of other people or curse them (James 3:9⁷⁴).⁷⁵

The LXX translates the Hebrew word "šelem" in Gn 1:26 with εἰκὼν *ëikōn* "image". In the New Testament this is used in words of Jesus when he answered the question whether one should pay taxes to Caesar or not (Mt 22:20-21; cf. also Mk 12:16; Lk 20:24):

20 And Jesus said to them, "Whose likeness and inscription is this?" 21 They said, "Caesar's." Then he said to them, "Therefore render to Caesar the things that are Caesar's, and to God the things that are God's."

The picture on the coin for the tax was Caesar's. This proves the tax coin to be Caesar's, and he should get his own back. The image on man is God's. This proves man to be God's own. And God should get his own back. Man being made in the image of God, should commit himself to God to serve and worship him. Within the New

73. In Heb 10:1 the word *ëikōn* is used to denote the body which casts the shadow, the body being the real thing and the shadow being only the resemblance of it. In other verses in the New Testament ἡ εἰκὼν *ëikōn* image is used for idolatry (Rom 1:23), and especially for the idolatry of worshipping the image of the beast in Revelation (13:14.15; 14:9.11; 15:2; 16:2; 19:20; 20:4).

74. ἐν αὐτῇ εὐλογοῦμεν τὸν κύριον καὶ πατέρα, καὶ ἐν αὐτῇ καταρώμεθα τοὺς ἀνθρώπους τοὺς καθ' ὁμοίωσιν θεοῦ γεγονότας•

75. In this verse the Greek word ὁμοίωσις *hōmōiōsis* "likeness" is used which in the LXX translates the Hebrew word דְּמוּת *"dēmût"* in Gn 1:26.

Testament Paul talks about man as made in the image of God in 1 Cor 11:7 pointing back to Gn 1:26-27:⁷⁶

For a man ought not to cover his head, since he is the image and glory of God, but woman is the glory of man.⁷⁷

The context here is related to his teaching about the continuing difference between the genders in this world and how this should be taken into account in the service of the church (cf. also Gal 3:28-29).

Jesus Christ as the image of God. In the New Testament Jesus Christ himself is the image of God in a most supreme way (Col 1:15-17):

15 He is the image of the invisible God⁷⁸, the first-born of all creation. 16 For by him all things were created, in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or rulers or authorities - all things were created through him and for him. 17 And he is before all things, and in him all things hold together.

Jesus is the image of the invisible God and the firstborn of all creation in a way that all things have been created through him and all things are sustained and hold together through him or "in him".

76. In the following verses 1 Cor 11:8-12 Paul points back to Gn 2:18-25. See also section 3.10.1.

77. ἄνθρωπος μὲν γὰρ οὐκ ὀφείλει κατακαλύπτεσθαι τὴν κεφαλὴν, εἰκὼν καὶ δόξα θεοῦ ὑπάρχων· ἡ γυνὴ δὲ δόξα ἀνδρός ἐστιν.

78. ὅς ἐστιν εἰκὼν τοῦ θεοῦ τοῦ ἀοράτου

The idea that Jesus is the image of the invisible God is also implied in a word of Jesus in John 14:8-11 when Jesus answered a request of Philip:

8 Philip said to him, "Lord, show us the Father, and it is enough for us." 9 Jesus said to him, "Have I been with you so long, and you still do not know me, Philip? Whoever has seen me has seen the Father. How can you say, 'Show us the Father'? 10 Do you not believe that I am in the Father and the Father is in me? The words that I say to you I do not speak on my own authority, but the Father who dwells in me does his works. 11 Believe me that I am in the Father and the Father is in me, or else believe on account of the works themselves.

Whoever sees Jesus, sees the Father. In God's Son Jesus Christ the beauty, holiness and glory of the Father are revealed to man in a way that he can perceive it without having to die (Jn 1:18). That the glory of God the Father is revealed on the face of Jesus Christ as the image of God, is taught by Paul in 2 Cor 4:3-6:

3 And even if our gospel is veiled, it is veiled only to those who are perishing. 4 In their case the god of this world has blinded the minds of the unbelievers, to keep them from seeing the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God. 5 For what we proclaim is not ourselves, but Jesus Christ as Lord, with ourselves as your servants for Jesus' sake. 6 For God, who said, "Let light shine out of darkness," has shone in our hearts to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ.

In the first creation "God said, "Let there be light," and there was light" (Gn 1:3). In the new creation through Jesus Christ God again says "Let there be light" about some sinners who live in darkness and then he himself shines in their hearts. As Paul puts it, God shines "in our hearts to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ". This means that God himself is light shining within the hearts of believers and through those believers he is spreading the knowledge of God through the gospel of Christ. To see and recognize the face of Jesus the Christ is to see and recognize the glory of God. This glory of God in Christ has the power to transform believers who come through the Holy Spirit into the presence of the Lord so that they become more like the Lord (2 Cor 3:18):

17 Now the Lord is the Spirit, and where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is freedom. 18 And we all, with unveiled face, beholding the glory of the Lord, are being transformed into the same image from one degree of glory to another. For this comes from the Lord who is the Spirit.

Quite in agreement with this section Paul teaches in Rom 8:29-30 that God's elect are predestined to become more like the Son of God and to partake in glory:

29 For those whom he foreknew he also predestined to be conformed to the image of his Son, in order that he might be the firstborn among many brothers.⁷⁹
30 And those whom he predestined he also called,

79. 29 ὅτι οὓς προέγνω, καὶ προώρισεν συμμόρφους τῆς εἰκόνης τοῦ υἱοῦ αὐτοῦ, εἰς τὸ εἶναι αὐτὸν πρωτότοκον ἐν πολλοῖς ἀδελφοῖς•

and those whom he called he also justified, and those whom he justified he also glorified.

This means that the image of God's Son is the perfect prototype or pattern of a new mankind. Paul speaks of this when he talks about the resurrection body (1 Cor 15:42-50):

42 So is it with the resurrection of the dead. What is sown is perishable; what is raised is imperishable. 43 It is sown in dishonor; it is raised in glory. It is sown in weakness; it is raised in power. 44 It is sown a natural body; it is raised a spiritual body. If there is a natural body, there is also a spiritual body.⁸⁰ 45 Thus it is written, "The first man Adam became a living being"; the last Adam became a life-giving spirit. 46 But it is not the spiritual that is first but the natural, and then the spiritual. 47 The first man was from the earth, a man of dust; the second man is from heaven. 48 As was the man of dust, so also are those who are of the dust, and as is the man of heaven, so also are those who are of heaven. 49 Just as we have borne the image of the man of dust, we shall also bear the image of the man of heaven.⁸¹ 50 I tell you this, brothers: flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God, nor does the perishable inherit the imperishable.

As long as our body is not transformed in the resurrection of the dead or - if we are still alive until Christ's second coming - in the

80. 44 σπεύρεται σῶμα ψυχικόν, ἐγείρεται σῶμα πνευματικόν. Εἰ ἔστιν σῶμα ψυχικόν, ἔστιν καὶ πνευματικόν.

81. 49 καὶ καθὼς ἐφορέσαμεν τὴν εἰκόνα τοῦ χοῦκου, φορέσομεν καὶ τὴν εἰκόνα τοῦ ἐπουρανίου.

transformation of the body of the living believers on that day, our body is perishable, in dishonor and weak and "natural". The Greek words which are translated with "natural body" in 15:44-46 are σῶμα ψυχικόν *sōma psychikōn*. Paul wants to point to the "soul" of man as the decisive factor of the first man Adam. His essence was that he was a "living being", literally "a living soul". Paul here refers back to Gn 2:7.⁸² The essence of the last Adam, Jesus Christ, is that he "became a life-giving spirit. His resurrection body is a "spiritual body" σῶμα πνευματικόν *sōma pñumatikōn*. This body is imperishable, in glory and in power. Adam had a body, a "soul-body". When he was created he had the potential to die in case of sin (Gn 2:17). He had a potentially perishable body. Adam's body of the old mankind is called "flesh and blood" in 1 Cor 15:50. This old mankind with the old perishable body cannot enter the kingdom of God, the coming world of righteousness. The reason why this old mankind is called "flesh and blood" is related to the soul the place of which is "in the blood".

Jesus Christ first became man with the body of the old mankind, with such a "soul-body" as Adam had. But when he had risen from the dead, he became "a life-giving spirit". This does not mean that he had no body when he rose.⁸³ He has a body indeed, but a "spiritual body". This section also has a certain relevance when it comes to the question whether man is made of

82. Ἐγένετο ὁ πρῶτος ἄνθρωπος Ἀδὰμ εἰς ψυχὴν ζῶσαν•

83. Cf. Lk 24:37-40: "37 But they were startled and frightened and thought they saw a spirit. 38 And he said to them, "Why are you troubled, and why do doubts arise in your hearts? 39 See my hands and my feet, that it is I myself. Touch me, and see. For a spirit does not have flesh and bones as you see that I have." 40 And when he had said this, he showed them his hands and his feet."

two or three parts. Whether he is made of body and soul only, or body and spirit understanding soul and spirit as synonyms. Or whether he is made of body and soul and spirit. Paul seems to distinguish between soul and spirit, as he seems to distinguish between the "natural body" or "soul-body" on the one hand and the "spiritual body" on the other. Christ's resurrection body is a spiritual body. On his resurrection day he could enter a house while the doors were shut (Jn 20:19.26). His body is not made of the dust of the earth, but of "heavenly material" (1 Cor 15:48). Our resurrection body will resemble Christ's appearance as sure as our earthly body resembles Adam's now: "Just as we have borne the image of the man of dust, we shall also bear the image of the man of heaven." What a glory is in store for believers. What an honor it is to be made in the image of God and to be resurrected in the image of Christ.

Ethical implications of being made in the image of God.

God's plan that we should resemble Christ has ethical implications according to Paul's teaching in Col 3:5-14 (KJV):

5 Mortify therefore your members which are upon the earth; fornication, uncleanness, inordinate affection, evil concupiscence, and covetousness, which is idolatry: 6 For which things' sake the wrath of God cometh on the children of disobedience: 7 In the which ye also walked some time, when ye lived in them. 8 But now ye also put off all these; anger, wrath, malice, blasphemy, filthy communication out of your mouth. 9 Lie not one to another, seeing that ye have put off the old man with his deeds; 10 And have put on the new man, which is renewed in knowledge after the

image of him that created him:⁸⁴ 11 Where there is neither Greek nor Jew, circumcision nor uncircumcision, Barbarian, Scythian, bond nor free: but Christ is all, and in all. 12 Put on therefore, as the elect of God, holy and beloved, bowels of mercies, kindness, humbleness of mind, meekness, longsuffering; 13 Forbearing one another, and forgiving one another, if any man have a quarrel against any: even as Christ forgave you, so also do ye. 14 And above all these things put on charity, which is the bond of perfectness.

It is clear that Adam did not lose his honor of having been made in God's image after he had sinned. But when we look at Col 3 we do realize that God's image has been distorted by man's sins as far as ethical behavior is concerned: On the side of the old man, of sinful Adam we have "fornication, uncleanness, inordinate affection, evil concupiscence, and covetousness, which is idolatry, anger, wrath, malice, blasphemy, filthy communication out of our mouth and lies. On the side of the new man which is identical with Christ and his character we have the true knowledge of God, holiness, being loved by God, bowels of mercies, kindness, humbleness of mind, meekness, longsuffering, forbearing one another, and forgiving one another and charity, which is the bond of perfectness.

Male and female in the image of God

We have seen in Gn 1:26-27 that God created man both male and female in his own image. Gn 2:18-25 give more information about

84. 10 καὶ ἐνδυσάμενοι τὸν νέον τὸν ἀνακαινούμενον εἰς ἐπίγνωσιν κατ' εἰκόνα τοῦ κτίσαντος αὐτόν

the forming of the woman out of the side of Adam:

18 Then the Lord God said, "It is not good that the man should be alone; I will make him a helper fit for him." 19 So out of the ground the Lord God formed every beast of the field and every bird of the heavens and brought them to the man to see what he would call them. And whatever the man called every living creature, that was its name. 20 The man gave names to all livestock and to the birds of the heavens and to every beast of the field. But for Adam there was not found a helper fit for him. 21 So the Lord God caused a deep sleep to fall upon the man, and while he slept took one of his ribs and closed up its place with flesh. 22 And the rib that the Lord God had taken from the man he made into a woman and brought her to the man. 23 Then the man said, "This at last is bone of my bones and flesh of my flesh; she shall be called Woman, because she was taken out of Man." 24 Therefore a man shall leave his father and his mother and hold fast to his wife, and they shall become one flesh. 25 And the man and his wife were both naked and were not ashamed.

It is not good for Adam to be alone. Here we find that God states that it would not be good for man / Adam to be alone. It is interesting that here we have mentioned a "not good" before the falling of Adam and Eve into sin. This stands in contrast to the repeated "good" and final "very good" in Gn 1. Adam is still in paradise, but it would not have been good for him to be or stay alone. Man is a social being until today. He needs other men. The basic unity of

human society is man, woman, children, the family.

The first preparation in Gn 2 of God's forming the woman for the man is that Adam gets the task of naming the animals. This is in agreement with his domination over them (cf. Gn 1:26-27). Adam's naming of the animals is an expression of his authority over them (Gn 2:19-20). The statement that "for Adam there was not found a helper fit for him" creates a kind of suspense in the story. Animals cannot fill the place which according to God's purpose should be taken by a fellow human being.

Eve a perfect match for Adam - equal, but different. The fact that the woman was taken from the side of Adam should be compared to the other statement that Adam was taken and formed from the ground. Adam was taken and formed of dust from the ground with his task to work the ground. The woman was taken out of the side of man and formed for man to be a helpful companion for him. If we add to this the further development that this woman became the mother of all men on earth and therefore was called "Eve", a name related to her giving life to all those children and descendants of Adam (Gn 3:20), then we realize that women are made for relationships. They are superbly gifted to be wives of their husbands and mothers of their children. They are masters in relationships. Often the mother of a family is called upon for many things from the side of her husband and perhaps from several children (Gn 5:4).⁸⁵

85. Cf. Madhura Ingahalikara and Alex Smitha, "Sex differences in the structural connectome of the human brain," *Proceedings of National Academy of Sciences of the United States of America*, November 2013, <http://www.pnas.org/content/early/2013/11/27/1316909110.full.pdf+html>, p. 1: "Sex differences in human behavior show adaptive complementarity: Males have better motor and spatial abilities, whereas females have supe-

Consequences of sin especially in the areas of strength. Later the consequences for their sins reach Adam and Eve in their respective areas of strength and special gifting: Adam will have problems in working the ground. Eve will have problems in her relationship with her husband and in giving birth to her children (Gn 3:16).

The joy of married life. When God brought the woman to the man, Adam realized that this is the answer to his loneliness (Gn 2:23):

This at last is bone of my bones and flesh of my flesh;
she shall be called Woman, because she was taken out
of Man.⁸⁶

The idea that someone is of the same bone and flesh is also found in Gn 29:13-14 where Laban realized the similarity between Jacob and himself when he had heard Jacob's story. Man and woman are made for each other. They are equal, both are created in the image of God. They are similar and they are different. Their similarities make them fit for each other. Their differences are complementary so that one gives the other what he is lacking. Both father and mother with their complementary gifting are supposed to be together a blessing for their children. Gn 2:24 is the foundation of biblical sexual ethics:

rior memory and social cognition skills. Studies also show sex differences in human brains but do not explain this complementarity... Overall, the results suggest that male brains are structured to facilitate connectivity between perception and coordinated action, whereas female brains are designed to facilitate communication between analytical and intuitive processing modes.”

וַיֹּאמֶר הָאָדָם זֹאת הִפְעֵם עֵצָה מְעַצְמִי וּבָשָׂר מִבְּשָׁרִי לָזֶאת יִקְרָא אִשָּׁה כִּי
מֵאִישׁ לִקְחָהּ זֹאת:

Therefore a man shall leave his father and his mother and hold fast to his wife, and they shall become one flesh.

The fact that the man leaves father and mother implies that the beginning of the married life of husband and wife is a public act. Everybody knows that they are now husband and wife.

One flesh, a unity not to be dissolved. They become one flesh which means a unity which should not be dissolved (Mt 19:3-9):⁸⁷

3 And Pharisees came up to him and tested him by asking, "Is it lawful to divorce one's wife for any cause?" 4 He answered, "Have you not read that he who created them from the beginning made them male and female, 5 and said, 'Therefore a man shall leave his father and his mother and hold fast to his wife, and they shall become one flesh'? 6 So they are no longer two but one flesh. What therefore God has joined together, let not man separate." 7 They said to him, "Why then did Moses command one to give a certificate of divorce and to send her away?" 8 He said to them, "Because of your hardness of heart Moses allowed you to divorce your wives, but from the beginning it was not so. 9 And I say to you: whoever divorces his wife, except for sexual immorality, and marries another, commits adultery."

Here we can see that the teaching of Jesus about married life is based on Gn 1:27 and 2:24. It is based on how God created man as

87. Cf. also Mk 10:2-12; Mal 2:14-16.

male and female "from the beginning" and on what God said about their being one flesh. This is also the reason why marriage should be held in honor among all believers (Heb 13:4).

Equality in personhood and importance. It is important to see that man and woman are both created in the image of God (Gn 1:27; 5:1-2) and so are equal in personhood and importance before God.⁸⁸ Pointing back to Genesis the apostle Paul writes (1 Cor 11:7-12):

7 For a man ought not to cover his head, since he is the image and glory of God, but woman is the glory of man. 8 For man was not made from woman, but woman from man. 9 Neither was man created for woman, but woman for man. 10 That is why a wife ought to have a symbol of authority on her head, because of the angels. 11 Nevertheless, in the Lord woman is not independent of man nor man of woman; 12 for as woman was made from man, so man is now born of woman. And all things are from God.

Paul makes some statements which underline the equality of man and woman and some which present their different roles. We first concentrate here on the equality. After having created Adam and then Eve, God nowadays uses the woman to bring forth man ("so man is now born of woman"). This implies that man and woman are equal. As God made Eve from Adam, he now makes man from woman. The statement "in the Lord woman is not independent of man nor man of woman" leads us to the same conclusion. Man

88. So with Grudem, *Systematic Theology. An Introduction to Biblical Doctrine*, p. 456-459.

and woman are interdependent. Not only as a couple, but also in the relationship of children and parents. No man is born without his mother, no girl is born without her father. God wants us to acknowledge our interdependence and honor each other in our differences. God wants the husband to honor his wife (1 Pt 3:7) and love her as Christ loved the church giving his life for her (Eph 5:25). The famous closure of the book of Proverbs (31:10-31) draws the picture of a wife and mother who is an excellent manageress and business woman, full of endeavors and ably using the opportunities which present themselves to her and at the same time highly appreciated by the members of her household.

In the New Testament the outpouring of the Holy Spirit brings gifts to all, men and women whom God wants to use powerfully to build his church and kingdom (Acts 2:17-18; Joel 2:28-29); 1 Cor 12:7,11; 1 Pt 4:10. In this context one very important verse to honor man and woman in Christ is from Paul's letter to the Galatians (3:28):

There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither
slave nor free, there is neither male nor female, for
you are all one in Christ Jesus.

Differences in roles. At the same time it is equally important to recognize that according to the Holy Scriptures man and woman have different roles.⁸⁹

The innertrinitarian relationship as a role model. The same Paul who wrote Gal 3:28, also wrote 1 Cor 11:3 giving us a framework of understanding of manhood and womanhood in Christ:

89. So with Grudem, *Systematic Theology. An Introduction to Biblical Doctrine*, p. 459-465.

But I want you to understand that the head of every man is Christ, the head of a wife is her husband, and the head of Christ is God.⁹⁰

Paul speaks of God the Father being the head of Christ, that means that Christ submits to the guidance of the Father. We can learn from Christ's relationship with the Father and his submission to God the Father as Grudem puts it: "Between the members of the Trinity there has been equality in importance, personhood, and deity throughout all eternity. But there have also been differences in roles between the members of the Trinity."⁹¹ The Bible teaches us that Jesus Christ is God the Son (Jn 1:1-3.14.18) from eternity, having equal and full divine glory with the Father (Phil 2:5-6; Col 2:9; Jn 17:24). But the Son willingly submitted in his earthly life to the Father's will (Phil 2:5-9). He will also submit to the Father when the Father will have put all his enemies under his feet "that God may be all in all" (1 Cor 15:28). As Christ submits to the Father, a man should submit to Christ and a wife should submit to her husband (1 Cor 11:3).

Different roles of man and woman before the fall. Man was created first, then the woman as a helper for the man (1 Tm 2:13; 1 Cor 11:8-9; Gn 2:7.18-23 1 Chr 5:1-2)

Adam named Eve. As man had received God's blessing with the authority over the animals of the earth in Gn 1:26.28 and as a sign of his authority he gave the names to all the animals in 2:19, so Adam named his wife first "woman" (2:23 and then "Eve" (3:20) as an expression of his authority.

90. θέλω δὲ ὑμᾶς εἰδέναι ὅτι παντὸς ἀνδρὸς ἡ κεφαλὴ ὁ Χριστὸς ἐστίν, κεφαλὴ δὲ γυναικὸς ὁ ἀνὴρ, κεφαλὴ δὲ τοῦ Χριστοῦ ὁ θεός.

91. So with *ibid.*, p. 459.

God named the human race "man" (Adam), not "woman" (Gn 5:2). In the Bible Adam represents the first whole human race, Jesus Christ as son of man or son of Adam inaugurated the new mankind (1 Cor 15:22.49; Rom 5:12-21).

What commandment is for whom? In the Bible, Old and New Testament alike, the wife should submit to her husband and respect his authority (e.g. Eph 5:22.33). The husband should love his wife "as Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her" (Eph 5:25) and should "not be harsh" with her (Col 3:19). Often the commandments are given to those who have a weakness in that particular area. If we husbands are told to love our wives and not be harsh with them, maybe we have a problem here. If the wives are told to submit to their husbands and respect them, maybe they have a problem, a weakness in this particular area. If both, husband and wife, obey what the word of God tells each of them, then married life can be a source of joy for the couple and the whole family. If one part rejects the word of God, the other is still challenged to glorify God by following his lead (e.g. 1 Pt 3:1; 1 Cor 7:14), even if family life is not as blissful as one would wish. For the role of women amongst God's people see section 7.7.

The gift oft staying single. In the New Testament there is a special gift of God mentioned for staying single because of the kingdom of God (Mt 19:11-12; 1 Cor 7:7-8.32-34.38.40). In the Old Testament there are not many examples of people who voluntarily stayed single. One of them would be the prophet Elijah. In the New Testament we have John the Baptist, Jesus Christ and the apostle Paul as famous examples of people staying single for the sake of their special calling.

Social being - made for relationship

We have already seen from Gn 2:18 that "it is not good that the man should be alone". This specifies man as a social being. He is made for relationship. He would not be happy if he is cut off from all fellowship with other fellow human beings. Normally he has his place in life by being part of a social network: being father, mother, brother, sister, son, daughter, uncle, aunt, cousin etc. etc.; belonging to a clan, a tribe, a nation; being leader or someone who is led in the social hierarchy.

This fact of man as a social being has also an influence on God's revelation towards man. Much of biblical ethics dwells on a holy and pure life within social relationships. To honor father and mother, to be faithful to one's wife or one's husband. Not to steal what belongs to the neighbor, not to harm his good name by slandering etc. etc. To care especially for the weaker parts of society, the widows, the orphans, the foreigner. A holy life is a life of love towards God and towards one's neighbors.

Responsible being - God's vice-regents on earth

Man's dominion as part of his being in the image of God. One aspect of man's being created in God's image is that man has dominion over the earth with the creatures on the earth, in the waters and in the air (Gn 1:26-28):

26 Then God said, "Let us make man in our image, after our likeness. And let them have dominion over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the heavens and over the livestock and over all the earth and over

every creeping thing that creeps on the earth.”⁹² 27 So God created man in his own image, in the image of God he created him; male and female he created them. 28 And God blessed them. And God said to them, “Be fruitful and multiply and fill the earth and subdue it and have dominion over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the heavens and over every living thing that moves on the earth.”⁹³

Words used for man's dominion. There are two words used for man having dominion over the earth or subduing it.

רָדָה rādāh to have dominion. In our section this word⁹⁴ is used for the rule of man on earth and over all other creatures somehow related to the earth (Gn 1:26-28). The same word is used for the rule of the coming Christ (Nm 24:19; Ps 72:8; 110:2) and for Solomon's dominion "over all the region west of the Euphrates from Tiphseh to Gaza, over all the kings west of the Euphrates" (1 Kgs 4:24). Solomon's chief officers ruled over the workers from the people (1 Kgs 9:23; 2 Chr 8:10).

An Israelite is not allowed to rule over his servant and fellow Israelite ruthlessly (Lv 25:43.46.53). But the shepherds of Israel have ruled God's people exactly in that way, with force and harshness (Ez 34:4). The priests ruled in a nonspiritual way over the

92. וַיְרַדּוּ בְּדִגַּת הַיָּם וּבְעֹף הַשָּׁמַיִם וּבְכָל־הַמָּה וּבְכָל־הָאָרֶץ וּבְכָל־הָרֶמֶשׂ הָרֶמֶשׂ
עַל־הָאָרֶץ:

93. וַיְבָרֶךְ אֹתָם אֱלֹהִים וַיֹּאמֶר לָהֶם אֱלֹהִים פָּרוּ וּרְבוּ וּמְלְאוּ אֶת־הָאָרֶץ וּבְכֹשֶׁת
וַרְדּוּ בְּדִגַּת הַיָּם וּבְעֹף הַשָּׁמַיִם וּבְכָל־חַיַּה הָרֶמֶשׂ עַל־הָאָרֶץ:

94. See Brown, Driver, and Briggs, Hebrew and English Lexicon of the Old Testament, p. 921-22.

common people (Jer 5:31).

The threat that "those who hate you shall rule over you" in Lv 26:17 is listed as part of the punishments in Lv 26 for the disobedience of the Israelites. This threat is seen as fulfilled in Neh 9:28). The Egyptians "will never again rule over the nations" (Ez 29:15). God lets the one from the east have victory over kings and rule them (Is 41:2). Redeemed Israel will rule over their former oppressors, including Babylon (Is 14:2.6). The righteous will rule over the wicked fools who go down to Sheol (Ps 49:15).

כָּבַשׁ *kābaš* **to subdue** The root *kḇš*⁹⁵ in Gn 1:28 is used in Qal for man subduing the earth, also for the Israelites intending to subdue people from Judah as their slaves (2 Chr 28:10) or for parents who force their children to be slaves because they are so poor (Neh 5:5) or for rich people from Judah who force their poorer brothers to be slaves again (Jer 34:11.16 or for the question of the king whether Haman would "assault" the queen Esther even in the king's house (Esther 7:8). It is used for subduing enemies in battle (Zec 9:15). It is also used wonderfully for God "subduing" and so graciously forgiving Israel's sins in his future salvation (Mi 7:19).

The root *kḇš* is used in the Niph'al for the land that is subdued before the Lord (Nm 32:22; 1 Chr 22:18) or before the Israelites (Nm 32:29; Joshua 18:1). In Pi'el it is used for David subduing several nations (2 Sm 8:11).

Man's dominion is a blessing, but is causing problems if he sins.

Gn 1:28 shows that the rule of man over the earth is related to his multiplying and filling the earth and is part of the blessing of God on man. Because man was so central for the earth, the sin of Adam

95. See *ibid.*, p. 461.

would bring death into the world (Rom 5:12; 8:20). But in the same way would the salvation of the children of God in Christ pave the way for the creation to "be set free from its bondage to decay and obtain the freedom of the glory of the children of God" (Rom 8:21).

The fact that God has given earth to man has enormous consequences for salvation history. Prayer and intercession of pious men becomes important and of highest influence (Gn 18:16-33; 19:29; Ps 106:23; Rv 5:8; 8:3-5). The heavens answer the earth (Hos 2:21) or what believers bind or loose on earth is bound or loosed in heaven (Mt 18:18).

Man's responsibility towards God. With great calling comes great responsibility. God created Adam and Eve as responsible towards their creator. They could sin and they could die (Gn 2:15-17):

15 The Lord God took the man and put him in the garden of Eden to work it and keep it. 16 And the Lord God commanded the man, saying, "You may surely eat of every tree of the garden, 17 but of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil you shall not eat, for in the day that you eat of it you shall surely die."⁹⁶

If we understand the imperatives in Gn 1:28⁹⁷ not as commandments but as the unfolding of the blessing mentioned there, then it is possible to see Gn 2:16-17 as the first commandment for man in the Bible. Indeed it seems, for the time being, that this was the one and only commandment for man in the garden of Eden.

16 וַיִּצְוֶה יְהוָה אֱלֹהִים עַל-הָאָדָם לֵאמֹר מִכָּל עֵץ-הַגָּן אָכַל תֹּאכַל: 17 וּמִעֵץ הָרִעִית טוֹב וְרָע לֹא תֹאכַל מִמֶּנּוּ כִּי בְיוֹם אָכַלְהָ מִמֶּנּוּ מוֹת תָּמוּת:

97. "Be fruitful and multiply and fill the earth and subdue it and have dominion ..."

Is this commandment part of a "covenant of works"? Reformed theology has understood this commandment as God's first covenant with man, "the covenant of works".⁹⁸ And while the word covenant is not mentioned in the immediate context of Gn 2:16-17, the verse Hosea 6:7 has served as a proof text for this understanding (see Hos 6:4-7):

4 What shall I do with you, O Ephraim?
What shall I do with you, O Judah?
Your love is like a morning cloud,
like the dew that goes early away.
5 Therefore I have hewn them by the prophets;
I have slain them by the words of my mouth,
and my judgment goes forth as the light.
6 For I desire steadfast love and not sacrifice,
the knowledge of God rather than burnt offerings.
7 But like Adam they transgressed the covenant;
there they dealt faithlessly with me.⁹⁹

In the context here God compares the repeated breaking of God's covenant through Ephraim and Judah with the disobedience and transgression of Adam who broke God's "covenant" in the garden of Eden. Of course we have to remember that God here is looking back from the time of Hosea in the eighth century before Christ to the time of Adam. "To make a covenant" or literally "to cut a covenant"(See e.g. Gn 15:18¹⁰⁰ was a customary action of mankind

98. See for example Grudem, Systematic Theology. An Introduction to Biblical Doctrine, p. 516-518.

99.

וְהָיָה כְּאָדָם עֲבָרוּ בְרִית שָׁם בְּגִדוֹ כִּי:

100. בַּיּוֹם הַהוּא כָּרַת יְהוָה אֶת־אֲבָרָם בְּרִית לְאָמֹר לְיִרְעָה נָתַתִּי אֶת־הָאָרֶץ
הַזֹּאת מִנְּתַר מִצְרַיִם עַד־הַנָּהָר הַנָּדֹל נְהַר־פָּרָת:

after paradise and after having fallen into sin. To do this animals could be killed and cut into pieces (Gn 15:10; Jer 34:18). Then the two parties would pass between the pieces of the sacrificed animals to confirm that they agree to fulfill the stipulations of the covenant (Gn 15:17-18; Jer 34:18).

If man had stayed faithful to God, he would have kept easy access to the tree of life. He would have lived forever (Gn 2:9,16; 3:22) and have enjoyed the fellowship with God forever (Gn 3:8). It is important to remember that Gn 2-3 do not only tell us that man can die in case of sin, but that he can live forever if he remains faithful to God and stays in his covenant fellowship. Eternal life is a gift that mankind remembers since the time of the garden of Eden. A covenant of works implies that 100 percent faithfulness and obedience towards God is rewarded with eternal life and access into the presence of God. No man after Adam's and Eve's falling into sin has ever fulfilled the conditions of this covenant except one, Jesus Christ. He would have had the right of eternal life without ever dying, but he sacrificed his holy blood and life to ransom a fallen and lost mankind (Gal 3:10-14; 4:4-5; John 3:16; 1 John 2:1-2).

3.10.2 Humanity in Sin - Our Problem

When Adam and Eve broke the one and only commandment they had received from God, they quickly realized that they had made a big mistake in not trusting God.

What is sin?

Sin is evil, is disobedience, falling short of God's mark and law, and guilt which has to be punished.

Words Used

רַע *raʿ* is an adjective meaning "bad, evil"¹⁰¹. The antonym is "good" טוֹב *ṭôḇ*. In Gn 8:21 "the intention of man's heart is evil from his youth". The men of Sodom are called "evil" in Gn 13:13. The word is not only used for moral evil, but also something unpleasant or hurtful. The LXX translates *raʿ* in Gn 8:21 with an inclination to "evil" (τα πονηρα) and the "evil men" of Sodom are called πονηροι *pōnērōi* in Gn 13:13. We are told not to "fall in with the many to do evil" (κακια *kakia*) in Ex 23:2.

רָשָׁע *rāšāʿ* is an adjective meaning "wicked, criminal"¹⁰². One antonym is "righteous" צַדִּיק *ṣaddîq*. *rāšāʿ* is used in legal contexts for guilty criminals as in Gn 18:23.25 where God is seen as the supreme judge of the earth who is about to punish the sins of Sodom and Gomorrah. The LXX translates *rāšāʿ* in Gn 18:23.25 with "ungodly" (ασεβης *asēbēs*) and in Ex 23:1 with "unrighteous, unjust" (αδικος *adikōs*).

חַטָּאת *ḥaṭāʾt* is a feminine noun meaning "sin, sin-offering"¹⁰³. It is related to a verb which means "miss, go wrong, sin". It can be illustrated with "missing a target". But often it is just synonymous

101. See Brown, Driver, and Briggs, Hebrew and English Lexicon of the Old Testament, p. 948. It is found 142 times in the OT according to Even-Shoshan, A New Concordance of the Bible, p. 1080-1.

102. See Brown, Driver, and Briggs, Hebrew and English Lexicon of the Old Testament, p. 957. It is found 263 times in the OT according to Even-Shoshan, A New Concordance of the Bible, p. 1093-5.

103. See Brown, Driver, and Briggs, Hebrew and English Lexicon of the Old Testament, p. 308. It is found 221 times in the OT according to Even-Shoshan, A New Concordance of the Bible, p. 359-60.

with the other words mentioned here for sin and guilt. In Gn 4:7 God warns Cain of the power of sin which was like a crouching beast at his door waiting to attack, but he should overcome sin. Cain did not heed this advice and so he killed his brother. In Gn 18:20 the sin of Sodom and Gomorrah is "very grave" which leads to their destruction by God's judgment. The LXX translates ḥaṭā'ūt in Gn 18:20 with "sin" (ἁμαρτία hamartia) and in Gn 31:36 with "sin" (ἁμαρτημα harmartēma).

חַטָּה ḥēṭ' is a masculine noun meaning "sin".¹⁰⁴ It is used e.g. in Gn 41:9 and Lv 19:17. The LXX translates ḥēṭ' in Gn 41:9 and in Lv 19:17 with "sin" (ἁμαρτία hamartia).

חַטָּאת ḥaṭṭā'āh is a feminine noun meaning "sin".¹⁰⁵ It is used e.g. in Is 5:18 and Ex 34:7. The LXX translates ḥaṭṭā'āh in Ex 34:7 with "sin" (ἁμαρτία hamartia) and in Is 5:18 with "lawlessness" (ἀνομία anōmia).

חַטֹּאת ḥăṭā'āh is a feminine noun meaning "sin".¹⁰⁶ It is used e.g. in the phrase "great sin" (Gn 20:9; Ex 32:21.30.31; 2 Kgs 17:21). The LXX translates ḥăṭā'āh in Gn 20:9 and in 2 Kgs 17:21 with "sin" (ἁμαρτία hamartia).

104. See Brown, Driver, and Briggs, Hebrew and English Lexicon of the Old Testament, p. 307. It is found 33 times in the OT according to Even-Shoshan, A New Concordance of the Bible, p. 358.

105. See Brown, Driver, and Briggs, Hebrew and English Lexicon of the Old Testament, p. 308. It is found 73 times in the OT according to Even-Shoshan, A New Concordance of the Bible, p. 359.

106. See Brown, Driver, and Briggs, Hebrew and English Lexicon of the Old Testament, p. 308. It is found 8 times in the OT according to Even-Shoshan, A New Concordance of the Bible, p. 358.

עֲוֹן 'āwōn is a masculine noun and can mean both iniquity and the punishment of iniquity.¹⁰⁷ For example in Gn 4:13 it is probable that Cain found his "punishment" too severe. It could also be translated with his "guilt" being too great, but it seems preferable that he did not have so much insight (cf. also 19:15). In Gn 15:16 "the iniquity of the Amorites is not yet complete", so their punishment will not happen yet for centuries to come. Judah acknowledges before Joseph that "God has found out the guilt of your servants" (Gn 44:16). If somebody commits idolatry, God is "a jealous God, visiting the iniquity of the fathers on the children to the third and the fourth generation of those who hate" him (Ex 20:5). The LXX translates 'āwōn in Gn 4:13 with "guilt" (αἰτία *aitia*), in 15:16 with "sins" (αἱ ἁμαρτίαι *hai hamartiai*), in Gn 19:15 with "lawlessness" (ἀνομία *anōmia*), and in Gn 44:16 with "injustice" (ἀδικία *adikia*).

פֶּשַׁע *peša'* is a masculine noun meaning "transgression".¹⁰⁸ In Gn 31:36 it is used for the alleged stealing of the household gods of Laban by Jacob or his family. In Gn 50:17 it denotes the evil which Joseph's brothers had done to him. The LXX translates *peša'* in Gn 31:36 with "unjust deed" (ἀδικημα *adikēma*) and in Gn 50:17 with "injustice" (ἀδικία *adikia*).

A look at certain texts where several of these above expressions are used at the same time shows that they are often used synonymously (Ex 34:7; Lv 16:16.21; Nm 14:18; 1 Sm 24:11; 25:28; 1

107. See Brown, Driver, and Briggs, *Hebrew and English Lexicon of the Old Testament*, p. 730-1. It is found 229 times in the OT according to Even-Shoshan, *A New Concordance of the Bible*, p. 842-3.

108. See Brown, Driver, and Briggs, *Hebrew and English Lexicon of the Old Testament*, p. 833. It is found 93 times in the OT according to Even-Shoshan, *A New Concordance of the Bible*, p. 966.

Kgs 8:50; Ps 51:3.5).

The teaching of Gn 3:1-7 about sin.

Man is tempted and led astray by the serpent to sin. The serpent is introduced as "more crafty than any other beast of the field that the Lord God had made" (Gn 3:1). If we only read Genesis 3, we could think of the snake as only an animal. But the further revelation of the Bible interprets this snake as an instrument of Satan. For example Revelation 12 has a lot of links with Genesis, and with Genesis 3 in particular (e.g. Gn 3:15).

1. The serpent attacks the weakest part of man and deceives the woman (Gn 3:1-6; 1 Tm 2:14).
2. The serpent undermines man's thankfulness towards God by concentrating on God's negative commandments (Gn 3:1).
3. The serpent sows the seed of doubt towards God and his word.
 - (a) The serpent accuses God of lying (3:4-5).
 - (b) The serpent denies the promised punishment of God (3:4).
4. The serpent promises man to be like God (3:5).

Results of sin – endangered relationships, with God and one another

The relationship between men and God got broken because Adam and Eve hid themselves when God came to the garden (Gn 3:8-10).

It seems that before their sinning God frequently visited them in the garden and that was the reason they immediately recognized that it was God who was coming. Now they do not run to him to meet him, but hide from him. Adam to make his guilt seem lighter speaks of the woman whom God gave him as the one who led him into sin, indirectly accusing God as the one who caused sin because he gave him such a woman (3:12). It is clear that another result of sin is that the relationship between Adam and Eve got endangered. Adam confronted with his sin immediately points to the fact that the woman which God had given him, gave him the fruit (3:12). Adam tries to reduce the weight of his own sin by letting the guilt of Eve appear bigger. God himself underlines the difficult relationship between husband and wife in the words of his punishment spoken to Eve (Gn 3:16).

Results of sin - physical and spiritual death

After Adam sinned God said to him (Gn 3:17-19):

Because you have listened to the voice of your wife and have eaten of the tree of which I commanded you, 'You shall not eat of it,' cursed is the ground because of you; in pain you shall eat of it all the days of your life; 18 thorns and thistles it shall bring forth for you; and you shall eat the plants of the field. 19 By the sweat of your face you shall eat bread, till you return to the ground, for out of it you were taken; for you are dust, and to dust you shall return.

The relationship between "Adam" ('āḏām) and the ground or earth he was taken from ('āḏāmāh) is ongoing even after the fall. The ground is cursed because of sinful man so that life becomes difficult

for him. When man dies, he returns to the ground, his body being dust and returning to the dust.

One way of speaking of man's death in the Old Testament is that man has to go to the underworld or 'Sheol'¹⁰⁹ or to the 'pit' of Sheol¹¹⁰.

Results of sin - curse on creation

The first curse mentioned in the Holy Bible is the curse on the snake in Gn 3:14:

Because you have done this,
cursed are you above all livestock
and above all beasts of the field;
on your belly you shall go,
and dust you shall eat
all the days of your life.¹¹¹

This seems to be a lasting curse of God which reaches in its effectiveness even into the area of the new heavens and the new earth in Is 65:17-25, esp. 65:25. An effective curse is dangerous. It can be final or almost irreversible. The next mentioned curse is on the ground because of Adam's sin having listened to the voice of his wife and eaten the forbidden fruit (Gn 3:17). The cursed ground

109. The Hebrew word שְׁאֵל or שְׁאֹל šə'āl means "underworld", see Brown, Driver, and Briggs, *Hebrew and English Lexicon of the Old Testament*, p. 982-3.

110. The Hebrew word שְׁחַת śəḥat means 1. pit, often dug to trap somebody (Ps 7:15; 9:15; 35:7; 94:13; Prv 26:27; Ez 19:4.8;), 2. pit of Sheol (Job 17:14; 33:18.22.24.28.30; Ps 16:10; 30:9; 49:9!; 55:23; 103:4(!); Is 38:17(!); 51:14; Ez 28:8; Jonah 2:7! See *ibid.*, p. 1001.

111. כִּי עָשִׂיתָ זֹאת אֲדֹרָר אֶתְּהָל מִכָּל-הַבְּהֵמָה וּמִכָּל חַיַּת הַשָּׂדֶה עַל-בֶּטֶן תֵּלֵךְ וְעָפָר תֹּאכַל כָּל-יְמֵי חַיֶּיךָ:

makes life very hard for Adam, full of work and sweat, and there will be dangers for a good harvest. The lesson we learn from this is that sin has made life very difficult and still makes it very difficult.

The next curse does not hit the ground but man himself in the person of Cain for murdering his brother Abel who then loses his ability to get anything out of the ground (Gn 4:10-12):

10 And the LORD said, "What have you done? The voice of your brother's blood is crying to me from the ground. 11 And now you are cursed from the ground, which has opened its mouth to receive your brother's blood from your hand. 12 When you work the ground, it shall no longer yield to you its strength. You shall be a fugitive and a wanderer on the earth."

He is so cut off from the ground that he becomes a restless fugitive. When Lamech names his son Noah he expresses a prophetic hope (Gn 5:29):

Out of the ground that the LORD has cursed this one shall bring us relief from our work and from the painful toil of our hands.¹¹²

And indeed God changed the course of history and his dealing with sin of man through the covenant he made with Noah and all flesh (Gn 6:18; 9:9-17). Accepting the burnt offerings from Noah, God promises (Gn 8:21-22):

21 ... I will never again curse the ground because of man, for the intention of man's heart is evil from his youth. Neither will I ever again strike down every

112. יִנְחַמֵּנוּ מִמַּעֲשֵׂנוּ וּמִמַּעֲבֹן יָדֵינוּ מִן־הָאֲדָמָה אֲשֶׁר אָרְרָה יְהוָה:

living creature as I have done. 22 While the earth remains, seedtime and harvest, cold and heat, summer and winter, day and night, shall not cease.

God's one sided covenant of grace with Noah and all flesh put his dealings with men on a new footing, just because he decided to exercise his sovereign divine grace and not curse the ground because of man in the future. Otherwise a universal flood or some similar catastrophe would have erased mankind again and again, because of man's utter sinfulness from the time of birth. But now God's grace would pave the way for the coming of the redeemer throughout salvation history in spite of all men being sinners having inherited their sinful human nature from Adam and Eve and in spite of their being totally corrupted by this sinful nature.

Original sin - inherited sinful human nature

We have just seen in Gn 8:21 that

... the intention of man's heart is evil from his youth.¹¹³

This statement of God in Genesis 8 after the flood has a close parallel in Gn 6:5 before the flood and both form and inclusion around the flood story:

The Lord saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every intention of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually.¹¹⁴

113. יֵצֵר לֵב הָאָדָם רָע מִנְעֻרָיו

114. וַיֵּרָא יְהוָה כִּי רָבָה רָעַת הָאָדָם בָּאָרֶץ וְכָל-יֵצֵר מַחְשַׁבַת לִבּוֹ רָק רָע. כָּל-הַיּוֹם:

If we understand that man's heart is evil "from his youth" in Gn 8:21 as "from his birth" (as in Job 31:18 and Ps 71:5-6; Jer 3:4; Ez 16:22.43.60), then the idea that the thoughts of man's heart are evil continually or "all days" in Gn 6:5 is just the same. If all men think and plan evil all the time, then human sinfulness is surely a universal phenomenon according to the Bible, even the first book of the Holy Bible. Ps 51:5 is in agreement with this where David confesses his sinfulness with the following words:

Behold, I was brought forth in iniquity,
and in sin did my mother conceive me.¹¹⁵

The apostle Paul implies the sinfulness of all men in Rom 5:12 as he does in Rom 3:23 (cf. also Rom 3:9-20).

For all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God.¹¹⁶

Total depravity – sin affects every part of human nature

As there is time wise no time in the life of man when he is not influenced by the effects of his sinful nature, so there is no area or part of a human being which is not corrupted by the same sinful nature. His body, his soul and his spirit are under the influence of sinful nature and can be defiled (cf. Rom 3:9-20). Therefore they have to be sanctified after someone comes to Christ and starts a holy life in the fear of God (2 Cor 7:1):

Since we have these promises, beloved, let us cleanse
ourselves from every defilement of body and spirit,
bringing holiness to completion in the fear of God.¹¹⁷

115. הֵן-בְּעֵינֶיךָ חוֹלָלְתִּי וּבְחֶמְסָא יִהְיֶה לִּי אִמִּי:

116. πάντες γὰρ ἥμαρτον καὶ ὑστεροῦνται τῆς δόξης τοῦ θεοῦ

117. ταῦτα οὖν ἔχοντες τὰς ἐπαγγελίας, ἀγαπητοί, καθαρίσωμεν ἑαυτοὺς

3.10.3 God's Covenants with Man

God's Covenants with Man in the Old Testament

Old Testament salvation history can be understood as a succession of different covenants of God with man. Let us first have an overview of God's covenants and then put an emphasis on the more prominent ones.

1. With Adam (Hos 6:7: "But like Adam they transgressed the covenant"),¹¹⁸
2. with Noah and his descendants and with all living creature (Gn 6:18; 9:9.11.12.13; 9:15.16.17; Jer 33:20.25);
3. with all inhabitants of the earth (Is 24:5) or with all nations (Zec 11:10);
4. with Abraham, Isaak and Jacob
 - (a) God's covenant with Abram "between the pieces" to give his seed the promised country based on grace, not on works (Gn 15:18; Neh 9:8);
 - (b) God's covenant with Abraham commanding circumcision and a blameless life (Gn 17:2.4.7; 17:9.10.11; 17:13.14.19; 17:21; Ex 2:24; Ex 6:4.5; Lv 26:42.44.45);
 - (c) God does not forget or break his covenant with the fathers, but keeps it for 1000 generations (Dt 4:31; 7:9; 2 Kgs 13:23; 1 Chr 16:15.17; Ps 105:8.10; 106:45; 111:5.9; Jgs 2:1);

ἀπὸ παντὸς μολυσμοῦ σαρκὸς καὶ πνεύματος, ἐπιτελοῦντες ἀγιωσύνην ἐν φόβῳ θεοῦ.

118.

וְהָיָה כְּאָדָם עֲבָרָיו בְּרִית

5. with the tribes of Israel

- (a) on Mount Sinai (Ex 19:5; Dt 5:2.3; Jer 31:32);
- (b) in Moab (Dt 29:1; 29:9.12.14; 29:21.25);
- (c) in Shechem (Jo 24:25);
- (d) in Jerusalem with Judah
 - i. under king Joash (2 Kgs 11:4.17; 2 Chr 23:1.3.16);
 - ii. under king Asa (2 Chr 15:12);
 - iii. under king Hezekiah (2 Chr 29:10);
 - iv. under king Josiah (2 Chr 34:30.31.32);
 - v. under the influence of the scribe Ezra (Ezr 10:3).

(e) the future new and eternal covenant after the exile

- i. In Isaiah: Jesus Christ, the prophesied personal servant of the Lord, is in person a covenant for God's people (Is 42:6; 49:8; 54:10; 55:3; Is 59:20-21; 61:1-3.8);
- ii. In Jeremiah: The new covenant is better than the one from Mount Sinai (31:31.32.33; 32:40; 50:5);
- iii. In Ezekiel (16:60.61.62; 20:37; 34:23-25; 37:24-26);
- iv. In the book of the twelve prophets (Hos 2:18-20; Mal 3:1).

6. with Aaron and his seed and with the Levites (Nm 18:19; Neh 13:29; with Phinehas and his seed Nm 25:12.13; the Levites and the covenant: Dt 33:9; Neh 13:29; Mal 2:4.5.8);

7. with David and his seed (2 Sm 23:5 pointing to 7:1-29; Ps 89:3.28.34.39; 132:12; Is 55:3; 61:1-3.8; Jer 33:20.21.25;

Ez 34:23-25; 37:24-26; 2 Kgs 11:4.17; 2 Chr 13:5; 21:7; 23:1.3.16).

Among this list of God's covenants with man we want to put a special emphasis on such of God's covenants which are solely based on grace: The covenant with Noah and all flesh, the covenant with Abram "between the pieces", and the covenant with David and his seed. No sin of man can destroy the determination of God not to send another flood (Gn 8:21). While Abram was asleep, he could not walk himself between the pieces and so agree to any stipulation of this covenant. He was passive. Only "a smoking fire pot and a flaming torch passed between these pieces" representing God moving through the pieces and indicating: "If I do not fulfill my promise to Abram, I shall be cut to pieces, I shall cease to be God" (Gn 15:17; Jer 34:18). This of course is impossible. God cannot lie and he will fulfill his promise to give Abram the land (Gn 15:8). In God's covenant with David and his seed, God adopts the son of David who will be heir to the throne. If the son of David sins, God will discipline him, but God's love will not depart from him (2 Sm 7:14-15).

While the covenant with Noah and all flesh lends the framework of God's grace for the further development of all mankind, it makes the other two covenants possible. The rainbow as God's sign of this covenant is mentioned in the description of God's throne presence in Ezekiel and Revelation and shows that God so loves the world and all of mankind, that he overrules the sinfulness of mankind by this covenant of grace (Ez 1:27-28; Rv 4:3). The New Testament starts with the words "The book of the genealogy of Jesus Christ, the son of David, the son of Abraham" (Mt 1:1). Jesus Christ is the legitimate heir of God's promises given to Abraham and to David. Whoever accepts Christ and is clothed with Christ,

enters into the treasures of these covenants and the grace of God provided through them (Gal 3:27-29).

The fact that God's promises to Abraham and David will be fulfilled in a new covenant of God with his people at the time of the coming Christ is clearly predicted in the passages about the new covenant in Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel and the book of the twelve prophets. The New Testament claims that Christ fulfills these glorious prophecies (Mt 5:17; 2 Cor 1:20).

Other information about God's covenants God summons his covenant people for judgment (Ps 50:5.16). A part of the covenant is God's commandment for Israel, not to make a covenant with the nations of the promised land or with their gods and not to marry those nations (Ex 23:32; 34:12.15; Dt 7:2; Jgs 2:2.20; Mal 2:10-11). The phrase "the book of the covenant" is used for the Sinai covenant (Ex 24:7)¹¹⁹ and for the Moab covenant (2 Kgs 23:2.3.21; 2 Chr 34:30.31.32 combined with Dt 31:9.25.26).

The "blood of the covenant" is mentioned in Ex 24:8¹²⁰ where it relates to the blood of the Sinai covenant and in Zec 9:11¹²¹ where it can be combined with 9:9-11 and 12:9-13:1 and understood as a marvelous and stunning prophecy about the coming Christ and the blood of the new covenant bringing salvation.

The sabbath rest is presented as an eternal covenant in Ex 31:16¹²². God promises the renewal of the covenant, including great and awe-

119. וַיִּקַּח סֵפֶר הַבְרִית וַיִּקְרָא בְּאָזְנוֹ הָעָם וַיֹּאמְרוּ כֹל אֲשֶׁר־דִּבֶּר יְהוָה נַעֲשֶׂה וְנִשְׁמָע:

120. וַיִּקַּח מֹשֶׁה אֶת־הַדָּם וַיִּזְרֹק עַל־הָעָם וַיֹּאמֶר הִנֵּה רֶם־הַבְרִית אֲשֶׁר כָּרַת יְהוָה עִמָּכֶם עַל כָּל־הַדְּבָרִים הָאֵלֶּה:

121. גַּם־אֵת בְּרִם־בְּרִיתְךָ שְׁלַחְתִּי אֶסְרִי'ךָ מִבּוֹר אֵין מַיִם בּוֹ:

122. וְשָׁמְרוּ בְנֵי־יִשְׂרָאֵל אֶת־הַשַּׁבָּת לַעֲשׂוֹת אֶת־הַשַּׁבָּת לְדֹרֹתָם בְּרִית עוֹלָם:

some miracles (Ex 34:10).

The tablets with the ten words are seen as foundation of the covenant (Ex 34:27.28; Dt 4:13; Dt 9:9.11.15). Idolatry is forgetting, transgressing or breaking the covenant (Dt 4:23-24; Dt 17:2; Dt 31:16.20; Jo 23:16; 1 Kgs 11:9-11; 19:10.14; 2 Kgs 17:15.35.38; 18:12; Jer 22:9). To take some of the devoted things is transgressing the covenant (Jo 7:11.15). Leviticus speaks of the "the salt of the covenant with your God" (Lv 2:13):

You shall season all your grain offerings with salt.
You shall not let the salt of the covenant with your
God be missing from your grain offering; with all
your offerings you shall offer salt.¹²³

The bread for the tabernacle is seen as an eternal covenant (Lv 24:8).

Every Sabbath day Aaron shall arrange it before the
Lord regularly; it is from the people of Israel as a
covenant forever.¹²⁴

Within the Old Testament "the ark of the covenant", carried by the priests, or Levites, is of special importance and is mentioned quite often. It is the mobile throne of God who sits over the cherubim (Nm 10:33; Nm 14:44; Dt 10:8; 31:9.25.26; Jo 3:3.6.8; Jo 3:11.14.17; 4:7.9.18; 6:6.8; 8:33).

At the time of Jgs 20:26-27 the ark of the covenant was in Bethel. In 1 Sm 4:3.4.5 the ark is taken from Shiloh to war and

123. וְכָל־קָרְבָּן מִנְחָתְךָ בַּמֶּלֶח תִּמְלֹחַ וְלֹא תִשָּׁכֶת מֶלֶח בְּרִית אֱלֹהֶיךָ מִעַל
מִנְחָתְךָ עַל כָּל־קָרְבָּנֶךָ תִּקְרֹב מֶלֶח: ס

124. בַּיּוֹם הַשַּׁבָּת בַּיּוֹם הַשַּׁבָּת יַעֲרֹכְנוּ לִפְנֵי יְהוָה תָּמִיד מֵאֵת בְּנֵי־יִשְׂרָאֵל בְּרִית
עוֹלָם:

then lost and later sent back. The ark is further mentioned in 2 Sm 15:24; 1 Kgs 3:15; 6:19; 8:1.6.21; 1 Chr 15:25.26.28.29; 16:6.37; 17:1; 22:19; 28:2.18; 2 Chr 5:2.7; 6:11. Jeremiah prophecies about a future time when the ark will not be missed any longer as the throne of the Lord and not be made again, but Jerusalem herself will be the throne of the Lord as a center of mankind worshipping the true God (Jer 3:16-17):

16 And when you have multiplied and increased in the land, in those days, declares the LORD, they shall no more say, "The ark of the covenant of the LORD." It shall not come to mind or be remembered or missed; it shall not be made again. 17 At that time Jerusalem shall be called the throne of the LORD, and all nations shall gather to it, to the presence of the LORD in Jerusalem, and they shall no more stubbornly follow their own evil heart.

One part of the blessings of the covenant is the confirming or the keeping of the covenant through God (Lv 26:9¹²⁵; Dt 7:12¹²⁶; Dt 8:18; 1 Kgs 8:23; 2 Chr 6:14; Neh 1:5; 9:32; Ps 103:18; Dn 9:4).

There are also other blessings for keeping the covenant (Ps 25:10.14). Through Isaiah God gives promises even to the eunuchs and to the foreigners who hold fast to God's covenant (Is 56:4.6). It is also possible that those who keep the covenant have to suffer (Ps 44:18).

125. I will turn to you and make you fruitful and multiply you and will confirm my covenant with you.

126. And because you listen to these rules and keep and do them, the Lord your God will keep with you the covenant and the steadfast love that he swore to your fathers.

If Israel breaks God's covenant through disobedience, God is going to punish and discipline them (Lv 26:15¹²⁷). One kind of punishment and vengeance for the covenant could be war, pestilence, being given into the hand of the enemy (Lv 26:25¹²⁸; Jer 11:02.03.06; 11:8.10). If Israel then repents in captivity, God will remember his covenant (Lv 26:42.44.45)¹²⁹ Israel did not keep God's covenant (Ps 78:9-10; 78:37; Ez 16:8.59.60; 44:6-7; Hos 6:7; 8:1). There are several prayers to God to act according to his covenant, be it with Israel or with David (Ps 74:20; Ps 89:39ff; Jer 14:21). In the book of Daniel the subject of the covenant is an important one for the end times (Dn 9:27; 11:22.28.30.32).

To understand God's covenants with people better, it is also good to note examples of covenants between people.

Covenants between people or creatures

1. between Abram and the Amorites Mamre, Eshcol and Aner (Gn 14:13);
2. between Abraham and Abimelech (Gn 21:27.32);
3. between Isaak and Abimelech (Gn 26:28-31);
4. between Jacob and Laban (Gn 31:44);

127. וְאִם־בְּחַקְתִּי תִמְאָסוּ וְאִם־אֶת־מִשְׁפָּטִי תִנְעַל נִפְשְׁכֶם לְבִלְתִּי עֲשׂוֹת. אֶת־כָּל־מִצְוֹתַי לְהַפְרֹכְכֶם אֶת־בְּרִיתִי:

128. וְהִבֵּאתִי עֲלֵיכֶם חֶרֶב נִקְמָה וְנָקַם־בְּרִית וְנִאֲסַפְתֶּם אֶל־עַרְיֵכֶם וְשַׁלַּחְתִּי דָבָר. בְּתוֹכְכֶם וְנִתְּתֶם בְּיַד־אֹיֵב:

129. Lv 26:42 "... then I will remember my covenant with Jacob, and I will remember my covenant with Isaac and my covenant with Abraham, and I will remember the land."

5. between Israel under Joshua and the Gibeonites (Jo 9:6.7.11; Jo 9:15.16);
6. a proposed covenant between Nahash the Ammonite and Jabesh-gilead (1 Sm 11:1-2);
7. two covenants between Jonathan and David (1. 1 Sm 18:3; 20:8; 2. 1 Sm 23:18);
8. between Abner and David (2 Sm 3:12.13);
9. a covenant between David and Israel proposed by Abner (2 Sm 3:21);
10. between David and Israel to anoint David to be king over Israel in Hebron (2 Sm 5:3; 1 Chr 11:3);
11. between Hiram and Solomon (1 Kgs 5:12);
12. between Asa king of Judah and Ben-hadad king of Syria (1 Kgs 15:19; 2 Chr 16:3);
13. between Baasha king of Israel and Ben-hadad king of Syria (1 Kgs 15:19; 2 Chr 16:3);
14. between Ben-hadad king of Syria and Ahab king of Israel (1 Kgs 20:34);
15. between Joash and the people of Judah to anoint Joash to be king (2 Kgs 11:4.17);
16. between the stones and the beasts of the field and a truly righteous person (according to Eliphaz the Temanite in Job 5:23);

17. between Job and his eyes not to look at a virgin (Job 31:1);
18. God asks Job: "Will the Leviathan make a covenant with you, to take him for your servant forever?" (Job 41:04). The answer is an emphatic "No!"
19. A wicked man violates his peace covenant with his friends Ps 55:21;
20. between Edom, the Ishmaelites, Moab, the Hagrites, Gebal, Ammon, Amalek, Philistia, Tyre and Asshur: God's enemies make a covenant against God to wipe out Israel (Ps 83:4-8);
21. the covenant between husband and wife is also a covenant with God (Proverbs 2:17; Mal 2:14);
22. between human parties covenants are broken which is evil (Is 33:8; Hos 10:4);
23. between the rich and the slaves in Jerusalem to free the slaves under Zedekiah king of Judah which has been broken (Jer 34:8.10.13; 34:15.18);
24. between the king of Babylon and the king of Judah before God (Ez 17:13.14.15; 17:16.18.19);
25. between Egypt, Cush, Put, Lud, all Arabia, and Libya (Ez 30:5);
26. between Assyria and Ephraim at the time of Hosea (Hos 12:1);
27. Tyre broke the covenant of brotherhood in a war crime and is punished (Amos 1:9);

28. God punishes Edom through nations who have a covenant with Edom but deceive Edom (Obd 1:7).
29. The covenant between ungodly rulers in Jerusalem and death and Sheol seems to be a very strange and occult one and is also rejected by God as no help against the divine punishment (Is 28:15.18).

God's Covenants with Man in the New Testament

Let us have an overview of God's covenants¹³⁰ mentioned in the New Testament.

1. Covenants with Abraham:

- (a) God gave Abraham the covenant of circumcision (Acts 7:8; cf. Gn 17:9-14).
- (b) The new covenant in Christ is a fulfillment of God's covenant promises to Abraham. The coming of John the Baptist as the forerunner of Christ is God's work "to show the mercy promised to our fathers and to remember his holy covenant, the oath that he swore to our father Abraham" (Luke 1:72-73). God's covenant promise to Abraham "And in your offspring shall all the families of the earth be blessed" (Acts 3:25; cf. Gn 12:3; 22:18) is fulfilled in Jesus Christ.

2. Covenants with Israel:

¹³⁰. We analyze here the instances of the Greek word for covenant in the New Testament: διαθήκη *diathēkē* .

- (a) The covenants belong to the Israelites (Rom 9:4) and the non-Israelites were "separated from Christ, alienated from the commonwealth of Israel and strangers to the covenants of promise, having no hope and without God in the world" (Eph 2:11-12).
 - (b) The covenant of Sinai is represented in Gal 4:24-26 by the slave Hagar and "is bearing children for slavery". This covenant stands in contrast to the covenant of the heavenly Jerusalem which is represented by the free Sarah whose son Isaac was born according to God's promise and to inherit God's promise (Gal 4:30). The reading of the old covenant implies the existence of the new covenant (2 Cor 3:14). Heb 8:9 also speaks of the old covenant quoting the words of Jer 31:32. This covenant was not inaugurated without blood (Heb 9:18-22). This covenant is spoken of as a testament in Heb 9:20. Related to this covenant is also the mentioning of "the ark of the covenant"¹³¹ and "the tablets of the covenant" in Heb 9:4.
 - (c) The new covenant with a future salvation for Israel: The section in Rom 11:25-29 is pointing to the new covenant of Jer 31:31-34. According to Heb 9:15 the Lord's "death has occurred that redeems them from the transgressions committed under the first covenant".
3. The new covenant for believers in Christ from Israel and all nations.

131. Compare the mentioning of the heavenly original of the earthly ark in Rv 11:19.

- (a) Jesus teaches in his words about the Lord's supper that the new covenant is inaugurated through his death (Mt 26:28; Mark 14:24; Luke 22:20; 1 Cor 11:25).
- (b) Paul understands himself as a servant of this new covenant in the power of the Holy Spirit who makes people spiritually alive (2 Cor 3:6). Paul teaches that the blessings that God had promised to give to all nations through the seed of Abraham are now freely given to all by faith in Jesus Christ (Gal 3:15,17; 4:24-26).
- (c) The writer of the epistle to the Hebrews sees Jesus as "the guarantor of a better covenant" (Heb 7:22). "Christ has obtained a ministry that is as much more excellent than the old as the covenant he mediates is better, since it is enacted on better promises (Heb 8:6). The writer proves this by quoting Jer 31:31-34 in Heb 8:8-12 since God there promised a better covenant (cf. Heb 10:16). "In speaking of a new covenant" God makes the first one old (Heb 8:13).
Christ "is the mediator of a new covenant, so that those who are called may receive the promised eternal inheritance", redeemed "from the transgressions committed under the first covenant" (9:15). The new covenant is seen as a testament, a will (9:16-17). The blood of Jesus is the blood of the new covenant (10:29) or "the blood of the eternal covenant" (13:20) which "speaks a better word than the blood of Abel" (12:24).

The subject of God's covenants is wonderful. It proclaims God's faithfulness. Over thousands of years God pursues his plans and fulfills his promises. The claim of the New Testament is that Jesus Christ came to fulfill God's promises to the fathers and his

covenants with them. The new covenant is the consummation of salvation history and brings eternal salvation by the blood of Jesus Christ, his resurrection, his rule and intercession sitting at the right hand of God the Father. Jesus Christ is the mediator of this new covenant. He grants rich spiritual blessings to believers out of Israel and all nations.

Chapter 4

Christology - about the Person and Work of Jesus Christ

4.1 Jesus as the Promised Seed.

The New Testament starts in Mt 1:1 like this:

The book of the genealogy of Jesus Christ, the son
of David, the son of Abraham.

In his genealogy in the first chapter the apostle Matthew shows that the prophecies about the coming of Jesus go way back into salvation history, to promises of God given to David and to Abraham. Indeed we can trace those promises even further back to God's words spoken right after Adam's and Eve's falling into sin.

4.1.1 The seed of the women

The seed of the woman (Gn 3:15) is understood by some New Testament passages as the first hint of the coming Savior who will crush the serpent (Rv 12:1-17; Rom 16:20; Lk 10:17-20). In the catastrophe of the flood God saves Noah and his family. It becomes evident that the promised line goes through his son Shem to Abram (Gn 9:25-27; 11:10-27). We can see the disastrous effects of sin and the accompanying curse throughout Gn 3-11, it becomes clear that there is a need for a power greater than sin and curses to redeem mankind.

4.1.2 The seed of Abraham

The source for this saving divine power is pointed out when we come in sacred history to the life of Abram. God reveals to Abram in Gn 12:1-4 that Abram will be a source of blessing for all families of the earth if he follows faithfully God's leading to an unknown country. This presupposes a power of blessing which is stronger than the power of sin and sin-related curses. It is clear that the subject is salvation. This becomes even more evident in Gn 15:5-6 where God reveals two great truths: First, the faith of Abram is the way of becoming justified before God. Second, Abram will be the father of innumerable descendants. The covenant of Gn 15:7-21 which guarantees the land to Abram is of utmost importance because it is a covenant of grace with no stipulation from the party of the deep sleeping Abram. All promises depend only on God's power and faithfulness. In further developments it becomes evident that God will use Abraham's seed through Isaac to bless all nations (22:18; 17:4-8.19-21; 26:2-5.24). From Isaac the promise continues through Jacob (25:23; 28:3-4; 28:13-15; 32:28; 35:10-

12; 46:3-4).

Together with the promises of blessings for all nations through the seed of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob God also promised that future kings would come from Abraham and Sarah (Gn 17:6.16) and Jacob (35:11). The picture we get from this is that God will make Abraham and Isaac and Jacob to a nation and give this nation a country of their own with kings of their own. Somehow God will use the seed of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob to give blessings to all nations. While all sons of Jacob will be the beneficiaries of the promises of God to Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, according to the blessing of Jacob in Gn 49:10 only Judah has received a special promise of rulership.

One of the prophecies of Balaam points to a mighty king coming out of Israel in the last days (Nm 24:17). This prophecy is in agreement with God's promises of kings in Genesis. His prophecy of the innumerable number of Israel (Nm 23:10 repeats similar predictions in Genesis. Another prophecy of his in Nm 24:5.9 reminds us of Gn 12:3:

5 How lovely are your tents, O Jacob,
your encampments, O Israel! ...
9 He crouched, he lay down like a lion
and like a lioness; who will rouse him up?
Blessed are those who bless you,
and cursed are those who curse you.”

4.1.3 The seed of David

In the historical writings we see some of the prophecies of the Torah fulfilled. In Joshua, Israel gets possession of the promised land.

With Saul, Israel gets the first king (1 Sm 10:1.17-26). He is not from Judah but from the tribe of Benjamin (1 Sm 10:20). Then God rejected Saul because of his disobedience (1 Sm 13:13-14; 15:22-29). In the books of Samuel one of the key subjects is God's choosing and rejecting of office holders or places. God rejects Shiloh in 1 Sm 1-4 and chooses Jerusalem in 2 Sm 6 and 2 Sm 24 (compare Ps 78:59-72). God rejects the house of Eli from the priesthood in 1 Sm 2-4 (compare 1 Kgs 2:27). God rejects Saul and chooses David instead (1 Sm 16:1-13) and even his house after him for ever (2 Sm 7). The covenant of God with David in 2 Sm 7 (especially 7:11-16) is one of the great steps forward in the progressive revelation of God:

11 ... Moreover, the Lord declares to you that the Lord will make you a house. 12 When your days are fulfilled and you lie down with your fathers, I will raise up your offspring after you, who shall come from your body, and I will establish his kingdom. 13 He shall build a house for my name, and I will establish the throne of his kingdom forever. 14 I will be to him a father, and he shall be to me a son. When he commits iniquity, I will discipline him with the rod of men, with the stripes of the sons of men, 15 but my steadfast love will not depart from him, as I took it from Saul, whom I put away from before you. 16 And your house and your kingdom shall be made sure forever before me. Your throne shall be established forever.

The context shows us David as he wants to build a worthy temple for the ark of God (2 Sm 7:1-3). The answer of God is: "Would you build me a house to dwell in? ... the Lord will make you a house"

(7:5.11). The same Hebrew word "house" is used for houses to live in made of stone and for house in the sense of family. David wanted to build a house of stone for the ark of the covenant. God will build a house for David in the sense of a dynasty, a royal family whose influence will never end. God promises to adopt one son of David in each generation to be the chosen king and at the same time a "son of God" with God as his caring and educating father. The key of God's promise is that the 'house' will last forever. God's promise in 2 Sm 7 is one-sided as his covenant with Abraham was in Gn 15, solely based on God's grace. Even if the sons of David sin, God's grace will not depart from them! These two grace-based covenants of God with Abraham and with David make the starting phrase of the New Testament (Mt 1:1) so important:

The book of the genealogy of Jesus Christ, the son of
David, the son of Abraham.

These two grace-based covenants guarantee the success of God's salvation plan in spite of human sinfulness. Saul was rejected because of his sin. God's promise to David can not be endangered by the sins of the different sons of David because God has promised so. What God is going to do to bring this about, is left open for future fulfillment. Even if the word covenant is not used in 2 Sm 7, it is used in 2 Sm 23:3-7 where David's last words are spoken and where he points back to God's promise of 2 Sm 7.

3 The God of Israel has spoken;
the Rock of Israel has said to me:
When one rules justly over men,
ruling in the fear of God,
4 he dawns on them like the morning light,
like the sun shining forth on a cloudless morning,

like rain that makes grass to sprout from the earth.

5 For does not my house stand so with God?

For he has made with me an everlasting covenant,
ordered in all things and secure.

For will he not cause to prosper
all my help and my desire?

6 But worthless men are all like thorns that are thrown
away,

for they cannot be taken with the hand;

7 but the man who touches them
arms himself with iron and the shaft of a spear,
and they are utterly consumed with fire."

The righteous ruler in the fear of God (23:3) is the promised son of David who will be like the sunshine furthering the fruitful growth of the land after the rain (23:4), a blessing for the whole country. In contrast to this stand the worthless men who are like thorns and end up in the fire (23:6-7). The center of God's quoted word here is 23:5: David's house stands firm with God because God has made (in 2 Sm 7) an everlasting covenant with him. "For will he not cause to prosper all my help and my desire?"¹ "All my help and desire" can be combined to mean "all my desired help" or "all my desired salvation". While dying, David puts forward a question: "Will God not cause all my desired salvation to prosper?" It is a question. But this dying man is full of the Spirit (23:2). The answer is a definite "Yes!". The picture implied in "cause to prosper" is that of a plant. Later prophecies of the "branch" or "sprout" of David are built upon these last words of David.² God will bring the promised blessings

1. כִּי־כָל־יִשְׁעֵי וְכָל־חַפְצֵי כִי־לֹא יִצְמִיחַ:

2. In Hebrew sprout or branch is *šemah* צֶמַח. Relevant prophetic texts are Isa 4:2; Jer 23:5-6; 33:14-17; Zec 3:8-9; 6:9-15.

and salvation through the seed of Abraham and the son of David to God's people and the world's nations.

The first fulfillment of the son of David who will build a house for God (2 Sm 7:13) is of course Solomon. But later prophecies which reflect on this covenant of God state that the coming Messiah will also be a builder of God's temple or dwelling-place. Because of the sins of Solomon the power over most tribes of Israel is taken away from the house of David and given over to Jeroboam the new king of northern Israel, but not for ever (1 Kgs 11:11-13; 11:29-39; 12:20). The further development in the book of Kings is catastrophic. First Northern Israel is destroyed and deported because of the sins of the inhabitants (2 Kgs 17). Then in 2 Kgs 25 Jerusalem and the temple are destroyed and the throne of David becomes vacant because of the sins of the Jews. Only at the end there is a small hopeful note that God's grace is still there even in exile:

27 And in the thirty-seventh year of the exile of Jehoiachin king of Judah, in the twelfth month, on the twenty-seventh day of the month, Evil-merodach king of Babylon, in the year that he began to reign, graciously freed Jehoiachin king of Judah from prison. 28 And he spoke kindly to him and gave him a seat above the seats of the kings who were with him in Babylon. 29 So Jehoiachin put off his prison garments. And every day of his life he dined regularly at the king's table, 30 and for his allowance, a regular allowance was given him by the king, according to his daily needs, as long as he lived.

When we look at the books of the prophets Isaiah, Jeremiah and Ezekiel, Daniel and the book of the twelve prophets from Hosea to Malachi we find many prophecies about the coming son of David

as Messiah.

Amos is mostly a prophet of doom but at the end of his book (9:11-12) he prophesies the Davidic Messiah with the words:

11 In that day I will raise up
the booth of David that is fallen
and repair its breaches, and raise up its ruins
and rebuild it as in the days of old,
12 that they may possess the remnant of Edom
and all the nations who are called by my name,"
declares the Lord who does this.

Hosea prophesies that the Israelites will live a long time without their own king and that they "shall return and seek the Lord their God, and David their king" in the last days (Hos 3:5). The prophet Isaiah proclaims in 7:14 the sign of Immanuel who will be born of a virgin.³

In Is 8:8-10 this Immanuel as the Lord of Judah is the reason why the armies of the enemies which have flooded Judah "even to the neck" will not completely drown Judah. They will not accomplish their purposes but will be stopped miraculously by "God is with us" (= Immanuel). Then further development reaches a climax in Is 9, 10 and 11. In Is 9:6-7 the Lord of Judah and Israel is

3. The Hebrew word translated here with "virgin" is עַלְמָה *hā-‘almāh*. Besides Isa 7:14 it is used in the following verses in the Old Testament: In Gn 24:43; Ex 2:8; Ps 68:25; Prv 30:19; Song 1:3; 6:8. None of the seven texts presents a woman which is clearly married and no longer a virgin. Those who translate *hā-‘almāh* with "a young woman" have no clear text to present that *hā-‘almāh* was used of a married young woman. The LXX uses *παρθένος* *parthēnōs* denoting a virgin and Matthew has used this translation. See Eddy Lanz, "The Sign of Immanuel in Isaiah 7:14," [accessed February 20, 2013], March 2010, <http://www.lanz.li/engot/ot23-immanuel1.pdf>, p. 3.

seen as a child on the throne of David with wonderful names given to him:

6 For to us a child is born,
to us a son is given;
and the government shall be upon his shoulder,
and his name shall be called
Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God,
Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace.⁴
7 Of the increase of his government and of peace
there will be no end,
on the throne of David and over his kingdom,
to establish it and to uphold it
with justice and with righteousness
from this time forth and forevermore.
The zeal of the Lord of hosts will do this.

These names present the child as a unique human personality without any parallel within Old Testament history. No king has ruled forever as this child on the throne of David will do. No king like this has ruled forever and in peace. The source of the everlasting kingdom is justice and righteousness. There never was a kingdom with these qualities that lasted forever. The names of the child seem to be grouped into four titles with two words each. For our subject the name "Mighty God" ('ēl gibbôr) is of special interest. These two words without any definite article are used only twice like this together in the whole of the Old Testament, once in Is 9:6 as part of the names of the child and the second time in Is 10:21, the next chapter (10:20-21):

יְקַרְא שְׁמוֹ פֶּלֶא יוֹעֵץ אֵל נְבוֹר אֲבִיעֵד שֶׁר־שָׁלוֹם: 4.

20 In that day the remnant of Israel
 and the survivors of the house of Jacob
 will no more lean on him who struck them,
 but will lean on the Lord,
 the Holy One of Israel, in truth.
 21 A remnant will return,
 the remnant of Jacob, to the mighty God.⁵

Is 10:20 speaks of the remnant of Israel trusting the Lord in truth. 10:21 presents this as the return of this remnant to "the mighty God" ('ēl gibbôr) where the same name is used for God which had been used as part of the names of the coming Messiah in Is 9:6. This can clearly be understood as a hint to the divinity of the coming Messiah. This would explain that he can stay and rule forever in peace. In 11:1-2 we see the son of David again:

1 There shall come forth a shoot from the stump of
 Jesse,
 and a branch from his roots shall bear fruit.⁶
 2 And the Spirit of the Lord shall rest upon him,
 the Spirit of wisdom and understanding,
 the Spirit of counsel and might,
 the Spirit of knowledge and the fear of the Lord.
 3 And his delight shall be in the fear of the Lord.
 He shall not judge by what his eyes see,
 or decide disputes by what his ears hear,
 4 but with righteousness he shall judge the poor,
 and decide with equity for the meek of the earth;
 and he shall strike the earth with the rod of his mouth,

5. שְׁאֵר יִשְׂרָאֵל יִשְׁכָּב אֶל־אֱלֹהִים נְבוֹרִים:

6. וַיֵּצֵא הָאֵלֹהִים מִן־נֶזֶע יֵשׁוּעַ וְנָצַר מִשְׁרָשָׁיו יִפְרֶה:

and with the breath of his lips he shall kill the wicked.
 5 Righteousness shall be the belt of his waist,
 and faithfulness the belt of his loins.

Here we get deeper insight into the question how the kingdom of this son of David will be upheld "with justice and with righteousness", it is by the power of the Holy Spirit upon him. If the son of David is divine, and the "zeal of the Lord of hosts will do this" and the Holy Spirit upon the child has his share in the success of the messianic kingdom, then we can say that this kingdom of God is prophesied as a kingdom of the Trinity. In Is 48:16 we hear:

16 Draw near to me, hear this:
 from the beginning I have not spoken in secret,
 from the time it came to be I have been there."
 And now the Lord God has sent me, and his Spirit.⁷

The man who speaks here is sent by the Lord God and his Spirit.⁸ The best person in the context of this verse to identify the speaker with is the special servant of the Lord who is also presented in Is 42:1-12; 49:1-13; 50:4-11 and 52:13-53:12.⁹ Compare especially 42:1 where the Spirit of the Lord is on the servant of the Lord in a way very similar to Is 11:1ff with a similar effect of bringing righteousness to the nations of the world. The servant of the Lord in the

7. וְעַתָּה אֲדַרְשֵׁי יְהוָה שְׁלַחֲנִי וְרוּחוֹ:

8. The Spirit is God in Isaiah (30:1). He has emotions (63:10) and so much intelligence that nobody can dare to give him counsel (40:13). The fact that he has a will is evident from his sending someone to fulfill a mission in this verse (48:16). Will, emotions and intelligence are understood as signs of a personality. So we can say that the Spirit of God is viewed as a person in Isaiah.

9. Grudem, Systematic Theology. An Introduction to Biblical Doctrine, p. 228.

given passages and the Davidic Messiah in Is 7-12 have so many parallels that Is 55:3-4 can rightly be understood as an identification of both. He is for example a light to the nations in 42:6 and 49:6 as the son of David is a light in 9:2.6. Another "trinitarian" section in Isaiah is the famous 61:1 which was later proclaimed by Jesus as fulfilled in the synagogue in Nazareth (Lk 4:18-19):

1 The Spirit of the Lord God is upon me,
because the Lord has anointed me
to bring good news to the poor;
he has sent me to bind up the brokenhearted,
to proclaim liberty to the captives,
and the opening of the prison to those who are bound.

A very interesting parallel to the Immanuel and Son of David prophecies in Is 7:14; 8:8-10; 9:6-7; 11:1-10 is found in Mi 5:2-5:

2 But you, O Bethlehem Ephrathah,
who are too little to be among the clans of Judah,
from you shall come forth for me
one who is to be ruler in Israel,
whose origin is from of old, from ancient days.
3 Therefore he shall give them up until the time
when she who is in labor has given birth;
then the rest of his brothers shall return to the people
of Israel.
4 And he shall stand and shepherd his flock
in the strength of the Lord,
in the majesty of the name of the Lord his God.
And they shall dwell secure, for now he shall be great
to the ends of the earth.
5 And he shall be their peace.

The fact that the Messiah is to be born in Bethlehem (Mi 5:2) and not in the palace of a Davidic king in Jerusalem shows that the family of David will lose Jerusalem and the palace and the power as is also presupposed in Is 11:1 under the picture of the tree of Jesse cut down and the shoot of the Messiah coming forth out of the reduced stump. The turning point for Israel is the birth of the Messiah out of a woman in labor in Mi 5:3 which resembles Is 7:14. The Messiah is the peace of Israel in person in Mi 5:5 and the Prince of Peace in Is 9:6. Both prophets, Micah and Isaiah, were working at the same time and have quite a few points in common.

In the Old Testament there is a series of prophetic passages about a "branch" from David which goes back to the last words of David where he confessed his hope that God would act according to his covenant (2 Sm 7:11-16) with him to "cause to prosper all my help and my desire" (2 Sm 23:5).¹⁰ There are texts of this series after Isaiah which are clearly messianic (Jer 23:5; 33:15; Zec 3:8; 6:12). Accordingly it is also possible to understand "the branch of the Lord" in Is 4:2 as messianic (4:2-4):

2 In that day the branch of the Lord shall be beautiful and glorious, and the fruit of the land shall be the pride and honor of the survivors of Israel.¹¹ 3 And he who is left in Zion and remains in Jerusalem will be called holy, everyone who has been recorded for life in Jerusalem, 4 when the Lord shall have washed away the filth of the daughters of Zion and cleansed the bloodstains of Jerusalem from its midst by a spirit of judgment and by a spirit of burning.

10. כִּי־כָל־יִשְׁעֵי וְכָל־חַפְצֵי כִּי־לֹא יִצְמִיחַ:

11. בַּיּוֹם הַהוּא יִהְיֶה צֶמַח יְהוָה לְצִבִּי וּלְכְבוֹד וּפְרִי הָאָרֶץ לְנֶאֱוֹן וּלְחַפְצֵי לְפָלִיטַת יִשְׂרָאֵל:

If we understand the "branch of the Lord" as the Messiah who brings this time of salvation about, it is interesting that very similar words are used for him here and for the Lord in 28:5-6:

5 In that day the Lord of hosts will be a crown of glory, and a diadem of beauty, to the remnant of his people, 6 and a spirit of justice¹² to him who sits in judgment, and strength to those who turn back the battle at the gate.

It fits the picture which we get in Isaiah that the Messiah is presented as divine or near to the divine. The phrases "spirit of judgment"¹³ in 4:4 and "spirit of justice" in 28:6 are identical in the Hebrew and as such are unique in the Old Testament. It is at least remarkable that another famous messianic prophecy is found in the immediate context of Is 28:5-6, namely 28:16 which is understood in the New Testament as messianic (Rom 9:33; 10:11; 1 Pt 2:6). The idea of the branch is taken up in Jeremiah 23:5-6:

5 Behold, the days are coming, declares the Lord, when I will raise up for David a righteous Branch,¹⁴ and he shall reign as king and deal wisely, and shall execute justice and righteousness in the land. 6 In his days Judah will be saved, and Israel will dwell securely. And this is the name by which he will be called: 'The Lord is our righteousness.'¹⁵

12. בְּיָוֶם הַהוּא יְהוָה יִהְיֶה צְבָאוֹת לְעֹמֶרֶת צְדִיק וְלְצִפְיֹרֶת תְּפִאֲרָה לְשָׂאֵר עַמּוֹ וְלְרוּחַ מִשְׁפָּט

13. בְּרוּחַ מִשְׁפָּט

14. וְהָקָמְתִי לְדָוִד צֶמַח צְדִיק

15. וְהָשְׁמָנוּ אֲשֶׁר-יִקְרָא יְהוָה צְדִיקָנוּ:

The Messiah who will be the means of the salvation of Judah and Israel is called "righteous Branch" and "The Lord is our righteousness". In the very similar text in Jer 33:15-16 the last name is given to the city of Jerusalem. Again as far as this name is given to the Messiah he is presented as near to the divine because he is the means of the great change which saves the people of God and changes the wicked Jerusalem to a city with the same name as the Messiah will have: "The Lord is our righteousness". This becomes even more evident in the prophet Zechariah who develops this prophecy further standing on the shoulders of Jeremiah. The closure of the 70 years of Jeremiah (Jer 25:11-13; 29:10) falls into the first phase of the service of Zechariah (Zec 1:12). In the vision of Zechariah in which the high priest Joshua is saved from his sins and the accusations of Satan and fully restored to a holy service for God we hear that this salvation for Joshua and his co-workers is a sign of greater things to come (Zec 3:8-9):

8 Hear now, O Joshua the high priest, you and your friends who sit before you, for they are men who are a sign: behold, I will bring my servant the Branch.

¹⁶ 9 For behold, on the stone that I have set before Joshua, on a single stone with seven eyes, I will engrave its inscription, declares the Lord of hosts, and I will remove the iniquity of this land in a single day.

In the pre-exilic and exilic prophets there are some "Branch" related messianic prophecies, some "stone" related prophecies and some "Servant of the Lord" related prophecies. It is remarkable that in this post-exilic prophet we have elements of all these three groups of messianic prophecies together. God somehow will solve

16. כִּי־הִנֵּנִי מֵבִיא אֶת־עֶבְדִּי צִמְחָה:

the problem of sin in a single day together with his plan of bringing his servant the Branch. In Zec 6:11-13 there is a further development of the Branch related prophecies:

11 Take from them silver and gold, and make a crown, and set it on the head of Joshua, the son of Jehozadak, the high priest. 12 And say to him, ‘Thus says the Lord of hosts, “Behold, the man whose name is the Branch: for he shall branch out from his place, and he shall build the temple of the Lord.”¹⁷ 13 It is he who shall build the temple of the Lord and shall bear royal honor, and shall sit and rule on his throne. And there shall be a priest on his throne, and the counsel of peace shall be between them both.”’

This vision in Zechariah brings the element of peace and unity between king and priest into the messianic Branch prophecies and the idea that the Branch will have a worldwide fellowship partaking in the glorification of the house of the Lord (6:15).

The Hebrew of 6:13 could even be understood as the Branch himself sitting as a priest on his throne being king at the same time¹⁸ which, of course, results in priesthood and kingship having peace because they are united under one head. This understanding is supported by the fact that the crown should be set on the head of Joshua, the high priest, who resembles the "Branch" who is from the house of David!

We have already noted that Zechariah further develops the Branch prophecies of Jeremiah. Jeremiah himself had delivered his first

17. הָנֵה-אִישׁ צִמַּח שָׁמוֹ וּמִתְחַתֵּיו יִצְמַח וּבִנּוֹ אֶת-הַיֵּל יְהוָה:

18. C. F. Keil, *Minor Prophets*, Martin, James <trans> (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Eerdmans, 1986), p. 300.

prophecy about the Branch in the context of a contrast between the evil shepherds and the coming good shepherds (Jer 24:1-4) with the Davidic Branch being the chief good shepherd.

Having noted that, it is of the utmost consequence that Zechariah includes certain shepherd prophecies in the second part of his book (Zec 9-14) which should be understood on the background of the messianic Branch prophecies of the first part (Zec 1-8). The Messiah enters Jerusalem in 9:9-12 as a bringer of peace in agreement with the blood of God's covenant.

The contrast between four evil shepherds and one good shepherd is presented in Zec 11:4-17. The good shepherd is God himself. God and his sheep become estranged from each other, because of the activities of three bad shepherds. While God decides to put an end to his work as a shepherd, he asks for his wages and receives thirty pieces of silver, according to Ex 21:32 the ransom money for a slave that is killed. The money then is thrown to the potter in the house of the Lord, presenting God again as the potter as in Jer 18:1-17 (see also Jer 19:1-13)¹⁹ who is the judge of Jerusalem and Judah. Because his sheep have rejected God the good shepherd, God hands them over to a worthless shepherd who would neglect the flock with disastrous consequences. In Zec 13:7 the figure of a good shepherd is seen again:

7 Awake, O sword, against my shepherd,
against the man who stands next to me,”²⁰
declares the Lord of hosts.
“Strike the shepherd,
and the sheep will be scattered;

19. I think, this is the reason why Mt 27:1-10 combines Zec 11:12-13 with the prophet Jeremiah.

20. חֶרֶב עוֹרֵי עַל־רֵעִי וְעַל־גֹּבֶר עַמִּיּוֹתִי

I will turn my hand against the little ones.

The shepherd is a good shepherd appointed by God ("my") and his death has the most serious consequences for the sheep which then are scattered. He is "the man who stands next to me" for God.²¹ In Zec 11 we have seen God as the good shepherd, here "the man who stands next to him" is a shepherd who gets killed. We have to add one more text to get the fuller picture (Zec 12:9-13:1):

9 And on that day I will seek to destroy all the nations that come against Jerusalem. 10 And I will pour out on the house of David and the inhabitants of Jerusalem a spirit of grace and pleas for mercy, so that, when they look on me, on him whom they have pierced,²² they shall mourn for him, as one mourns for an only child, and weep bitterly over him, as one weeps over a firstborn. 11 On that day the mourning in Jerusalem will be as great as the mourning for Hadad-rimmon in the plain of Megiddo. 12 The land shall mourn, each family by itself: the family of the house of David by itself, and their wives by themselves; the family of the house of Nathan by itself, and their wives by themselves; 13 the family of the house of Levi by itself, and their wives by themselves; the family of the Shimeites by itself, and their wives by themselves; 14 and all the families that are left,

21. The word translated with "the man who stands next to me" is used in the following texts in Leviticus often as "neighbor": Lev 18:20; 19:11; 19:15; 19:17; 24:19; 25:14; 25:15; 25:17.

22. וְשָׁפַקְתִּי עַל-בֵּית דָּוִיד וְעַל יוֹשֵׁב יְרוּשָׁלַם רֵיחַ חַן וְתַחֲנוּנִים וְהִבִּיטוּ אֵלַי אֶת אֲשֶׁר-דָּקְרוּ.

each by itself, and their wives by themselves. 13:1
On that day there shall be a fountain opened for the
house of David and the inhabitants of Jerusalem, to
cleanse them from sin and uncleanness.

The day of salvation ("on that day" 12:9.11; 13:1) when all their sins will be forgiven (13:1), is the day when all families of Israel recognize the person "whom they have pierced".²³ The outpouring of the Holy Spirit opens their eyes. The first effect of this outpouring is a prayer movement crying out for God's grace and mercy.

God grants them his grace and mercy by revealing himself once more to them. But this time as the one whom they had pierced. God is speaking in 12:1-13:1. But it is also a man who speaks who was pierced and killed by Israel at a former time. But when they see him, he is alive and active to save them from the assault of all nations. This text is a great mystery within the Old Testament and belongs to the last and climactic section of Zechariah's prophecies (Zec 12:1-14:21).

When they recognize that they had killed their Savior they start to weep and mourn like parents who recognize that they themselves have killed their only child and firstborn son. Their grief is a great contrast to the mourning of the Egyptians over their firstborn in the night of passover. At that time the Israelites were saved by the blood of the lamb, but they were not damaged themselves. On this day of the Lord they recognize their sin, that they had killed their Messiah, who is the Lord, and they receive the Spirit of God and are cleansed by his blood. It is a wonderful circumstance ordained by God's sovereign hand that the piercing of the God-man would

23. The word means "to pierce somebody to kill him". It is used in Judges 9:54; 1 Sm 31:4; 1 Chr 10:4; Is 13:15; Jer 37:10; 51:4; Lam 4:9; Zec 12:10; 13:3.

happen in the passover week (John 19:37). All the pieces fall into place when we recognize that the Branch who will be used according to Zec 3:8-9 for the forgiveness of sin is Jesus Christ crucified, the incarnate God and Savior of Israel. Jesus is the shepherd of Zec 11 given the wages of 30 silver coins, he is the slain shepherd next to God of Zec 13:7 (Mt 26:31; Mk 14:27). And Jesus Christ the Lord is coming back to make his divine appearance on the Mount of Olives on his day to take over the rule of the whole world (Zec 14:3-4.9). We can say that Is 9:6-7 combined with 10:21 presents the divinity of the son of David related to his birth as a child. In the same way Zec 12:10 combined with 3:9; 9:9-11; 11:12-13; 13:1.7 and 14:3-4 presents the divinity of the son of David in relation to his death and second coming.

Having looked at Is 9:6-7 and Zec 9-14 one section of the book of Daniel fits into this same context and that is Dn 7:9-10.13-14.27:

9 As I looked, thrones were placed,
and the Ancient of days took his seat;
his clothing was white as snow,
and the hair of his head like pure wool;
his throne was fiery flames;
its wheels were burning fire.
10 A stream of fire issued
and came out from before him;
a thousand thousands served him,
and ten thousand times ten thousand stood before him;
the court sat in judgment,
and the books were opened...
13 I saw in the night visions,
and behold, with the clouds of heaven
there came one like a son of man,

and he came to the Ancient of Days
 and was presented before him.
 14 And to him was given dominion
 and glory and a kingdom,
 that all peoples, nations, and languages
 should serve him;
 his dominion is an everlasting dominion,
 which shall not pass away,
 and his kingdom one
 that shall not be destroyed...
 27 And the kingdom and the dominion
 and the greatness of the kingdoms under the whole
 heaven
 shall be given to the people of the saints of the Most
 High;
 their kingdom shall be an everlasting kingdom,
 and all dominions shall serve and obey them.'

In Dn 7 there are four beasts which represent four kingdoms of this world coming one after the other (Dn 7:17). The last is the most terrible one, making war with the saints and prevailing over them (7:7.21) until God finishes it in his judgment (7:11).

On the background of those four beasts which represent four kingdoms arising "out of the earth" (7:17), the coming of "one like a son of man" with "the clouds of heaven" into the presence of "the Ancient of Days" is a total contrast. It is the kingdom of God and of heaven in contrast to the kingdoms of this world.

The human outlook of God's kingdom stands in contrast to the beastly way of the kingdoms of this world. In the interpretation the "one like a son of man" represents "the people of the saints of the Most High". But as the four beasts represent four kings and four

kingdoms, so the "one like a son of man" is not only to be identified with the "people of the saints", but also as their king.

From the rest of the Old Testament prophecies, this has to be the Messiah, the son of David. In Dn 9:1-2 we see Daniel studying the book of the prophet Jeremiah who also teaches about the coming Messiah of the house of David (Jer 23:5-6). The nearest parallel of Dn 7:13-14 with its emphasis on the everlasting kingdom would be Is 9:6-7. Surely Daniel himself had understood this vision as pointing to the coming of the Messiah to receive the kingdom forever.

Daniel was coming, as Dn 1 and his reading of the prophet Jeremiah shows, from the tradition of the law and the prophets as far as they existed. The kingdom of God in Dn 2 and 7 has to be understood with the background of that prophetic tradition, and that tradition sees the Messiah as the king of the kingdom of heaven.²⁴

Jesus Christ often uses the name "son of man" to talk about himself in the gospels, and people tend to think that this is a name for Christ which more points to his humble state as a human being. But Jesus pointed to Dn 7:13 and Ps 110:1 when he stood before the Sanhedrin (Mt 26:63-64):

63 But Jesus remained silent. And the high priest said to him, "I adjure you by the living God, tell us if you are the Christ, the Son of God." 64 Jesus said to him, "You have said so. But I tell you, from now on you will see the Son of Man seated at the right hand of Power and coming on the clouds of heaven."

The claim to be the "Son of Man" of Daniel was the answer of Jesus to the question whether he is the Christ, the Son of God. It

24. Keil, Ezekiel, Daniel, p. 234-5.

is a "Yes!" and a very strong one, so strong that it was regarded as blasphemy and led to his condemnation to death. In a way the title "Son of Man" understood with the background of Dn 7:13-14 is the most exalted title for the coming Christ, because in Dn 7 the son of man reaches the very presence of God and receives dominion over the whole world and that forever. If the Sanhedrin had believed that Jesus was indeed the Messiah, then his claim would not have been seen as blasphemy. But they rejected his claim and handed him the death sentence. Dn 7:13-14 is another of those texts which present the coming Messiah very close to the divine. The other text which Jesus pointed to, does exactly the same (Ps 110:1-7):

A Psalm of David.

1 The Lord says to my Lord:

"Sit at my right hand,²⁵

until I make your enemies your footstool."

2 The Lord sends forth from Zion

your mighty scepter.

Rule in the midst of your enemies!

3 Your people will offer themselves freely

on the day of your power,

in holy garments;

from the womb of the morning,

the dew of your youth will be yours.

4 The Lord has sworn

and will not change his mind,

"You are a priest forever

after the order of Melchizedek." 5 The Lord is at your

right hand;

25. נָאֻם יְהוָה לְאֹדֹנִי שֵׁב לְיָמִינִי.

he will shatter kings on the day of his wrath.
 6 He will execute judgment among the nations,
 filling them with corpses;
 he will shatter chiefs
 over the wide earth.
 7 He will drink from the brook by the way;
 therefore he will lift up his head.

This Psalm is attributed to David, who speaks of God as the Lord talking to "my Lord" which is, of course, a great surprise. David is the king of Israel and so the human Lord of the country. There is no other human lord over him at the time he received this Psalm and vision from the Lord. But he acknowledges someone as "his Lord" who is distinct from God. If someone speaks of "his Lord", he acknowledges this person as his owner or ruler who guides his life. David is king and knows a person besides God who rules and guides him.

This person is invited by God to sit at His right hand until all his enemies are defeated and in submission to him. He seems to be appointed to rule the whole earth from Zion. At the same time he will be a priest forever "after the order of Melchizedek". If he is a priest forever, he also will be a king forever.

If we combine Is 9:6-7 and Dn 7:13-14 with Psalm 110 we have three witnesses of the coming Messiah who is going to rule Israel and the world forever. In all three texts there are elements which present the Messiah close to the divine.²⁶

Psalm 45:6-7 fits in neatly here:

26. See also the use Jesus made of Ps 110:1 in Matthew 22:41-46 where he is proven to be a teacher par excellence with the result that no one dared "to ask him any more questions."

6 Your throne, O God, is forever and ever.²⁷

The scepter of your kingdom is a scepter of uprightness;
 ness;

7 you have loved righteousness and hated wickedness.

Therefore God, your God, has anointed you
 with the oil of gladness beyond your companions.²⁸

The Psalm is addressed to the "king" (45:1). In 45:6 he is called "God" and again in 45:7 where he as "God" is distinguished from his God. He is the anointed king, righteous and ruling for ever. We have seen these elements in Is 9:6-7 and Is 11:1-5, even with the name "Mighty God". In Heb 1:8 this Psalm is quoted and interpreted as pointing to Jesus.

Psalm 1 and 2 introduce the book of Psalms with two great gifts of God for his people and the world, the word of God in Ps 1 and the Messiah of God in Ps 2. According to Psalm 2, God will implement his rule through his Messiah from Zion in the whole world even if the nations and rulers of the world reject him.

This Psalm is taken up as a Psalm of David in the prayer of the persecuted church in Acts 4:25-28 and understood to point to Jesus's crucifixion by Israel's leaders and the Gentiles represented in the Roman government. The believers pray that as the rejection prophesied in the Psalm had been fulfilled, so also the implementation of God's rule through his Messiah might be fulfilled by miracles of God and by the bold preaching of his servants. Their prayer is answered immediately (Acts 4:29-31).

Like his contemporary Jeremiah the prophet Ezekiel also has a Messianic hope for the future when God will restore and unite Israel under the Davidic Messiah (Ez 34:23-24; 37:24-25).

27. כִּסְאֶךָ אֱלֹהִים עוֹלָם וָעֶד.

28. עַל־כֵּן מָשַׁחְךָ אֱלֹהִים אֱלֹהֶיךָ שֶׁמֶן שִׁשְׁוֹן מִחֲבֵרֶיךָ: .

It is possible to understand Haggai 2:21-23²⁹ as a promise of God that the messianic line would go through Zerubbabel, a promise that would ultimately be fulfilled in Jesus Christ (Mt 1:12; Lk 3:27).

Mal 3:1-2 speaks of the coming of the Lord:

1 "Behold, I send my messenger
and he will prepare the way before me.³⁰
And the Lord whom you seek
will suddenly come to his temple;
and the messenger of the covenant
in whom you delight, behold, he is coming,³¹
says the Lord of hosts.
2 But who can endure the day of his coming,
and who can stand when he appears?
For he is like a refiner's fire and like fullers' soap.

The first mentioned messenger who comes to prepare the way seems to be Elijah according to 4:5-6 (and then John the Baptist according to Mt 11:10). The "Lord who comes to his temple" is God, because it is "His" temple. But at the same time he is called "the messenger of the covenant" in the parallelism. When we think of the New Testament fulfillment, the one is Elijah, namely John the Baptist, and the other is Jesus Christ (Mt 3:3.11-12).

The wording of Mal 3:1 recalls Is 40:3.³² In both texts the coming of God is the focus and the necessary preparation for it. As Mal

29. Keil, Minor Prophets, p. 214-215.

30. הִנְנִי שְׁלֹחַ מַלְאָכִי וַיְכַנְּנוּ דֶּרֶךְ לִפְנֵי

31. וַיָּבֹאוּ יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵיכֶם הָאֵלֶּיךָ אֲשֶׁר-אַתֶּם מְבַקְשִׁים

וּמַלְאָךְ הַבְּרִית אֲשֶׁר-אַתֶּם הַפְּצִים הַנְּהַלְתָּ

32. I think, that is the reason why Mk 1:2-3 combines both passages and only mentions the name of the greater prophet as was customary in combined quotations involving a minor prophet.

3:1 may identify the voice in the desert as that of Is 40:3, the Lord and the messenger of the covenant may be identified with the revelation of the glory of the Lord and his arm in 40:5.10 on the one hand and the servant of 53:1 on the other.

4.2 The Humanity of Christ

4.2.1 Virgin Birth

Biblical testimony for the virgin birth.

We have seen in the section³³ about the Christ as the seed of David subsection 4.1.3 that Isaiah proclaims in 7:14 the sign of Immanuel who will be born of a virgin and who can be identified with the help of Is 8:8-10, 9:6-7, 10:20 and 11:1-2 as the coming Christ. His contemporary prophet Micah also binds the hope of the time of salvation to a woman giving birth to the Christ in Bethlehem (Mi 5:2-3:

2 But you, O Bethlehem Ephrathah,
 who are too little to be among the clans of Judah,
 from you shall come forth for me one
 who is to be ruler in Israel,
 whose origin is from of old, from ancient days.
 3 Therefore he shall give them up until the time
 when she who is in labor has given birth;
 then the rest of his brothers shall return

33. For this section about the humanity of Christ we follow the line of argument of Grudem, *Systematic Theology. An Introduction to Biblical Doctrine*, p. 529-543.

to the people of Israel.

When Micah says that the origin of the coming Christ goes way back, "is from of old, from ancient days", he might mean that old prophecies have spoken of the coming savior and bringer of peace. See for example the first of these prophecies about the seed of the woman (Gn 3:15; Gal 4:4-5).

The evangelist Matthew (Mt 1:18-25) tells us that the prophecy of Is 7:14 has been fulfilled in Jesus and that the name of Jesus resembles the meaning of Immanuel:

20 But as he considered these things, behold, an angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream, saying, "Joseph, son of David, do not fear to take Mary as your wife, for that which is conceived in her is from the Holy Spirit. 21 She will bear a son, and you shall call his name Jesus, for he will save his people from their sins." 22 All this took place to fulfill what the Lord had spoken by the prophet: 23 "Behold, the virgin shall conceive and bear a son, and they shall call his name Immanuel" (which means, God with us).

Matthew conveys the perspective of Joseph how he got to know about the virgin birth of Jesus through the angel. Luke basically agrees with the testimony of Matthew but he gives the perspective of Mary and what the angel told her (Lk 1:30-35):

30 And the angel said to her, "Do not be afraid, Mary, for you have found favor with God. 31 And behold, you will conceive in your womb and bear a son, and you shall call his name Jesus. 32 He will be great and will be called the Son of the Most High. And

the Lord God will give to him the throne of his father David, 33 and he will reign over the house of Jacob forever, and of his kingdom there will be no end.” 34 And Mary said to the angel, “How will this be, since I am a virgin?” 35 And the angel answered her, “The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you; therefore the child to be born will be called holy - the Son of God.

In Luke Jesus was conceived by the Holy Spirit and born by the virgin Mary and therefore he is "holy" and "the Son of God". We shall discuss the title Son of God later in detail. We can see that both, Matthew and Luke combine the teaching of the virgin birth with texts of Isaiah, namely Is 7:14 (Mt 1:23) and Is 9:7 (Lk 1:32). This confirms our use of texts in Is 7-12 to identify the child Immanuel of Is 7:14 as the coming Christ within biblical theology. Within Luke the wording of Lk 3:23 also presupposes the virgin birth saying that people supposed that Jesus was the son of Joseph.

Theological importance of the virgin birth.

The virgin birth is part of the biblical teaching of the ultimate divine miracle, the incarnation: God became man. This is the greatest miracle. Deity and humanity are united in one person. The birth of Jesus by the virgin Mary after Jesus had been conceived by the power of the Holy Spirit made this miracle possible. As we have seen from Lk 1:35, the virgin birth makes Jesus also holy in a special sense. The uniting of the holy divine nature and the human nature in the person of Jesus results in a man who is sinless and did never sin. The miracle of the virgin birth made it possible that Jesus was born without inherited sin.

4.2.2 Human Weaknesses and Limitations

Jesus had a human body.

The newborn baby Jesus was looking just like other babies (Lk 2:7 and he had to grow and to go through the different phases of childhood just like other children (Lk 2:52). He got tired (Jn 4:6) and thirsty (Jn 19:28) and hungry (Mt 4:2) as we do. After he had been beaten and tortured, he got so weak that Simon of Cyrene had to carry the cross for him (Lk 23:26). After Jesus had risen from the dead, he still could show his human hands and feet to his disciples so that they could recognize him (Lk 24:39). He even ate before their eyes (Lk 24:42-43). In his resurrected human body he went up to heaven while they were watching him (Lk 24:50-51; Acts 1:9).

Jesus had a human mind.

Luke helps us to see that Jesus had a truly human mind and had to live and grow through the different stages of the development of a human child until becoming an adult (Lk 2:52):

And Jesus increased in wisdom and in stature and in favor with God and man.³⁴

This learning process of Jesus continued until the last day of his life and his suffering was the climax of all (Heb 5:8

Although he was a son, he learned obedience through what he suffered.³⁵

34. Καὶ Ἰησοῦς προέκοπτεν σοφίᾳ καὶ ἡλικίᾳ καὶ χάριτι παρὰ θεῷ καὶ ἀνθρώποις.

35. καίπερ ὢν υἱός, ἔμαθεν ἅψ ὧν ἔπαθεν τὴν ὑπακοήν

When Jesus says that no one knows when the day of the coming of the Son of Man will be, "not even the angels in heaven, nor the Son, but only the Father" (Mk 13:32), we have to understand this according to the humanity of Jesus. According to the humanity of Jesus, Jesus could die. He could not die according to his deity. He is from eternity to eternity. According to his humanity it was possible that he did not know the day of his second coming. According to his deity he knows everything.³⁶

Jesus had a human soul and human emotions.

Jn 12:27; 13:21; Mt 26:38; 8:10; Jn 11:35; Heb 5:7-9; 4:15.

His people saw Jesus only as a man.

When Jesus went into his hometown Nazareth and preached there, the people did not really accept him, because they saw him only as "the carpenter's son", the son of Mary and the brother of "James and Joseph and Simon and Judas" and of "all his sisters" living with them in Nazareth (Mt 13:53-58). His own brothers did not believe in him before his crucifixion and resurrection (Jn 7:5). Once "his own" even wanted to put him into a kind of arrest to (Mk 3:20-21):

20 Then he went home, and the crowd gathered again, so that they could not even eat. 21 And when his family heard it, they went out to seize him, for they were saying, "He is out of his mind."³⁷

36. So with Grudem, *Systematic Theology. An Introduction to Biblical Doctrine*, p. 561.

37. καὶ ἀκούσαντες οἱ παρ' αὐτοῦ ἐξῆλθον κρατῆσαι αὐτόν, ἔλεγον γὰρ ὅτι ἐξέστη.

In this last section we can exclude the mother of Jesus Mary, because she knew about the special calling of her son from God's angels and messengers like Simeon and Anna and the shepherds (Lk 1-2). But Mk 3:20-21 agree with John 7:5 that Jesus had people in his own family who did not believe in him. After the resurrection we find them in the first church as believers (Acts 1:14; 1 Cor 15:7).

4.2.3 Sinlessness

Lk 2:40 tells us that God's special grace guided Jesus throughout his childhood and made him grow strong and in wisdom. The devil tempted Jesus, but without success (Lk 4:13). Jesus could challenge his contemporaries (Jn 8:46):

Which one of you convicts me of sin? If I tell the truth, why do you not believe me?³⁸

Because of his sinlessness (Jn 8:29) Jesus is the light of the world freeing those who abide in his word from darkness (8:12) and from the slavery of sin (Jn 8:31-36; 15:10). With regard to the accusations before Pilate, the New Testament states that Jesus was without guilt (Jn 18:38). Jesus "in every respect has been tempted as we are, yet without sin" (Heb 4:15; cf. 2:18; 7:26; 2 Cor 5:21; 1 Pt 1:19; 2:22; 1 Jn 3:5; Mt 4:1-11; Mk 1:12-13; Lk 4:1-13).

Jesus is called holy (Acts 2:27; 3:14; 4:30; 13:35) and righteous (Acts 3:14; 7:52; 1 Pt 3:18; 1 Jn 2:1). The perfect obedience of Jesus Christ towards the Father even in his suffering became a source of salvation for sinners (Heb 5:7-9; Rom 5:18-19; Heb 2:17-18).

38. τίς ἐξ ὑμῶν ἐλέγχει με περὶ ἁμαρτίας; εἰ ἀλήθειαν λέγω, διὰ τί ὑμεῖς οὐ πιστεύετε μοι;

The circumstance that God send "his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh and for sin"³⁹ has not to be understood in the sense that Jesus himself had sin in his flesh, but that his flesh, his body was like the body of sinful man, but at the same time without sin (Rom 8:3). That God send Jesus "for sin"⁴⁰ means that God send him "as a sin offering".

4.2.4 What positive effects has the full humanity of Christ?

His representative obedience brings salvation to mankind.

Paul portrays Jesus Christ as the last Adam in comparison to the first Adam (1 Cor 15:45-47). Both represent all of mankind. Therefore all die because of the sin of the first Adam who represented all of his children in his disobedience. In Christ all are made righteous and alive, because all who belong to him are represented in his obedience and are made righteous in Christ (Rom 5:18-19; 1 Cor 15:22).

The human high priest Jesus has destroyed the devil becoming an atoning sacrifice for sins in his death.

Heb 2:14-18:

14 Since therefore the children share in flesh and blood, he himself likewise partook of the same things, that through death he might destroy the one who has the power of death, that is, the devil, 15 and deliver all those who through fear of death were subject to lifelong slavery. 16 For surely it is not angels that

39. ὁ θεὸς τὸν ἑαυτοῦ υἱὸν πέμψας ἐν ὁμοιώματι σαρκὸς ἁμαρτίας

40. περὶ ἁμαρτίας

he helps, but he helps the offspring of Abraham. 17 Therefore he had to be made like his brothers in every respect, so that he might become a merciful and faithful high priest in the service of God, to make propitiation for the sins of the people. 18 For because he himself has suffered when tempted, he is able to help those who are being tempted.

The human high priest Jesus can sympathize with us.

The same section we have just quoted implies this idea in Heb 2:17-18. One great profit of the incarnation of the Word of God is that Jesus Christ as a high priest is merciful and sympathizes with us human beings knowing exactly how we feel (Heb 4:15).

The man Jesus Christ is the one mediator between God and man.

In 1 Tm 2:1-7 the apostle Paul encourages believers to pray for all men, because God wants to save all men through the proclamation of the gospel to all nations as through the apostle Paul, for Jesus Christ is the one mediator between God and men (1 Tm 2:5-6):

5 For there is one God, and there is one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus,⁴¹ 6 who gave himself as a ransom for all, which is the testimony given at the proper time.

41. εἷς γὰρ θεός, εἷς καὶ μεσίτης θεοῦ καὶ ἀνθρώπων ἄνθρωπος Χριστὸς Ἰησοῦς,

Jesus as king of the earth fulfills God's original purpose for man to rule over creation.

As we have seen before, God made man the ruler of the earth in Gn 1:26-28. The crucified and risen Christ claims to be the ruler of the earth (Mt 28:18-20) as has also been prophesied about the coming Christ in Isaiah 11:1-10 who would bring peace to the whole earth (cf. Rom 8:17-23).

The man Jesus is our master and we are his disciples.

Jesus is the role model for all true Christians ((1 Jn 2:6; 3:2-3; 2 Cor 3:18; Rom 8:29; 1 Pt 2:21; Heb 12:2-3; Phil 3:10; 1 Pt 3:17-18; 4:1).

Christ's resurrected human body is the pattern for our future bodies.

Christ as the firstborn of the dead (Col 1:18; cf. 1 Cor 15:23) gives us a glimpse of what our glorious bodies will be like (Phil 3:20-21; 1 Cor 15:42-44,49).

4.2.5 The humanity of Jesus will remain forever.

The resurrection narratives make it abundantly clear that the body of Jesus was still human and even resembled his crucified body so far that the marks of his crucifixion were still visible (Jn 20:25-27; Lk 24:39-42; cf. Rv 5:6). We can assume that normally there will be no stains of torture or accidents on the glorious bodies of the resurrected. If the resurrection body of Christ was still recognizable as a body which had been crucified, there will be a deeper divine

purpose in this. Perhaps God wants us to see and remember for ever what price and love brought us into his presence (Rv 7:14).

The apostles were witnesses to the fact that Jesus went into heaven in his resurrected human body (Acts 1:11). Stephen witnessed "the Son of Man standing at the right hand of God" (Acts 7:56). Christ revealed himself from heaven to Paul as well (Acts 9:5; 1 Cor 9:1; 15:8). The glory of Christ as the son of man is also seen by John in Rv 1:13-17).

4.3 The Deity of Christ

4.3.1 Statements of Scripture that show that Jesus Christ is God.

Christ is called "God" (θεός theōs).

The Word that was in the beginning and with God was also God⁴² (Jn 1:1; cf. 1:18). The answer of the apostle Thomas to the appearance of the risen Christ is: "My Lord and my God!"⁴³ (Jn 20:28). The apostle Paul speaks of his desire for the salvation of the Israelites and says (Rom 9:5):

To them belong the patriarchs, and from their race, according to the flesh, is the Christ who is God over all, blessed forever. Amen.⁴⁴

42. For this section about the deity of Christ we follow the line of argument of Grudem, Systematic Theology. An Introduction to Biblical Doctrine, p. 543-554.

43. Ὁ κύριός μου καὶ ὁ θεός μου.

44. ὧν οἱ πατέρες, καὶ ἐξ ὧν ὁ χριστός τὸ κατὰ σάρκα, ὁ ὢν ἐπὶ πάντων, θεός εὐλογητός εἰς τοὺς αἰῶνας• ἀμήν.

According to Paul one aspect of a just and godly life is that we are "waiting for our blessed hope, the appearing of the glory of our great God and Savior Jesus Christ"⁴⁵ (Tit 2:13). Heb 1:8 quotes Ps 45:6 and applies it with the title "God" to Jesus Christ, the Son of God. In the first verse of his second letter Peter speaks of "the righteousness of our God and Savior Jesus Christ" (1:1). In total agreement with this New Testament use of God for Christ is the marvelous prediction of the coming Christ to be called "Mighty God" in Is 9:6 (cf. Is 10:21).

Christ is called "Lord" (κύριος kyriōs).

Filled with the Holy Spirit Elizabeth speaks of Mary as "the mother of my Lord" (Lk 1:43). In talking to the shepherds the angel of the Lord acknowledges the new born baby Jesus as "Savior", "Christ" and "Lord" (Lk 2:11). If according to Mt 3:3 John's call to repentance is a fulfillment of the commandment in Is 40:3 to prepare "the way of the Lord", then it is implied that Jesus, the person coming after John, the one mightier than John (Mt 3:11), is the Lord, the God of Israel. In the same way Jesus uses Ps 110:1 in Mt 22:44 pointing out that according to this prophecy of the king David the coming Christ is the Lord even of David and much greater than this earthly king, ruling seated at the right hand of God the Father until his enemies are overcome.

The apostle Paul says that "for us there is one God, the Father, from whom are all things and for whom we exist, and one Lord, Jesus Christ, through whom are all things and through whom we

45. προσδεχόμενοι τὴν μακαρίαν ἐλπίδα καὶ ἐπιφάνειαν τῆς δόξης τοῦ μεγάλου θεοῦ καὶ σωτῆρος ἡμῶν Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ

exist"⁴⁶ (1 Cor 8:6). In the context of the use of the spiritual gifts, the apostle Paul states that a person speaking under the influence of a spirit can only confess "Jesus is Lord" if this is the Holy Spirit (1 Cor 12:3). But if somebody curses Jesus speaking under the influence of a spirit, then this spirit can not be the Holy Spirit of God.

Heb 1:10-12 quotes Ps 102:25-27 and applies it with the title "Lord" to the Son of God. When Jesus comes on his white horse riding into the battle which finishes this world, he has a name written on him "King of kings and Lord of lords"⁴⁷ (Rv 19:16; cf. 17:14). In 1 Tm 6:15 a very similar phrase is used for God the Father.⁴⁸ and in Dt 10:17 for God the Lord.

Of special significance are the places in the New Testament where Jesus is called Lord in a way that Old Testament verses are quoted or alluded to because that shows that the author in question identifies Jesus as God the Lord, the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jakob. Paul says, "if you confess with your mouth that Jesus is Lord and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved" (Rom 10:9). He makes it clear in the context that the confession is the confession of prayer and the Lord is the Lord of all, the God of Israel (Rom 10:12-13) quoting Joel 2:32).

The same is true for the confession of all that Jesus is Lord in Phil 2:9-11 if it is compared to Is 45:23-24

Phil 2:9 Therefore God has highly exalted him and
bestowed on him the name that is above every name,
10 so that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow,

46. ἀλλ ἡμῖν εἷς θεὸς ὁ πατήρ, ἐξ οὗ τὰ πάντα καὶ ἡμεῖς εἰς αὐτόν, καὶ εἷς κύριος Ἰησοῦς Χριστός, δι οὗ τὰ πάντα καὶ ἡμεῖς δι αὐτοῦ.

47. Βασιλεὺς βασιλέων καὶ κύριος κυρίων.

48. ὁ βασιλεὺς τῶν βασιλευόντων καὶ κύριος τῶν κυριευόντων

in heaven and on earth and under the earth, 11 and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.

Is 45:23 By myself I have sworn; from my mouth has gone out in righteousness a word that shall not return: 'To me every knee shall bow, every tongue shall swear allegiance.' 24 Only in the Lord, it shall be said of me, are righteousness and strength; to him shall come and be ashamed all who were incensed against him.

With the background of Is 45:23-24 the highest name in Phil 2:9-11 is the name of Lord God who is worthy to be worshiped. Both texts taken together show the determination of God that all will have to acknowledge the deity of Jesus Christ the Lord.

"I am" (ἐγὼ εἰμί egō ēimi) is used for Christ in a way that points to Ex 3:14 et al.

When Jesus says in Jn 8:58 "Truly, truly, I say to you, before Abraham was, I am", the people who hear him feel so provoked that they want to stone him to death. They understood that this was an enormous claim and they rejected it. In the same chapter Jesus explains that the way of salvation from sins is to believe that "I am" (Jn 8:24):

I told you that you would die in your sins, for unless you believe that I am (he) you will die in your sins.⁴⁹

I have put the "he" of "I am (he)" in brackets because it is not in the Greek. It sounds awkward in English to say "that I am" without

49. εἶπον οὖν ὑμῖν ὅτι ἀποθανεῖσθε ἐν ταῖς ἁμαρτίαις ὑμῶν· ἐὰν γὰρ μὴ πιστεύσητε ὅτι ἐγὼ εἰμι, ἀποθανεῖσθε ἐν ταῖς ἁμαρτίαις ὑμῶν.

anything further said, so most translations will add something like "he", but the context does not really tell us who or what "he" would be. If we combine 8:58 and 8:24 to understand both as hints to the deity of Jesus Christ who "is" before Abraham came into existence, then a line opens up that goes back to Ex 3:14:

13 Then Moses said to God, "If I come to the people of Israel and say to them, 'The God of your fathers has sent me to you,' and they ask me, 'What is his name?' what shall I say to them?" 14 God said to Moses, "I AM WHO I AM." And he said, "Say this to the people of Israel, 'I AM has sent me to you.'"⁵⁰

The "I am..." words in John are related to this line of thought, because Jesus identifies himself with gifts from God to his believing disciples which are divine (bread of eternal life 6:35.51; light of eternal life 8:12; 9:5; the door to salvation and eternal life 10:7.9; the good shepherd laying down his life for the sheep and taking it up again and uniting the people of God out of Israel and out of all the nations and being one with the Father 10:11-17.30; the resurrection and the life 11:25-26; the way, and the truth, and the life leading to the Father 14:6; the true vine being the life source of the connected believers having chosen them to bear fruit 15:1.5.16; the king born to bear witness to the truth 18:37).

Another episode in John 18:4-9 shows the power of the "I am" of Jesus. They only could take him captive, because he handed himself over to them saving his disciples giving them time to flee.

50. וַיֹּאמֶר אֱלֹהִים אֶל־מֹשֶׁה אֲדֹנָי אֲשֶׁר אֲדֹנָי וַיֹּאמֶר כֹּה תֹאמַר לִבְנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל
אֲדֹנָי שְׁלַחְנִי אֵלֵיכֶם:

LXX: καὶ εἶπεν ὁ θεὸς πρὸς Μωϋσῆν Ἐγὼ εἰμι ὁ ὢν· καὶ εἶπεν Οὕτως ἐρεῖς τοῖς υἱοῖς Ἰσραὴλ. Ὁ ὢν ἀπέσταλκέν με πρὸς ὑμᾶς.

4 Then Jesus, knowing all that would happen to him, came forward and said to them, "Whom do you seek?"
 5 They answered him, "Jesus of Nazareth." Jesus said to them, "**I am** he." Judas, who betrayed him, was standing with them. 6 When Jesus said to them, "**I am** he," they drew back and fell to the ground. 7 So he asked them again, "Whom do you seek?" And they said, "Jesus of Nazareth." 8 Jesus answered, "I told you that **I am** he. So, if you seek me, let these men go."⁵¹ 9 This was to fulfill the word that he had spoken: "Of those whom you gave me I have lost not one."

The places with "I am" in bold script (emphasis mine) have only "I am" in Greek, meaning here of course I am Jesus whom you want to take captive. But because the Greek answer is only "I am", it is still possible that John intended it to be a pointer to the power of the divine name in Ex 3:14 which lets the soldiers fall to the ground and shows the total superiority of Jesus.

The "I am"-line of thought is not only important in John's gospel but also in the Revelation that God gave John. We can find "I am" statements about God the Father there and about Jesus Christ. In Rv 1:4 God the Father is called "who is and who was and who is to come"⁵² which is a kind of translation of God's name in Ex 3:14

51. 5 ἀπεκρίθησαν αὐτῷ· Ἰησοῦν τὸν Ναζωραῖον. λέγει αὐτοῖς· Ἐγὼ εἰμι. εἰστίκει δὲ καὶ Ἰούδας ὁ παραδιδούς αὐτὸν μετ' αὐτῶν. 6 ὥς οὖν εἶπεν αὐτοῖς· Ἐγὼ εἰμι, ἀπήλθον εἰς τὰ ὀπίσω καὶ ἔπεσαν χαμαί. 7 πάλιν οὖν ἐπρωτότησεν αὐτούς· Τίνα ζητεῖτε; οἱ δὲ εἶπαν· Ἰησοῦν τὸν Ναζωραῖον. 8 ἀπεκρίθη Ἰησοῦς· Εἶπον ὑμῖν ὅτι ἐγὼ εἰμι· εἰ οὖν ἐμὲ ζητεῖτε, ἄφετε τούτους ὑπάγειν·

52. The Greek ὁ ὢν καὶ ὁ ἦν καὶ ὁ ἐρχόμενος is like a quote from the LXX of Ex 3:14 which has been enriched with καὶ ὁ ἦν καὶ ὁ ἐρχόμενος

where God's name based on the Hebrew imperfect form could be translated according to the possible contexts as "I am who I am" or "I was who I was" or "I shall be who I shall be".

Rv 1:8 is even closer to Ex 3:14 (emphasis of "quotation part" mine):

"I am the Alpha and the Omega," says the Lord God,
"who is and who was and who is to come, the Almighty."⁵³

There are other instances where God's name is presented in imitation and adaption of Ex 3:14 in Revelation (4:8; 11:17⁵⁴). Christ's speaking in Rv 1:17-18 resembles certain elements of Rv 1:8 where God the Father is speaking:

17 When I saw him, I fell at his feet as though dead.
 But he laid his right hand on me, saying, "Fear not,
 I am the first and the last,⁵⁵ 18 and the living one. I
 died, and behold I am alive forevermore, and I have
 the keys of Death and Hades.

According to its meaning the fact that Christ is "the first and last"⁵⁶ is identical with God being "the Alpha and the Omega". Therefore Christ (cf. 22:16) can say about himself in Rv 22:13:

I am the Alpha and the Omega, the first and the last,
 the beginning and the end.⁵⁷

53. Ἐγὼ εἰμι τὸ Ἄλφα καὶ τὸ Ὠ, λέγει κύριος, ὁ θεός, ὁ ὢν καὶ ὁ ἦν καὶ ὁ ἐρχόμενος, ὁ παντοκράτωρ.

54. In this last instance the part "and is to come" is dropped, because at the time of the seventh trumpet God has already come.

55. ἐγὼ εἰμι ὁ πρῶτος καὶ ὁ ἔσχατος

56. See also Rv 2:8 and compare with Is 41:4; 44:06; 48:12 where the same expressions are used for the one and only true God.

57. ἐγὼ τὸ Ἄλφα καὶ τὸ Ὠ, ὁ πρῶτος καὶ ὁ ἔσχατος, ἡ ἀρχὴ καὶ τὸ τέλος.

Christ is called “The Word” (ὁ λόγος ἡ ὁ λόγος).

It is the apostle John who calls Jesus the Word in three different sections of his books, in his gospel, the Revelation and his first letter.

The prologue of John's gospel presents Jesus as the eternal Word (Jn 1:1-3.14):

1 In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.⁵⁸ 2 He was in the beginning with God. 3 All things were made through him, and without him was not any thing made that was made... 14 And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we have seen his glory, glory as of the only Son from the Father, full of grace and truth.⁵⁹

The qualities of the Word and so of Jesus are that he was already there in the beginning. This means that he is eternal and was there before the foundation of the world. He was with God, showing his personality and fellowship with God the Father (cf. Jn 17:5.24). He is even God himself. He took part in the creation of the world so that everything was created through him (cf. Gn 1:1.3; Ps 33:6). He became flesh and we know him under the name of Jesus Christ, the only Son from the Father.

In Rv 19:13 we hear the name of Jesus who rides on his white horse into battle:

58. 1 Ἐν ἀρχῇ ἦν ὁ λόγος, καὶ ὁ λόγος ἦν πρὸς τὸν θεόν, καὶ θεὸς ἦν ὁ λόγος.

59. Καὶ ὁ λόγος σὰρξ ἐγένετο καὶ ἐσκήνωσεν ἐν ἡμῖν, καὶ ἐθεασάμεθα τὴν δόξαν αὐτοῦ, δόξαν ὡς μονογενοῦς παρὰ πατρός, πλήρης χάριτος καὶ ἀληθείας•

... and the name by which he is called is The Word of God.⁶⁰

This means that Jesus is the Word of God in person. Wherever God speaks, he does it through his Word. This agrees with John 1:1-3 where God spoke in creation and so created everything through his Word. But this is also true for the self-revelation of God throughout salvation history through his Word (cf. 1 Pt 1:10-12). Jesus Christ is the voice of God. This is also true for God's ongoing activity in sustaining the world through his Word (Heb 1:3).

The beginning of John's first letter has several parallels to the prologue of his gospel (1 Jn 1:1-3):

1 That which was from the beginning, which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, which we looked upon and have touched with our hands, concerning the word of life - 2 the life was made manifest, and we have seen it, and testify to it and proclaim to you the eternal life, which was with the Father and was made manifest to us⁶¹ - 3 that which we have seen and heard we proclaim also to you, so that you too may have fellowship with us; and indeed our fellowship is with the Father and with his Son Jesus Christ.

Here Christ is called "the Word of life" or "the Eternal Life". This Word of life was also there in the beginning as in John 1:1 (cf. also Jn 1:4). As the author of John 1:14 claims to be an eyewitness of

60. καὶ κέκληται τὸ ὄνομα αὐτοῦ ὁ Λόγος τοῦ Θεοῦ.

61. 1 Ὁ ἦν ἀπ' ἀρχῆς, ὃ ἀκηκόαμεν, ὃ ἐωράκαμεν τοῖς ὀφθαλμοῖς ἡμῶν, ὃ ἐθεασάμεθα καὶ αἱ χεῖρες ἡμῶν ἐψηλάφησαν, περὶ τοῦ λόγου τῆς ζωῆς— 2 καὶ ἡ ζωὴ ἐφανερώθη, καὶ ἐωράκαμεν καὶ μαρτυροῦμεν καὶ ἀπαγγέλλομεν ὑμῖν τὴν ζωὴν τὴν αἰώνιον ἣτις ἦν πρὸς τὸν πατέρα καὶ ἐφανερώθη ἡμῖν

the Word, so does the author of this letter claim to be a witness for the Word of life with his eyes, his ears and even his hands. This will be especially related to the appearances of the risen Christ (cf. Jn 20:1-21:25). He gives his testimony to lead people to Christ, perfect joy and to eternal life (1 Jn 1:4; 5:13). As the Word of Life is divine in the beginning of the letter, so Jesus Christ is God and eternal life at the end of letter (1 Jn 5:20) which is an inclusion similar to Jn 1:1-3.14 and 20:28.

Christ is called “Son of Man” (ὁ υἱὸς τοῦ ἀνθρώπου ἡ ὑιὸς τοῦ ἀνθρώπου) in a way that points back to Dn 7:13.

“Son of Man” is used 84 times in the four gospels and in addition to that only once in Acts 7:56⁶². Within the four gospels it is a normal way of Jesus referring to himself. People might misunderstand this title as just presenting Jesus as a son of Adam, as a mere man. But this is not quite correct if we look at the way Jesus himself used this term when asked in the Jewish Sanhedrin, their "Supreme Court", whether he is the Christ or not (Mt 26:63-66:

63 But Jesus remained silent. And the high priest said to him, “I adjure you by the living God, tell us if you are the Christ, the Son of God.” 64 Jesus said to him, “You have said so. But I tell you, from now on you will see the Son of Man seated at the right hand of Power and coming on the clouds of heaven.”⁶³ 65

62. See Grudem, *Systematic Theology. An Introduction to Biblical Doctrine*, p. 546.

63. λέγει αὐτῷ ὁ Ἰησοῦς· Σὺ εἶπας· πλὴν λέγω ὑμῖν, ἀπ' ἄρτι ὄψεσθε τὸν υἱὸν τοῦ ἀνθρώπου καθήμενον ἐκ δεξιῶν τῆς δυνάμεως καὶ ἐρχόμενον ἐπὶ τῶν νεφελῶν τοῦ οὐρανοῦ.

Then the high priest tore his robes and said, "He has uttered blasphemy. What further witnesses do we need? You have now heard his blasphemy. 66 What is your judgment?" They answered, "He deserves death."

The answer of Jesus includes at least three elements which led to his condemnation as a blasphemer and worthy of death: His statement "You have said so" means "Yes, I am the Christ, the Son of God". As soon as somebody claims this, but is not the Christ, this is regarded as blasphemy and a capital offense. The Sanhedrin rejected this claim of Jesus and sentenced him to death. But Jesus used this opportunity to add even more to what seemed to be a wrong claim. He claimed to be the fulfiller of Ps 110:1 who is going to sit after this day ("from now on") at the right hand of God being identical with "the Son of Man" of Daniel 7:13-14 who comes with the clouds of heaven into the presence of God to rule forever:

13 I saw in the night visions, and behold, with the clouds of heaven there came one like a son of man, and he came to the Ancient of Days and was presented before him. 14 And to him was given dominion and glory and a kingdom, that all peoples, nations, and languages should serve him; his dominion is an everlasting dominion, which shall not pass away, and his kingdom one that shall not be destroyed.

Here we see that the connection of this title with Daniel 7:13 is of the utmost importance. It does not present Jesus as a mere man, a common man, but as the "Son of Man" who rules all nations forever sitting in the presence of God Almighty. The people of the Sanhedrin understood this as abundant evidence against Jesus proving him to be worthy of death. The only section outside the gospels

where this term is used agrees totally with this picture and leads to another death at the hands of the people of the Sanhedrin. They stone Stephen just after he proclaimed (Acts 7:56):

Behold, I see the heavens opened, and the Son of Man standing at the right hand of God.⁶⁴

This title brings Christ as closely into God's presence as is possible. He is the divine man next to God the Father who lives and rules forever fulfilling God's plan and God's purpose.

Christ is called "Son of God" (ὁ υἱὸς τοῦ θεοῦ ἡσ̄ hyiōs tōu theōu) in a way that presents him as divine.

In order to understand the way the Bible uses the title "Son of God" for Jesus Christ, it is useful that we also look at other uses of "Son" or "Sons of God" in the Bible.

1. Angels as "the sons of God" Job 1:6; 2:1; Gn 6:2 if combined with Jude 1:6-7.
2. The Israelites as a whole nation are called "firstborn son" of God (Ex 4:22).
3. The Israelites as individuals are called "sons of God" or "children of God" and are admonished to live accordingly (Dt 14:1). Believers in Israel are called "the generation of your children" in contrast to unbelieving Israelites (Ps 73:15).
4. In a very similar the individual Christian believers in the New Testament are called children of God, because they have accepted Jesus Christ as their Savior and Lord (Gal 3:25-29).

64. Ἰδοὺ θεωρῶ τοὺς οὐρανοὺς διηνοιγμένους καὶ τὸν υἱὸν τοῦ ἀνθρώπου ἐκ δεξιῶν ἑστῶτα τοῦ θεοῦ.

5. The anointed king and son of David is called "son of God" (2 Sm 7:14). This text is also the foundation for the title "Son of God" for the coming Christ from the line of David in the New Testament (e.g. Mt 16:16).
6. God calls the judges in Ps 82:6-7 "gods, sons of the Most High", but threatens that they should die "like men... like any prince".
7. The title "Son of God" used for Jesus Christ.
 - (a) Jesus is "Son of God" as born from the virgin Mary to sit on the throne of David, the Christ of Israel and king of the Jews (Lk 1:31-35).
 - (b) He is "Son of God" as anointed by the Holy Spirit after his baptism (Lk 3:22).
 - (c) He "was declared to be the Son of God in power according to the Spirit of holiness by his resurrection from the dead" (Rom 1:3-4); cf. Acts 13:33-35; 17:31).
 - (d) John speaks of Jesus as the "only Son" of God the Father (Jn 1:14.18; 3:16.18; 1 Jn 4:9).⁶⁵
 - (e) Jesus is also the eternal, pre-existent Son of God who was loved by the Father before the foundation of the world and had divine glory and through whom all things have been created (Jn 1:1-3.14; 10:36; Heb 1:1-12).
 - (f) As the Son of God Jesus has all authority in heaven and on earth and is higher than all men and all angels

⁶⁵. In Lk 7:12 it denotes the only son of a widow; in Lk 8:42 the only daughter of Jairus; in Lk 9:38 the only son of the father who asks Jesus to cast out the evil spirit; in Heb 11:17 Abraham offered up Isaac his only son.

(Mt 11:25-27; 17:5; 28:18-20; 1 Cor 15:28; Jn 5:20-25; 3:35-36; 16:15).

(g) As the Son Jesus is the revelation of God the Father (Jn 8:19; 14:9; Heb 1:2-3).

4.3.2 Jesus has divine qualities.

1. He exercises divine power with is normally only found with the almighty God. He "rebuked the winds and the sea" (Mt 8:26-27; cf. Ps 89:9). He feeds 5000 men and declares himself to be the bread of life giving life for ever (Jn 6:11.35-40). In the series of his miracles he reveals "his" glory inviting faith in him (Jn 2:11). He forgives sins (Mk 2:5.7).
2. He is from eternity. He can say "Before Abraham was, I am" (Jn 8:58 and "I am the Alpha and the Omega, the first and the last, the beginning and the end" (Rv 22:13; cf. 1:17).
3. He is immortal. He was only killed according to the flesh in his humanity, but never ceased to exist according to his deity. He made himself alive again (Jn Jn 2:19; 10:17-18). He is the Author of life (Acts 3:15) who has "the power of an indestructible life" (Heb 7:16; cf. 1 Tm 6:16).
4. He knows everything. He knows that some people present think that he blasphemes by forgiving sins (Mk 2:8). He knows Nathanael and his qualities even before meeting him (Jn 1:48) which is also true for all the others he met (2:25; 6:64). Indeed Jesus knows "all things" (16:30; 21:17).
5. He is everywhere at the same time (Mt 18:20; 28:20).

6. He is worthy to be worshiped (Phil 2:9-11; cf. Is 45:23-24; Heb 1:6; Rv 5:8-13; Mt 28:17).

4.3.3 How can we understand Phil 2:5-8?

When Paul says, that Christ "made himself nothing" or "emptied himself", does he mean that Jesus gave up some of his divine attributes while on earth?⁶⁶ Was he less than divine?

5 Have this mind among yourselves, which is yours in Christ Jesus, 6 who, though he was in the form of God, did not count equality with God a thing to be grasped, 7 but made himself nothing, taking the form of a servant, being born in the likeness of men.⁶⁷ 8 And being found in human form, he humbled himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross.

The first thing to note is that Paul wants to encourage a humble conduct amongst the Philippians (Phil 2:3-4) and therefore talks of the humility of Christ as the example par excellence (Phil 2:5-8) which was rewarded by God the Father in giving him the name and place above all others (Phil 2:9-11).

That Christ had "the form of God" in heaven before his incarnation and enjoyed "equality with God", means that all beings in heaven knew and had to acknowledge the deity of Christ in heaven which was visible to all as his divine glory (cf. Jn 17:5.24).

66. See Grudem, Systematic Theology. An Introduction to Biblical Doctrine, p. 549-552.

67. 6 ὃς ἐν μορφῇ θεοῦ ὑπάρχων οὐχ ἄρπαγμόν ἡγήσατο τὸ εἶναι ἴσα θεῷ, 7 ἀλλὰ ἑαυτὸν ἐκένωσεν μορφὴν δούλου λαβών, ἐν ὁμοιώματι ἀνθρώπων γενόμενος• καὶ σχήματι εὐρεθεὶς ὡς ἄνθρωπος

That Christ "emptied himself" by "taking the form of a servant" in his incarnation and his humble, serving life on earth, does not mean that he threw off his deity, but only that he was hiding the visible radiance of his divine glory and exchanging it with the visible form of a human servant, who would even humble himself so far as to die the shameful and dishonoring death of a rejected and cursed criminal at the cross. All this Christ did in obedience to God the Father's guidance.

What would have been the use of Christ's incarnation if he would have come not in the humble visible form of a weak baby in the manger, but in the full radiance of his divine glory which would have killed all men coming to see him (Ex 33:20; Jn 1:18)? In hiding his visible divine glory, he fulfilled the purpose of his incarnation to become the Savior and not destructor of mankind (Jn 12:47). Paul the author of Phil 2:7 makes it clear that he does not view the incarnated Christ as having lost his deity, but as revealing and housing it in the flesh (Col 2:9)⁶⁸:

For in him the whole fullness of deity dwells bodily.⁶⁹

Or as Paul puts the same mystery in the words of 1 Tm 3:16:

Great indeed, we confess, is the mystery of godliness:
He was manifested in the flesh,
vindicated by the Spirit,
seen by angels,
proclaimed among the nations,
believed on in the world,
taken up in glory.⁷⁰

68. Cf. also Col 1:19.

69. ὅτι ἐν αὐτῷ κατοικεῖ πᾶν τὸ πλήρωμα τῆς θεότητος σωματικῶς

70. καὶ ὁμολογουμένως μέγα ἐστὶν τὸ τῆς εὐσεβείας μυστήριον. Ὁς

4.3.4 What positive effects has the full deity of Christ?

The divine Christ is mediator and Savior.

By being God and man Jesus Christ could become the mediator between God and mankind and he could give himself as a valid ransom for all laying the foundation for the potential salvation of all, if they accept Christ as Savior, Lord and mediator in the gospel for all nations (1 Tm 2:5-7).⁷¹

The divine Christ makes us partakers of the divine nature.

By uniting the deity with humanity in his incarnation Christ made it possible that his people become partakers of the divine nature. Those who accept Jesus Christ by faith, become one spirit with him, the Lord (1 Cor 6:17). They have received great promises through which they "may become partakers of the divine nature" (2 Pt 1:4). They are treated and disciplined by God as his own sons that they "may share his holiness" (Heb 12:5-11, esp. 10; 1 Jn 3:1-2).

4.4 The Incarnation: Deity and Humanity United in the Person of Christ

4.4.1 Three heretical views of Christ's person.

These three are called Apollinarianism, Nestorianism, and Monophysitism and have been rejected by what was later called ortho-

ἐφανερώθη ἐν σαρκί, ἐδικαιώθη ἐν πνεύματι, ὤφθη ἀγγέλοις, ἐκηρύχθη ἐν ἔθνεσιν, ἐπιστεύθη ἐν κόσμῳ, ἀνελήμφθη ἐν δόξῃ.

71. Grudem, Systematic Theology. An Introduction to Biblical Doctrine, p. 553.

doxy.⁷²

Apollinarianism

About A.D. 361 Apollinaris became bishop of Laodicea⁷³ He taught that Jesus Christ had a human body (σάρξ sarx) and a human soul (ψυχή psychē), but not a human mind (νοῦς nous). According to Apollinaris Jesus had instead of the human mind the divine "Word" (ὁ λόγος hō lōgōs).⁷⁴ His view was rejected at the Council of Constantinople in A.D. 381.⁷⁵ If Jesus had not "a human mind or spirit" he would not have been "like his brothers in every respect" (Heb 2:17).⁷⁶

Nestorianism

Nestorius belonged theologically to the Antiochian school of thought and exegesis and was after 428 C.E. Bishop of Constantinople. He preached against the designation of Mary as "the mother of God" (Θεοτόκος theōtōkōs) which was widely in use at that time:

You ask...whether Mary may be called *mother of God*.
Has God then a mother? If so, heathenism itself is

72. In this section we follow *ibid.*, p. 554-556.

73. *ibid.*, p. 554. According to Heussi, *Kompendium der Kirchengeschichte*, §24w he died between 385 and 395 in old age.

74. For a more detailed presentation of the ideas of Apollinaris see Harnack, *Lehrbuch der Dogmengeschichte - Zweiter Band: Die Entwicklung des kirchlichen Dogmas I*, p. 324-333.

75. Grudem, *Systematic Theology. An Introduction to Biblical Doctrine*, p. 555.

76. ὅθεν ὄφειλεν κατὰ πάντα τοῖς ἀδελφοῖς ὁμοιωθῆναι, ἵνα ἐλειμῶν γένηται καὶ πιστὸς ἀρχιερεὺς τὰ πρὸς τὸν θεόν, εἰς τὸ ἰλάσκεσθαι τὰς ἁμαρτίας τοῦ λαοῦ•

excusable in assigning mothers to its gods...; but then Paul is a liar, for he said of the deity of Christ that it was without father, without mother, and without descent.⁷⁷ No, my dear sir, Mary did not bear God; ... the creature bore not the uncreated Creator, but the man who is the instrument of the Godhead; the Holy Ghost conceived not the Logos, but formed for him, out of the virgin, a temple which he might inhabit... The incarnate God did not die, but quickened him in whom he was made flesh This garment, which he used, I honor on account of the God which was covered therein and inseparable therefrom; ...*I separate the natures, but I unite the worship.* Consider what this must mean. He who was formed in the womb of Mary, was not himself God, but God assumed him (*assumsit*, i.e., clothed himself with humanity), and on account of Him who assumed, he who was assumed is also called God.⁷⁸

This preaching started a controversy in Constantinople and beyond. For many people the veneration of Mary was very important for their devotion and they felt that Nestorius had attacked something substantial. In the course of the controversy the bishop Cyril of Alexandria in Egypt became an influential opponent to the ideas of Nestorius and the word *thēōtōkōs* became the watchword of the orthodox party.⁷⁹ In this controversy Nestorius did not acknowledge

77. Heb 7:3 ἀπάτωρ, ἀμήτωρ, ἄνευ γενεαλογίας

78. Quoted according to Philip Schaff, *History of the Christian Church - Volume III Nicene and Post-Nicene Christianity A.D. 311-600* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Eerdmans, 1985), p. 717-718.

79. *ibid.*, pp. 718, 721.

a personal unity⁸⁰ of the two natures in Christ, but only "a moral unity, an intimate friendship or conjunction"⁸¹. The question was whether Christ would not fall apart into two persons according to the teaching of Nestorius. Perhaps this was not the case for Nestorius himself, but the teaching of "Nestorianism" is understood to imply two persons, a human and a divine who are not really united in Christ.⁸² Nestorius lost his office as bishop. His teachings were condemned at the Council of Ephesus in A.D. 431.⁸³

Monophysitism (Eutychianism)

Monophysitism asserts that Christ has only one nature.⁸⁴ This view is also called Eutychianism after Eutyches who was the leader of a monastery of 300 monks in Constantinople. After the incarnation Eutyches saw only one nature, not two in Christ: Only one nature should be worshiped, "the nature of God become flesh and man"⁸⁵ The problem with this view is that the human nature and divine nature in Christ do not remain fully human and fully divine. The

80. "Ἐνωσις καθ' ὑπόστασιν hēnōsis kath hypōstasin

81. Συναφεία synaphēia So ibid., p. 719. Cf. Harnack, *Lehrbuch der Dogmengeschichte - Zweiter Band: Die Entwicklung des kirchlichen Dogmas I*, p. 356.

82. See Grudem, *Systematic Theology. An Introduction to Biblical Doctrine*, p. 555.

83. William Young, *Rasulo ke naqshe qadam par*, Lahore, 1998, p. 250.

84. From Greek mōnōs "one" and physis "nature".

85. Μίαν φύσιν προσκυνεῖν, καὶ ταύτην Θεοῦ σαρκωθέντος καὶ ἐνανθρωπήσαντος. Eutychus also "declared before the synod at Constantinople: Ὁμολογῶ ἐκ δύο φύσεων γεγεννηθῆναι τὸν κύριον ἡμῶν πρὸ τῆς ἐνῆσεως· μετὰ δὲ τὴν ἔνωσην μίαν φύσιν ὁμολογῶ. Quotes according to Schaff, *History of the Christian Church - Volume III Nicene and Post-Nicene Christianity A.D. 311-600*, p. 736-737.

human nature of Christ seems absorbed into the divine nature with the result that both natures are changed and a third nature results.⁸⁶

4.4.2 **The orthodox answer to the controversy: The Chalcedonian Definition of A.D. 451.**

Chalcedon is a town in Bithynia not far away from Constantinople (modern Istanbul). In 451 it became the place of one of the most important Councils of Church history. The Symbol of Chalcedon (For the full text with the Greek in parallel see section A.3) tries to protect the mystery of the person of Christ against ideas which were seen as misunderstandings or false teachings.

We, then, following the holy Fathers, all with one consent, teach men to confess one and the same Son, our Lord Jesus Christ, the same perfect in Godhead and also perfect in manhood; truly God and truly man, of a reasonable (rational) soul and body; consubstantial (coessential) with the Father according to the Godhead, and consubstantial with us according to the Manhood; in all things like unto us, without sin; begotten before all ages of the Father according to the Godhead, and in these latter days, for us and for our salvation, born of the Virgin Mary, the Mother of God, according to the Manhood; one and the same Christ, Son, Lord, Only-begotten, to be acknowledged in two natures, *inconfusedly, unchangeably, indivisibly, inseparably*; the distinction of natures being by no means taken away by the union, but rather the property of

86. So with Grudem, Systematic Theology. An Introduction to Biblical Doctrine, p. 556.

each nature being preserved, and concurring in one Person and one Subsistence, not parted or divided into two persons, but one and the same Son, and only begotten, God the Word, the Lord Jesus Christ, as the prophets from the beginning (have declared) concerning him, and the Lord Jesus Christ himself has taught us, and the Creed of the holy Fathers has handed down to us.⁸⁷

The following words are against Apollinaris: "truly man, of a reasonable soul and body... consubstantial with us according to the Manhood; in all things like unto us".⁸⁸

The following words are against Nestorianism: "indivisibly, inseparably... concurring in one Person and one Subsistence, not parted or divided into two persons."⁸⁹

The following words are against Monophysitism: "to be acknowledged in two natures, inconfusedly, unchangeably ... the distinction of natures being by no means taken away by the union, but rather the property of each nature being preserved."⁹⁰

The strenght of the Chalcedonian definition lies in the use of negative terms which reject perceived erroneous teachings about

87. Philip Schaff, *Creeds of Christendom, with a History and Critical notes. Volume II. The Greek and Latin Creeds, with Translations*, vol. 2 (Christian Classics Ethereal Library, 1877), <http://www.ccel.org/ccel/schaff/creeds2.html>, p. 103-108. Emphasis Schaff.

88. ἄνθρωπον ἀληθῶς τὸν αὐτὸν, ἐκ ψυχῆς λογικῆς καὶ σώματος,...καὶ ὁμοούσιον τὸν αὐτὸν ἡμῖν κατὰ τὴν ἀνθρωπότητα, κατὰ πάντα ὅμοιον ἡμῖν

89. ἀδιαιρέτως, ἀχωρίστως...καὶ εἰς ἓν πρόσωπον καὶ μίαν ὑπόστασιν συντρεχούσης, οὐκ εἰς δύο πρόσωπα μεριζόμενον ἢ διαιρούμενον

90. ἐκ δύο φύσεων (ἐν δύο φύσεσιν), ἀσυγχύτως, ἀτρέπτως...οὐδαμοῦ τῆς τῶν φύσεων διαφορᾶς ἀνηρημένης διὰ τὴν ἕνωσιν, σωζομένης δὲ μᾶλλον τῆς ιδιότητος ἐκατέρας φύσεως

the two natures in Christ on the one hand (inconfusedly, unchangeably, indivisibly, inseparably) and on the other hand in leaving the inmost mystery of the relationship of the two natures unexplained.

4.4.3 **Understanding biblical texts with Christ's deity and humanity in one person in mind.**

It is interesting to look at biblical texts with the idea of the two natures of Christ in mind.⁹¹.

Christ's deeds according to his humanity and deity

According to his humanity Christ went up to heaven in his resurrected human body (Acts 1:9-11), but according to his divine nature he can be at the same time at all places (Mt 28:20). According to his human nature Christ passed through the different ages of man (Lk 3:23), but according to his deity he is from eternity and not subjected to time (Jn 1:1-2; 8:58). As man Jesus could be hungry, thirsty and tired (Lk 4:2; Jn 19:28; 4:6), as God he rules and sustains the world and its elements (Mt 8:26-27; Heb 1:3). As man he died (Lk 23:46), as God he raised himself up again (Jn 2:19). With regard to the will power of Jesus Grudem explains:

At this point it seems necessary to say that Jesus had two distinct wills, a human will and a divine will, and that the wills belong to the two distinct natures of Christ, not to the person. In fact, there was a position, called the monothelite view, which held that Jesus had only 'one will,' but that was certainly a minor-

91. With Grudem, *Systematic Theology. An Introduction to Biblical Doctrine*, p. 558-563.

ity view in the church, and it was rejected as heretical at a church council in Constantinople in A.D. 681... This distinction of two wills and two centers of consciousness helps us understand how Jesus could learn things and yet know all things.⁹²

With this in mind Mt 26:39-42 would be a good example for the human will of Jesus Christ coming to rest in the sovereign will of God learning and practicing perfect obedience even in suffering (Heb 5:8). An example for his limited human knowledge where Jesus has to learn would be Lk 2:52 and Mk 13:32 while other texts show his divine knowledge of all (Jn 2:25; 16:30; 21:17).

The person of Christ is the agent of the deeds of his humanity or his deity.

Christ is before Abraham was (Jn 8:58; deed of his deity). Christ died for our sins (1 Cor 15:3; deed of his humanity). Christ is leaving the world (Jn 16:28; deed of his humanity) and he is with his people every day and everywhere (Mt 28:20; deed of his deity).

Communication of attributes

Grudem aptly explains about the qualities that were given from one nature in Christ to the other:

- (1) From the divine nature to the human nature...
Jesus' human nature gained (a) a worthiness to be worshiped and (b) an inability to sin...

92. *ibid.*, p. 560-561.

(2) From the human nature to the divine nature
 Jesus' human nature gave him (a) an ability to experience suffering and death; (b) an ability to understand by experience what we are experiencing; and (c) an ability to be our substitute sacrifice, which Jesus as God alone could not have done.⁹³

The incarnation is the greatest miracle and mystery of the Bible and of salvation history. What is expressed in John 1:14 has been summarized with this short and helpful sentence:

Remaining what he was, he became what he was not.⁹⁴

4.5 The Offices of Jesus the Christ

Christ or Messiah means the anointed one⁹⁵ and could be used in the Old Testament for the high priest⁹⁶, kings⁹⁷ and prophets⁹⁸. We will understand it here as a designation for the promised prophethood, priest and Saviour Jesus who brings peace and salvation to the people of God and a time of uninterrupted blessing to all nations of the earth. In the New Testament Jesus Christ is called prophet (Mt 21:11; 16:14; Acts 3:22-23), king (Mt 2:2; 27:37; 28:18; Lk 1:31-33; Rv 19:16) and priest (Heb 2:17; 4:15).

93. Grudem, *Systematic Theology. An Introduction to Biblical Doctrine*, p. 563.

94. *ibid.*, p. 563.

95. מָשִׁיחַ

96. Lev 4:3.5.16; 6:22

97. 1 Sm 2:10.35; 12:3.5; 16:6; 24:6.10; 26:9.11.16.23; 2 Sm 23:1

98. 1 Chr 16:16-17.22 for Abraham, Isaac and Jacob; 1 Kgs 19:16

4.5.1 Jesus as King

In subsection 4.1.3 we have seen that Jesus as the son of David is king. The responsibility of a king is that he obeying the law of God (Dt 17:18-19) guides and rules God's people. A good parable of a king's responsibility is the work of a shepherd: protecting and guiding the sheep and fulfilling their necessities (Ps 23; Jn 10:1-30). The promised Christ is true and faithful in judgment and will implement God's law in all the world (Is 11:1-4; 42:1-4). Jesus is fulfilling his calling as a king (Jn 10:11; 18:37; 1 Tm 6:13; Mt 21:4-5; 28:18-20).

4.5.2 Jesus as Prophet

There is a prophecy of Moses in Deuteronomy (18:15) which is more than once understood⁹⁹ as a pointer to Jesus in the New Testament:

The Lord your God will raise up for you a prophet like me from among you, from your brothers - it is to him you shall listen.

The section in Dt 18:15-22 could be understood as a general prediction of coming prophets and this maybe the first intended meaning in this context. But if we combine it with the closure of the book Dt 34:10-12 the statement of a prophet "like Moses" becomes more special:

9 And Joshua the son of Nun was full of the spirit of wisdom, for Moses had laid his hands on him. So the people of Israel obeyed him and did as the Lord

99. See Acts 3:22; 7:37; Mt 17:5; Mk 9:4.7; Lk 9:35.

had commanded Moses. 10 And there has not arisen a prophet since in Israel like Moses, whom the Lord knew face to face, 11 none like him for all the signs and the wonders that the Lord sent him to do in the land of Egypt, to Pharaoh and to all his servants and to all his land, 12 and for all the mighty power and all the great deeds of terror that Moses did in the sight of all Israel.

Joshua had been appointed by God through Moses and he served the Lord and his people as a good spirit-gifted leader. But he was not like Moses. Moses was a prophet and a savior figure sent by God with signs and wonders. When Jesus came as a prophet with signs and wonders he was accepted by believers such as Stephen as the promised prophet like Moses who was also the ultimate Savior (Acts 7:34-39.51-53).

A prophet is a mediator. His responsibility is to receive the word from God and proclaim it to God's people. This prophecy is a gift from the Holy Spirit (Mic 3:8). His responsibility is also to hear the requests of the people of God and see their situation and bring these before God in intercession (1 Sm 12:23). Jesus is fulfilling his calling as a prophet (Mt 4:17.23; 7:24.28-29; Mk 1:35; Lk 5:16).

4.5.3 **Jesus as Priest**

The priest is also a mediator. Like a prophet he also proclaims the word of God to God's people, but he gets it from God's law given through Moses (Mal 2:7; Jer 18:18). Like the prophets the priest is also busy in intercession bringing the situation of God's people before God (Ex 28:7-30). In addition to this his special calling is to serve God in the tabernacle or in the temple and so to live closer

to the presence of God as any other Israelite. Through sacrifices he brings the people of God into God's presence. If they fall into sin and repent, he can make atonement for them through the blood of sacrifices to restore their relationship with God. Jesus is fulfilling his calling as a priest (Heb 7:14-28; 9:14-15; 9:22-28; 10:19-23; Rom 8:34; Rv 5:10).

4.6 The Atonement through Jesus Christ

One of the most important aspects of the work of Jesus Christ is his atoning for the sins of the whole world. We talk about this in the section about atonement in soteriology, especially atonement in the New Testament which of course is completely dependent on Christ's work (see subsection 5.2.2). We do it in that section because we want to understand the language of the New Testament for atonement on the background of the imagery and phrases of the Old Testament which is the preceding section there (see subsection 5.2.1).

4.7 The Historicity of Christ's Death and its Importance.

4.7.1 The Problem of Docetism

Ignatius opposing docetism.

One of the earliest writers against docetism in the time after the New Testament is Ignatius of Antioch. We can use his letters to understand and define this early form of docetism: In the heresy of docetism of his time it is denied that Jesus had a real and permanent

human body and consequently it is also denied that he really suffered and died in a real bodily sense at the cross. Docetism derives from the Greek word *dōkēin* δοκεῖν and means in this context "to seem", "to look like". It only looked as if Christ had a body or as if he died. He did not really have a body and did not really die. According to Schaff¹⁰⁰ Ignatius was bishop of Antioch "at the close of the first century and the beginning of the second" and was condemned to death in 107 C.E. or between 110 and 116, "transported to Rome, and thrown before wild beasts in the Colosseum". Some of his epistles are disputed, but "the seven shorter Greek Ep. are genuine".¹⁰¹ He wrote his seven epistles on his journey to his martyrdom in Rome:

Eusebius and Jerome put them in the following order:
 (1) To the Ephesians; (2) to the Magnesians; (3) to the Trallians; (4) to the Romans; (5) to the Philadelphians; (6) to the Smyrneans; (7) to Polycarp, bishop of Smyrna. The first four were composed in Smyrna; the other three later in Troas.¹⁰²

To the Trallians, X:

But if, as some that are without God, that is, the unbelieving, say, that He only seemed to suffer (they themselves only seeming to exist),¹⁰³ then why am I

100. Schaff, *History of the Christian Church - Volume II Ante-Nicene Christianity A.D. 100-325*, p. 47-48.

101. *ibid.*, p. 47.

102. *ibid.*, p. 656.

103. The Greek according to O. de Gebhardt, A. Harnack, and Th. Zahn, *Patrum Apostolicorum Opera - editio quinta minor* (Leipzig, 1906), p. 99 reads: λέγουσιν, τὸ δοκεῖν πεπονθέναι αὐτόν, αὐτοὶ ὄντες τὸ δοκεῖν

in bonds? Why do I long to be exposed to the wild beasts? Do I therefore die in vain? Am I not then guilty of falsehood against [the cross of] the Lord?¹⁰⁴

To the Smyrneans IV,2:

But if these things were done by our Lord only in appearance, then am I also only in appearance bound.¹⁰⁵

To the Smyrneans V,2:

For what does any one profit me, if he commends me, but blasphemes my Lord, not confessing that He was [truly] possessed of a body?¹⁰⁶ But he who does not acknowledge this, has in fact altogether denied Him, being enveloped in death.¹⁰⁷

Irenaus about the docetism of Basilides.

Irenaus (Against Heresies I, xxiv, 4) gives the following information of the teaching of Basilides who spread his ideas in Alexandria in Egypt. What is interesting for our subject is that according to him Simon of Cyrene was crucified and not Jesus.

104. Schaff, ANF01. The Apostolic Fathers with Justin Martyr and Irenaeus, p. 102.

105. *ibid.*, p. 124. The Greek according to Gebhardt, Harnack, and Zahn, *Patrum Apostolicorum Opera - editio quinta minor*, p. 108 reads: εἰ γὰρ τὸ δοκεῖν ταῦτα ἐπράχθη ὑπὸ τοῦ κυρίου ἡμῶν, καὶ γὰρ τὸ δοκεῖν δέδεμαι.

106. The Greek according to *ibid.*, p. 108 reads: τὸν δὲ κύριόν μου βλασφημεῖ, μὴ ὁμολογῶν αὐτὸν σαρκοφόρον;

107. Schaff, ANF01. The Apostolic Fathers with Justin Martyr and Irenaeus, p. 125.

4. Those angels who occupy the lowest heaven, that, namely, which is visible to us, formed all the things which are in the world, and made allotments among themselves of the earth and of those nations which are upon it. The chief of them is he who is thought to be the God of the Jews; and inasmuch as he desired to render the other nations subject to his own people, that is, the Jews, all the other princes resisted and opposed him. Wherefore all other nations were at enmity with his nation. But the father without birth and without name, perceiving that they would be destroyed, sent his own first-begotten Nous (he it is who is called Christ) to bestow deliverance on them that believe in him, from the power of those who made the world. He appeared, then, on earth as a man, to the nations of these powers, and wrought miracles. Wherefore he did not himself suffer death, but Simon, a certain man of Cyrene, being compelled, bore the cross in his stead; so that this latter being transfigured by him, that he might be thought to be Jesus, was crucified, through ignorance and error, while Jesus himself received the form of Simon, and, standing by, laughed at them. For since he was an incorporeal power, and the Nous (mind) of the unborn father, he transfigured himself as he pleased, and thus ascended to him who had sent him, deriding them, inasmuch as he could not be laid hold of, and was invisible to all.¹⁰⁸

The system of Basilides is antisemitic and gnostic. Salvation is

108. Schaff, ANF01. The Apostolic Fathers with Justin Martyr and Irenaeus, p. 500.

only for the soul, matter is inferior and there is the body which is made of matter. Therefore the idea that the Savior would become flesh is nonsensical and ridiculous. People who confess Jesus as the crucified Christ have not yet the real knowledge or insight (= gnosis in Greek).

Summary of the examples of both schools of docetism.

There were more gnostic schools teaching docetism. These two may suffice as examples. In the world views both of the docetism Ignatius was opposing and the docetism of Basilides reasons can be found why both would deny the real suffering of Jesus and his having a real human body. One main reason seems to be that matter is thought to be evil or inferior and the spirit world to be superior and not compatible with the world of matter. The Savior figure therefore can not really become flesh and can not really suffer in the flesh or body. Salvation can not be based on the shedding of the blood of an innocent person. As we find this gnostic denial of the suffering of Jesus of Nazareth in the body of flesh and blood in the second century we may ask what evidence was there in that time or is today which can be used to affirm that Jesus of Nazareth really died at the cross.

4.7.2 Evidence from Non-Christian Sources

Before we turn to "Christian" testimonies about the fact and the importance of the death of Jesus at the cross, let us look at non-Christian testimonies first. There are some Jewish and Roman testimonies.

Jewish Sources

The Talmud. F.F. Bruce says about the Jewish witness from the Talmud:¹⁰⁹

As the Mishnah is a law-code, and the Talmuds commentaries on this code, there is little occasion in these writings for references to Christianity, and what references there are are hostile. But, such as they are, these references do at least show that there was not the slightest doubt of the historical character of Jesus.

According to the earlier Rabbis whose opinions are recorded in these writings, Jesus of Naza-reth was a transgressor in Israel, who practiced magic, scorned the words of the wise, led the people astray, and said he had not come to destroy the law but to add to it. He was hanged on Passover Eve for heresy and misleading the people. His disciples, of whom five are named, healed the sick in his name.

It is clear that this is just such a portrayal of our Lord as we might expect from those elements in the Pharisaic party which were opposed to Him. Some of the names by which He is called bear witness directly or indirectly to the Gospel record. The appellation *Ha-Taluy* ('The Hanged One') obviously refers to the manner of His death; another name given to Him, Ben-Pantera ('Son of Pantera'), probably refers, not (as has sometimes been alleged) to a Roman soldier named Pantheras, but to the Christian belief in

109. F. F. Bruce, *The New Testament Documents - Are they reliable?* (Grand Rapids, Michigan, 1978), p. 101.

our Lord's virgin birth, Pantera being a corruption of the Greek parthenos ('virgin').¹¹⁰ This does not mean, of course, that all those who called Him by this name believed in His virgin birth.

Josephus Flavius Josephus was a first-century Jew who witnessed the Jewish war and became attached to the Flavian family because he had foretold the Roman commander Vespasian that he would become Caesar.¹¹⁰ Living in Rome he authored several books about the Jewish history. In his "Antiquities" (XX, 9, 1) Josephus relates the death of James, the brother of Jesus and gives so an indirect testimony to the existence of Jesus and to the fact that his brother James was important for the church in Jerusalem:

...but this younger Ananus, who, as we have told you already, took the high-priesthood, was a bold man in his temper, and very insolent; he was also of the sect of the Sadducees, who are very rigid in judging offenders, above all the rest of the Jews, as we have already observed; when, therefore, Ananus was of this disposition, he thought he had now a proper opportunity [to exercise his authority]. Festus was now dead, and Albinus was but upon the road; so he assembled the sanhedrim of judges, and brought before them the brother of Jesus, who was called Christ, whose name was James, and some others, [or, some of his companions]; and when he had formed an accusation against them as breakers of the law, he delivered them to be stoned.¹¹¹

110. *ibid.*, p. 103.

111. Josephus, *The Works of Flavius Josephus*, Volume IV: *Antiquities of*

There is another testimony about John the Baptist in Antiquities XVIII, 5, 2. The following testimony about Jesus has probably some Christian interpolations in them because it seems improbable that Josephus as a Pharisaic Jew could have written everything which is included in the following paragraph (Antiquities XVIII, 3,3):

Now, there was about this time Jesus, a wise man, if it be lawful to call him a man, for he was a doer of wonderful works - a teacher of such men as receive the truth with pleasure. He drew over to him both many of the Jews, and many of the Gentiles. He was [the] Christ. And when Pilate, at the suggestion of the principal men amongst us, had condemned him to the cross, those that loved him at the first did not forsake him, for he appeared to them alive again the third day; as the divine prophets had foretold these and ten thousand other wonderful things concerning him; and the tribe of Christians, so named from him, are not extinct at this day.¹¹²

Bruce after having discarded certain elements as Christian interpolations,¹¹³ retains the following elements of the Testimonium Flavianum:

We have therefore very good reason for believing that Josephus did make reference to Jesus, bearing

the Jews XVIII-XX / Flavius Josephus Against Apion / Concerning Hades / Appendix / Index, p. 139-140.

112. Josephus, The Works of Flavius Josephus, Volume IV: Antiquities of the Jews XVIII-XX / Flavius Josephus Against Apion / Concerning Hades / Appendix / Index, p. 11.

113. Bruce, The New Testament Documents - Are they reliable?, p. 108-112.

witness to (a) His date, (b) His reputation as a wonderworker, (c) His being the brother of James, (d) His crucifixion under Pilate at the information of the Jewish rulers, (e) His messianic claim, (f) His being the founder of 'the tribe of Christians', and probably (g) the belief in His rising from the dead.

Roman Sources

The evidence from the Roman historian Tacitus about the death of Jesus under Pontius Pilate is related to the rumor that Nero himself had ordered fire to be laid to the parts of Rom which he wanted to rebuild in new glory:¹¹⁴

But all human efforts, all the lavish gifts of the emperor, and the propitiations of the gods, did not banish the sinister belief that the conflagration was the result of an order. Consequently, to get rid of the report, Nero fastened the guilt and inflicted the most exquisite tortures on a class hated for their abominations, called Christians by the populace. Christus, from whom the name had its origin, suffered the extreme penalty during the reign of Tiberius at the hands of one of our procurators, Pontius Pilatus, and a most mischievous superstition, thus checked for the moment, again broke out not only in Judaea, the first source of the evil, but even in Rome, where all things hideous and shameful from every part of the world

114. Cornelius Tacitus, *The Annals*, trans. Alfred John Church and William Jackson Brodribb, The Internet Classics Archive, [accessed February 6, 2013] (109), <http://classics.mit.edu/Tacitus/annals.html>, Book XV, 44.

find their centre and become popular. Accordingly, an arrest was first made of all who pleaded guilty; then, upon their information, an immense multitude was convicted, not so much of the crime of firing the city, as of hatred against mankind. Mockery of every sort was added to their deaths. Covered with the skins of beasts, they were torn by dogs and perished, or were nailed to crosses, or were doomed to the flames and burnt, to serve as a nightly illumination, when daylight had expired. Nero offered his gardens for the spectacle, and was exhibiting a show in the circus, while he mingled with the people in the dress of a charioteer or stood aloft on a car. Hence, even for criminals who deserved extreme and exemplary punishment, there arose a feeling of compassion; for it was not, as it seemed, for the public good, but to glut one man's cruelty, that they were being destroyed.

Summary of the Non-Christian Sources

Neither the Roman witnesses nor the Jewish have any problem with the crucifixion of Jesus of Nazareth. The death of Jesus is attested in both areas. His death is no problem. His resurrection is neither acceptable for the Gentile mindset nor for Rabbinical Judaism.

4.7.3 Evidence from the New Testament

The Use of the Noun "Cross" in the New Testament

The cross in the Gospels.

The cross of the disciple in the Gospels. Even when the Gospels speak of the cross of the believers who follow Jesus, it is implied that they only carry their own cross by following Jesus who goes in front and carries his cross. So even here the cross of Christ is implied: Mt 10:38; Mt 16:24; Mark 8:34; Lk 9:23; 14:27.

The cross of Jesus Christ in the Gospels. Jesus is bearing his own cross to Golgotha in John 19:17. Carson sheds light on this:

This refers to the cross-member, the horizontal bar (Lat. patibulum). The condemned criminal bore it on his shoulders to the place of execution, where the upright beam of the gibbet was already fastened in the ground. The victim was then made to lie on his back on the ground, where his arms were stretched out and either tied or nailed to the patibulum. The cross-member was then hoisted up, along with the victim, and fastened to the vertical beam. The victim's feet were tied or nailed to the upright, to which was also sometimes attached a piece of wood that served as a kind of seat (Lat. sedecula) that partially supported the body's weight. This was designed to increase the agony, not relieve it.¹¹⁵

The cross of Jesus is carried by Simon of Cyrene in Mt 27:32, Mk 15:21, and Lk 23:26, probably because Jesus broke down under the burden after having been tortured and having lost blood.¹¹⁶ In Jn

115. D. A. Carson, *The Gospel According to John* (Leicester, UK: Apollos Inter-Varsity, 1991), 715 pp, p. 608.

116. See *ibid.*, p. 609.

19:19 the reason for the condemnation of Jesus is written and put on the cross:

Pilate also wrote an inscription and put it on the cross. It read, "Jesus of Nazareth, the King of the Jews."

People who pass by mock Jesus that he should come down from the cross (Mt 27:40; Mk 15:30), the Chief priests and scribes and elders did the same (Mt 27:42; Mk 15:32).

The mother of Jesus, Mary was standing with at least three other women and the writer of the fourth Gospel, John, close to the cross (Jn 19:25). Jesus was taken dead from the cross on the day of preparation before the great Sabbath and buried by Joseph of Arimathea and Nicodemus in a nearby and never used tomb (Jn 19:31-41).

The cross in Paul's letters The cross in Paul's letters is the cross of Jesus Christ. The cross of Christ is the power of God (1 Cor 1:17-18). Justification comes by the cross of Christ alone, not by circumcision of the flesh and keeping the whole law. This is the offense of the cross of Christ (Gal 5:11). Whoever preaches the Cross of Christ as the only way of salvation is persecuted and rejected. The cross of Christ is salvation from one's own flesh and from the world and the door to become a new creation in Christ. As believers we can and should boast in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ (6:12; 6:14).

Through the cross of Christ God has reconciled Israelites and Non-Israelites to God in one body, thereby killing the hostility (Eph 2:16).

Jesus Christ is God who became man and obeyed his heavenly Father always leading a holy life free from sin, loving the Father

even more than his own life, becoming obedient to die, to die at the cross. The climax of his love for God and the lost world is his self-humiliation, losing his life and all of his honor at the cross. In answer to this God has raised him from the dead and above all, so that all have to honor Jesus Christ, the crucified and risen Lord and God (Phil 2:8)

The enemies of the cross of Christ perish, those who love the cross of Christ and follow his example will be glorified (Phil 3:18).

The only way of reconciliation for everything is the blood of Christ (Col 1:20). God the Father reconciles the whole world to himself by the blood of Christ. This also means that whoever rejects the blood of Christ has no reconciliation (Col 1:23! Faith is necessary!).

The fullness of God dwelled in the crucified Christ forgiving all our sins and triumphing over all enemies (Col 2:14).

The cross in Hebrews The cross of Christ in Hebrews 12:2 is the way from shame to glory from death to eternal life and joy and so an example for us to follow Christ on the same way (Heb 12:1-2).

The Use of the Verb "Crucify" in the New Testament

In the Old Testament the verb is used once in Esther 7:9 in the LXX for the execution of Haman.¹¹⁷

117. Then Harbona, one of the eunuchs in attendance on the king, said, "Moreover, the gallows that Haman has prepared for Mordecai, whose word saved the king, is standing at Haman's house, fifty cubits high." εἶπεν δὲ Βουγαθαν εἰς τῶν εὐνούχων πρὸς τὸν βασιλέα Ἰδοὺ καὶ ξύλον ἡτοίμασεν Ἀμαν Μαρδοχαίῳ τῷ λαλήσαντι περὶ τοῦ βασιλέως, καὶ ὥρθωται ἐν τοῖς Ἀμαν ξύλον πηχῶν πεντήκοντα. εἶπεν δὲ ὁ βασιλεὺς Σταυρωθήτω ἐπ' αὐτοῦ. If not noted otherwise, the LXX text is given according to Rahlfs, *Septu-*

Used for the disciples of Christ Jesus predicts that some of his disciples (prophets, wise men, scholars of the Scriptures) will be crucified (Mt 23:34). Paul sees the cross for a believer as a means for a changed life (Gal 5:24) and as a radical change in the relationship of the believer towards the world (Gal 6:14). Paul asks "Was Paul crucified for you?" which has an emphatic "No!" as answer (1 Cor 1:13). Thus Paul underlines the uniqueness of Christ, the crucified.

Used for the two robbers. Crucify related to the two robbers on the left and on the right of Jesus (Mt 27:38; Mk 15:27; Lk 23:33; Jn 19:18;

Used for Christ. Jesus predicts his crucifixion (Mt 20:19;¹¹⁸ Mt 26:2).¹¹⁹

Pilate asks what he should do with Jesus. Pilate himself wanted to release Jesus (Lk 23:20). The people request his crucifixion (Mt 27:22; Mt 27:23; Mt 27:26; Mk 15:13; Mk 15:14; Mk 15:15; Lk 23:21; Lk 23:23; Jn 19:6; Jn 19:15; Jn 19:16). Pilate says to Jesus that he has the authority to release him or to crucify him (Jn 19:10).

Jesus is mocked and then crucified (Mt 27:31; Mt 27:35; Mk 15:20; Mk 15:24; Mk 15:25; Lk 23:33; Jn 19:18). Jesus was cruci-

aginta.

118. Mt 20:17-19: 17 And as Jesus was going up to Jerusalem, he took the twelve disciples aside, and on the way he said to them, 18 "See, we are going up to Jerusalem. And the Son of Man will be delivered over to the chief priests and scribes, and they will condemn him to death 19 and deliver him over to the Gentiles to be mocked and flogged and crucified, and he will be raised on the third day."

119. Mt 26:1-2: 1 When Jesus had finished all these sayings, he said to his disciples, 2 "You know that after two days the Passover is coming, and the Son of Man will be delivered up to be crucified."

fied near the city with his "guilt" written over his head in three languages (Jn 19:20). The four soldiers who crucified Jesus divided his garments into four parts and cast lots for his tunic (Jn 19:23). Near the place where Jesus was crucified was a garden tomb where Jesus was laid (Jn 19:41).

Jesus, the crucified, is used almost like a new title of Christ after his resurrection (Mt 28:5; Mk 16:6). The two angels tell the women that Jesus had foretold his crucifixion and resurrection on the third day (Lk 24:7). The two Emmaus disciples report the crucifixion of Jesus to Jesus (Lk 24:20).

The house of Israel is informed by Peter that they have crucified Jesus but God has made him both Lord and Christ in fulfillment of Ps 110:1 (Acts 2:36). Peter inform the Sanhedrin and all of Israel that "by the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, whom you crucified, whom God raised from the dead - by him this man is standing before you well (Acts 4:10).

Paul preaches "Christ crucified"¹²⁰ ... the power of God and the wisdom of God" (1 Cor 1:23). Paul preached Christ crucified in Corinthus (1 Cor 2:2).¹²¹

According to Paul the rulers of this age did not understand God's wisdom (1 Cor 2:8), otherwise the crucifixion would never have happened. Christ was "crucified in weakness, but lives by the power of God" (2 Cor 13:4).

Gal 3:1 gives us a good impression of Paul's way to evangelize:

O foolish Galatians! Who has bewitched you? It
was before your eyes that Jesus Christ was publicly

120. Χριστὸν ἐσταυρωμένον

121. 1 Cor 2:2: For I decided to know nothing among you except Jesus Christ and him crucified. οὐ γὰρ ἔκρινά τι εἰδέναι ἐν ὑμῖν εἰ μὴ Ἰησοῦν Χριστὸν καὶ τοῦτον ἐσταυρωμένον•

portrayed as crucified.

The two witnesses in Rv 11 will be killed in Jerusalem (Rv 11:8).

And their dead bodies will lie in the street of the great city that symbolically is called Sodom and Egypt, where their Lord was crucified.

The Use of the Verb "Crucify With" in the New Testament

This verb is used for the robbers who were crucified with Christ and mocked him as the others did (Mt 27:44; Mark 15:32). In John 19:32 their legs are broken by the soldiers.

Paul uses this same word in Romans 6:6 for believers who are crucified with Christ so that God frees them thus from the power of sin:

We know that our old self was crucified with him in order that the body of sin might be brought to nothing, so that we would no longer be enslaved to sin.¹²²

The idea in Gal 2:20 is basically the same.

The Use of "Tree" for Cross

In these verses the word "tree" or "wood"¹²³ is used for the cross: Acts 5:30;; 10:39-40;; 13:29-31;; Gal 3:13-14;; 1 Pet 2:24;. The

122. Rom 6:6: τοῦτο γινώσκοντες ὅτι ὁ παλαιὸς ἡμῶν ἄνθρωπος συνεσταυρώθη, ἵνα καταργηθῇ τὸ σῶμα τῆς ἁμαρτίας, τοῦ μηκέτι δουλεύειν ἡμᾶς τῇ ἁμαρτίᾳ. If not noted otherwise, the Greek New Testament quotations are from Michael W. Holmes, ed., *The Greek New Testament: SBL Edition*, [accessed May 19, 2011], 2010, <http://www.crosswire.org/sword/modules/ModInfo.jsp?modName=SBLGNT>.

123. τὸ ξύλον

Old Testament background to this use seems to be found in Dt 21:22-23 (cf. Gal 3:13):

22 And if a man has committed a crime punishable by death and he is put to death, and you hang him on a tree, 23 his body shall not remain all night on the tree, but you shall bury him the same day, for a hanged man is cursed by God.¹²⁴ You shall not defile your land that the LORD your God is giving you for an inheritance.

The relationship of the Synoptics and John

When it comes to the witness of the four Gospels, certain verses in John (Jn 13:1; 13:27; 18:28; 19:14.31.36.42) have led to the assumption that John on the one hand and the Synoptic Gospels on the other hand may have used different calendars. After weighing the evidence, Carson is of the opinion that the given verses of John do not necessarily imply different calendars for the four gospels.¹²⁵ One recent book in favor of different calendars has been written by Colin J. Humphreys.¹²⁶

The death of Jesus verified.

According to Mk 15:44 Pilatus checked from the Centurion whether Jesus had already died before granting the corpse of Jesus to Joseph

124. The Lxx has: οὐκ ἐπικοιμηθήσεται τὸ σῶμα αὐτοῦ ἐπὶ τοῦ ξύλου, ἀλλὰ ταφῇ θάψετε αὐτὸν ἐν τῇ ἡμέρᾳ ἐκείνῃ, ὅτι κεκατηραμένος ὑπὸ θεοῦ πᾶς κρεμάμενος ἐπὶ ξύλου·

125. Carson, *The Gospel According to John*, p. 55 and under the given verses in the commentary.

126. Colin J. Humphreys, *The Mystery of the last Supper: Reconstructing the final days of Jesus* (Cambridge UP, 2011).

of Arimathea. In John 19:33-35 the reader is informed that the legs of Jesus were not broken by the soldiers because Jesus was already dead. "But one of the soldiers pierced his side with a spear, and at once there came out blood and water" (John 19:34). The piercing of the side of Jesus with the coming out of blood and water already separated was proof that Jesus was really dead.

Evidence from the Lord's Supper

We have four accounts within the New Testament who testify to the fact that Jesus knew about his death beforehand and that he also knew about his death being the foundation of a new world order with forgiveness of sins in fulfillment of Jer 31:31ff. The fact that so many different churches and denominations from the beginning celebrated and still celebrate the Lord's supper is a strong pointer to the historicity of the death of Christ at the cross as a fact and the means of salvation.

| Mt 26:26-30 | Mk 14:22-26 | Lk 22:19f.18 | 1 Cor 11:23-25 |
|--------------------------|------------------------------|-----------------------|--|
| | | | 23b ... ὅτι ὁ κύριος Ἰησοῦς ἐν τῇ νυκτὶ ᾗ παρεδίδετο |
| 26 Ἐσθιόντων δὲ αὐτῶν | 22 Καὶ ἐσθιόντων αὐτῶν | 19 καὶ | |
| λαβὼν ὁ Ἰησοῦς ἄρτον | λαβὼν ἄρτον | λαβὼν ἄρτον | ἔλαβεν ἄρτον |
| ἔκλασεν καὶ δοῦς | ἔκλασεν καὶ ἔδωκεν | ἔκλασεν καὶ ἔδωκεν | ἔκλασεν |
| τοῖς μαθηταῖς | αὐτοῖς | αὐτοῖς | |
| εἶπεν• | καὶ εἶπεν• | λέγων• | καὶ εἶπεν• |

| | | | |
|--|--|---|--|
| Λάβετε φάγετε, τουτό ἐστιν τὸ σώμά μου. | Λάβετε, τουτό ἐστιν τὸ σώμά μου. | Τουτό ἐστιν τὸ σώμά μου τὸ ὑπὲρ ὑμῶν διδόμενον• τουτο ποιεῖτε εἰς τὴν ἐμὴν ἀνάμνησιν. | Τουτό μου ἐστιν τὸ σώμα τὸ ὑπὲρ ὑμῶν• τουτο ποιεῖτε εἰς τὴν ἐμὴν ἀνάμνησιν. |
| 27 καὶ λαβὼν ποτήριον | 23 καὶ λαβὼν ποτήριον | 20 καὶ τὸ ποτήριον ὡσαύτως μετὰ τὸ δειπνήσαι, | 25 ὡσαύτως καὶ τὸ ποτήριον μετὰ τὸ δειπνήσαι, |
| καὶ εὐχαριστήσας ἔδωκεν αὐτοῖς | εὐχαριστήσας ἔδωκεν αὐτοῖς, | | |
| λέγων• Πίετε ἕξ αὐτοῦ πάντες, | καὶ ἔπιον ἕξ αὐτοῦ πάντες. 24 καὶ εἶπεν αὐτοῖς• | λέγων• | λέγων• |
| 28 τουτο γάρ ἐστιν τὸ αἷμά μου τῆς διαθήκης | Τουτό ἐστιν τὸ αἷμά μου τῆς διαθήκης | Τουτο τὸ ποτήριον ἡ καινὴ διαθήκη ἐν τῷ αἵματί μου, | Τουτο τὸ ποτήριον ἡ καινὴ διαθήκη ἐστὶν ἐν τῷ ἐμῷ αἵματι• |
| τὸ περὶ πολλῶν ἐκχυννόμενον εἰς ἄφεσιν ἁμαρτιῶν• | τὸ ἐκχυννόμενον ὑπὲρ πολλῶν. | τὸ ὑπὲρ ὑμῶν ἐκχυννόμενον. | |

τοῦτο ποιεῖτε,
ὁσάκις ἐὰν
πίνητε, εἰς
τὴν ἐμὴν
ἀνάμνησιν.

| | | |
|----------------|----------------|----------------|
| 29 λέγω δὲ | ἀμὴν λέγω | 22:18 λέγω |
| ὑμῖν, | ὑμῖν | γὰρ ὑμῖν, |
| οὐ μὴ πῖω ἅπ | ὅτι οὐκέτι οὐ | οὐ μὴ πῖω ἅπ |
| ῥοτι | μὴ πῖω | τοῦ νῦν |
| ἐκ τούτου τοῦ | ἐκ τοῦ | ἀπὸ τοῦ |
| γενήματος τῆς | γενήματος τῆς | γενήματος τῆς |
| ἀμπέλου | ἀμπέλου | ἀμπέλου |
| ἕως τῆς | ἕως τῆς | ἕως οὗ |
| ἡμέρας | ἡμέρας | |
| ἐκείνης | ἐκείνης | |
| ὅταν αὐτὸ | ὅταν αὐτὸ | |
| πίνω μεθ | πίνω καινὸν | |
| ὑμῶν καινὸν | | |
| ἐν τῇ βασιλείᾳ | ἐν τῇ βασιλείᾳ | ἡ βασιλεία |
| τοῦ πατρὸς | τοῦ θεοῦ. | τοῦ θεοῦ ἔλθῃ. |
| μου. | | |
| 30 καὶ | 26 Καὶ | |
| ὑμνήσαντες | ὑμνήσαντες | |
| ἐξῆλθον εἰς τὸ | ἐξῆλθον εἰς τὸ | |
| ὄρος τῶν | ὄρος τῶν | |
| Ἑλαιῶν. | Ἑλαιῶν. | |

Evidence from Baptism.

According to Rom 6:3-6 the symbolic meaning of Christian Baptism is related to crucifixion, death, burial and resurrection of Jesus Christ:

3 Do you not know that all of us who have been baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into his death?

4 We were buried therefore with him by baptism into death, in order that, just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, we too might walk in newness of life. 5 For if we have been united with him in a death like his, we shall certainly be united with him in a resurrection like his. 6 We know that our old self was crucified with him in order that the body of sin might be brought to nothing, so that we would no longer be enslaved to sin.

Every baptism in the name of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit points to the spiritual union of the believer with Jesus Christ (1 Cor 6:17). Because the believer is united with Christ he also inherits his "history", his having being crucified, having died, having been buried, having risen from the dead and having been raised to the right hand of God in heaven (Eph 2:6). The Lord's supper and Christian baptism are thus both inseparably linked to the fact of the death of Jesus Christ at the cross. Both proclaim the death of the Lord (1 Cor 11:26).

Important Witnesses to the Text of the New Testament

As we have seen in the word studies, the words used for the cross and the crucifixion of Jesus are mainly in the four canonical gospels Matthew, Mark, Luke and John, in Acts, the letters of Paul, Hebrews and Revelation. How well attested are these books of the New Testament (and the others)?

With all the Greek manuscripts as evidence, the old versions of the New Testament in other languages and the Church Father quotations there is enormous proof that the cross was always there in the center of the Gospel. In some cases we have manuscripts which are only roughly about 100-150 years away (p⁴⁵ p⁴⁶ p⁴⁷

ⲡ⁶⁶ ⲡ⁷⁵) from the writing of the autographs¹²⁷ (ca. 47-95 C.E.). The papyrus ⲡ⁵² was perhaps copied less than 50 years after the original writing of the Gospel of John. Based on the manuscript evidence we can say that the cross and the resurrection of Christ were always the heart and center of the canonical gospels.

Summary of the Evidence from the New Testament

The evidence for the fact of the crucifixion and death of Jesus of Nazareth in the New Testament is straightforward. His mother and aunt and best friend stood so close to the cross that Jesus could talk to them. His 12 apostles were eyewitnesses to his sufferings at the cross and to his having risen from the dead. From his friends and from his enemies nobody challenged the fact of the death of Jesus Christ at the cross. His enemies questioned whether he really had risen from the dead.

There is no doubt about the words and the language used for "cross" and "to crucify". All four canonical gospels are structured in a way that the most important part of the narrative is the passion and the resurrection of Jesus Christ. The death of Christ at the cross and his resurrection are the foundation of eternal salvation and eternal life. In the Lord's supper and Christian baptism the death of Christ at the cross is presented as God's way of salvation already known and proclaimed by Jesus himself.

As far as we know the transmission history of the Greek New Testament going back very close to the time of the writing of the

127. Autographs are the very original books, the master copies. We only have copies going back to the first autograph.

autographs of the gospels¹²⁸ and the letters of Paul¹²⁹, the cross of Christ always belonged to the canonical gospels and to the preaching of Paul.

4.7.4 **Evidence from the Creeds of Christendom**

The evidence of the ancient creeds is quite impressive because the creeds were used as a summary of the Christian faith. They are given in the appendix in full (Appendix A) to give the context for the expressions in which we are interested with regard to our subject. The Symbol of Chalcedon has to be understood together with the Nicaeno-Constantinopolitanum. So the mentioning of the crucifixion of Jesus in the latter is also part of the faith proclaimed in Chalcedon.

The Symbol of Chalcedon wants to protect the true faith of salvation by protecting the mystery of the Person of Christ against some ideas which are rejected as heretical. The creeds were affirming faith in God the Father, in the Son and in the Holy Spirit from the beginning. These creeds reflect the beliefs of many churches and denominations over the centuries till today. When it comes to the crucifixion or the suffering of Jesus Christ in the body for our salvation, they all are adamant and agree.

128. The four canonical gospels were probably written somewhere between 50 and 95 C.E.

129. The letters of Paul were probably written somewhere between 47 and 64 C.E.

4.8 Christ's Resurrection and its Importance.

4.8.1 Words used

1. ἡ ἀνάστασις *anastasis* f. noun, 1. rising, 2. resurrection.¹³⁰
2. ἀνίστημι *anistēmi* 1. trans.: raise, 2. intrans.: rise.¹³¹
3. ἐγείρω *ēgēirō* 1. Active: a. trans.: wake (people who are asleep), raise (who are ill or dead); b. intrans.: only imperative: rise! (Mk 2:9; Eph 5:14). 2. Passive: a. to awake, to wake up; b. to be raised, rise.¹³²
4. ἔγερσις *ēgērsis* f. noun, resurrection (Mt 27:53).¹³³
5. συνεγείρω *synēgēirō* 1. Active: to raise up with (Eph 2:6), 2. Passive: to be raised with (Col 2:12; 3:1).¹³⁴
6. ζάω *zaō* to live.¹³⁵
7. ζωοποιέω *zōōpoiēō* to make alive, to keep alive.¹³⁶
8. συζωοποιέω *syzōōpoiēō* to make alive together with (Eph 2:5; Col 2:13).¹³⁷

130. See Bauer, Wörterbuch zum Neuen Testament, p.119-121.

131. See *ibid.*, p. 138-139.

132. See *ibid.*, p. 425-426.

133. See *ibid.*, p. 426.

134. See *ibid.*, p. 1556.

135. See *ibid.*, p. 663-666.

136. See *ibid.*, p. 676.

137. See *ibid.*, p. 1537.

4.8.2 The resurrection of Jesus Christ

Predicted in the Old Testament

Here we follow the testimony of the New Testament about the prophecies in the Old. In Ps 16:8-11 David "foresaw and spoke about the resurrection of the Christ, that he was not abandoned to Hades, nor did his flesh see corruption" (Acts 2:31; 2:24-28). Is 55:3 is quoted partially by Paul in Acts 13:34 as proof of the resurrection of Jesus. In Acts 26:22-23 we find a summary of Old Testament prophecies of Paul:

22 To this day I have had the help that comes from God, and so I stand here testifying both to small and great, saying nothing but what the prophets and Moses said would come to pass: 23 that the Christ must suffer and that, by being the first to rise from the dead, he would proclaim light both to our people and to the Gentiles.

According to 1 Cor 15:3-4 the death of Christ for our sins, his burial and his resurrection on the third day were predicted in the Old Testament Scriptures.

Predicted by Jesus himself.

Jesus taught the inner group of his disciples that he would be raised from the dead after his sufferings (Mt 17:9; Mk 9:9,10). That he would meet them in Galilee after being raised (Mt 26:32; Mk 14:28). An angel at the tomb repeated this promise of Jesus to meet them in Galilee (Mt 28:6-7; Mk 16:6-7).

In Mark there are predictions of Jesus that he would be raised after three days (Mk 8:31; 9:31; 10:34). Even the enemies of Jesus

knew this teaching and therefore requested the grave to be secured until the third day (Mt 27:63-64). In Matthew and Luke Jesus predicted that he would be raised on the third day (Mt 16:21; 17:23; 20:19; Lk 9:22; 18:33; cf. Acts 10:40). According to Jn 2:19-22 Jesus said: "Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up" (2:19). The risen Christ teaches that it is the prophetic teaching of the OT "that the Christ should suffer and on the third day rise from the dead" (Lk 24:46; cf. John in Jn 20:9 and Paul in Acts 17:3). The risen Christ rebukes the unbelief of the disciples "because they had not believed those who saw him after he had risen" (Mk 16:11.14).

Testified to in the New Testament.

In the New Testament there are different kinds of witnesses to the resurrection of Jesus Christ. The angels at the tomb quote the teaching of Jesus (Lk 24:6-7 and say that he is risen (Mt 28:6-7; Mk 16:6-7. Every apostle is an eye "witness to the resurrection of Jesus" (Acts 1:22; see also: appeared to Simon (Lk 24:34); seven of the disciples (Jn 21:14); all apostles 2:32; Peter and John 3:15; 4:10; the apostles 4:33; 10:41; Paul (Acts 17:18.32; Acts 25:19). Let us have a look at the resurrection of Jesus according to the four gospels.

| Agreements | | | | |
|-------------------------------|-----------|-----------|--------------------|-----------|
| | Mt | Mk | Lk | Jn |
| 1. Friday evening | 27:57 | 15:42 | 23:54 | 19:31.38 |
| 2. Joseph from Arimathea | 57 | 43 | 50-51 | 19:38 |
| 3. asked Pilate | 58 | 43 | 52 | 38 |
| 4. for the body of Jesus | 58 | 45 | 52 | 38 |
| 5. Joseph took the body | 59 | 46 | 53 | 38 |
| 6. and wrapped it in linen | 59 | 46 | 53 | 40 |
| 7. laid it in the tomb | 60 | 46 | 53 | 41 (20:6) |
| 8. rolled stone to entrance | 60 | 46 | (24:2) | (20:1) |
| 9. Mary Magdalene and ... | 61(27:56) | 47(15:40) | 55(24:10) | (20:1-2) |
| 10. the first day of the week | 28:1 | 16:1-2 | 24:1 | 20:1 |
| 11. Mary Magdalene and ... | 1 | 1 | 10 | 1-2 |
| 12. rolled back the stone | 2 | 4 | 2 | 1 |
| 13. his clothing white | 3 | 5 | 4 | 11 |
| 14. He is not here, has risen | 6 | 6 | 6 | - |
| 15. they left the tomb | 8 | 8 | 9 | 18 |
| 16. some doubted | 17 | 14 | 11 | 24-29 |
| 17. Jesus met them | 9 | 7.9-14 | 13-51 | 20:11ff |
| 18. Sit at my right hand | 22:44 | 19(12:36) | 51(21:27) | 17(16:7) |
| 19. baptism with the Spirit | 3:11 | 1:8 | 49 | 16:7 |
| Special witness | | | | |
| 1. The guard at the tomb | 28:4.11ff | | | |
| 2. Appearance to 2 disciples | | | 24:17-32 | |
| 3. Appearance to Peter | | | 24:34 | |
| 4. Appearance on a mountain | 28:16ff | | | |
| 5. Accompanying signs | | 16:17ff | | |
| 6. Appearance to Thomas | | | | 20:24ff |
| 7. Appearance by Tiberian Sea | | | | 21:1-23 |
| Differences | | | | |
| 1. Time | 28:1 | 16:1 | 24:1 | 20:1 |
| 2. Numbers of women | 1(2...) | 1(3...) | 10(3+...)1f(1+...) | |
| 3. Place of speaking | 5 | | | |
| 4. Where women saw angel | 2 | 3 | 3-4 | 1 |
| 5. Numbers of angels | 2 | 5 | 4 | (20,12) |
| 6. Women meeting Jesus | 9 | 8 10ff | 22ff | 18 |
| 7. In Jerusalem or in Galilee | 7f(26:32) | 7(14:28) | 24:49 | 20 + 21 |

The agreements taken together present a strong testimony to the resurrection which agrees even up to some minor details. The special witness in each gospel shows that there is even more information to be had with the greater number of witnesses than in any single gospel. The differences prove the different accounts to be independent witnesses which would be normal in a legal context of evaluating eye witness accounts of the same event.

Paul presents the case for the resurrection of Christ to the Corinthians (1 Cor 15:3-8) because some denied the idea of a resurrection:

3 For I delivered to you as of first importance what I also received: that Christ died for our sins in accordance with the Scriptures, 4 that he was buried, that he was raised on the third day in accordance with the Scriptures, 5 and that he appeared to Cephas, then to the twelve. 6 Then he appeared to more than five hundred brothers at one time, most of whom are still alive, though some have fallen asleep. 7 Then he appeared to James, then to all the apostles. 8 Last of all, as to one untimely born, he appeared also to me.

4.8.3 **What Jesus taught about the resurrection and his part in it.**

Jesus himself is the resurrection and the life (Jn 11:25-26):

25 Jesus said to her, "I am the resurrection and the life. Whoever believes in me, though he die, yet shall he live, 26 and everyone who lives and believes in me shall never die. Do you believe this?" ¹³⁸

138. Those who have been raised by Jesus or in his name were a living

He who believes in him, may die according to his body, but he will not die spiritually. Therefore in John 11 there is a double meaning to "resurrection": according to the body and according to the spirit. Jesus is the resurrection and the life in both meanings.¹³⁹

God the Son raises himself from the dead (Jn 2:19-22; 10:17-18). He has the power to and he raises the dead (Jn 5:25). Christ will raise his people on the last day and loose none of them (Jn 6:39).

4.8.4 What the apostles taught about the resurrection and Christ's part in it.

The agent of the resurrection

God the Father raised Jesus from the dead (Acts 2:32; 3:15; 5:30; 13:30,32,37; Gal 1:1; 1 Thes 1:10; 1 Pt 1:21). God raises the dead (2 Cor 1:9; Rom 4:17).

God the Son raised himself from the dead (Jn 2:19-22; 10:17-18). God the Son raises the dead (Jn 5:25; 1 Cor 15:22,45). In 2 Tm 2:8 Christ is "risen". In Greek this is written in passive voice without mentioning the agent.

proof that Jesus himself is "the resurrection and the life" Jn 11:25: Lazarus (Jn 11:43-44; 12:1,9,17); Jairus's Daughter (Mk 5:23,41-42; Lk 8:54-55; Mt 9:18,25); the widow's son at Nain (Lk 7:14); Dorcas (Acts 9:40-41); Eutychus (Acts 20:9,12). Compare the general statement to the disciples of John that at that time dead were being raised (Mt 11:5; Lk 7:22) and the command to raise dead in the name of Jesus (Mt 10:8). It is interesting to note that the miracle of the resurrection of someone has not more convincing power than the inspired word of God (Lk 16:31).

139. This might perhaps be helpful when it comes to understanding Rv 20:4-6.

The resurrection and Jesus Christ.

The risen Christ is the living one (Lk 24:5; Acts 1:3; Heb 7:8.25; 1 Pt 2:4.5; Rv 1:18; 2:8). The resurrection shows that Jesus is appointed to be the Son of God, the Christ (Rom 1:4), the judge of the whole world on judgment day (Acts 17:31), and the Lord of all: "For to this end Christ died and lived again, that he might be Lord both of the dead and of the living" (Rom 14:9).

The power of the resurrection of Jesus Christ is an enormous divine power (Eph 1:20; Phil 3:10; 2 Cor 13:4). The resurrection of Christ is linked to the biblical teaching of a general resurrection of life and of judgment. It is linked to the resurrection of believers (1 Cor 6:14; 2 Cor 13:4). The resurrection of Christ is also proof of the teaching of resurrection (Acts 4:2).

Jesus was "the first to rise from the dead" (Acts 26:22-23). The order of resurrection starts with "Christ the firstfruits" (1 Cor 15:23). He is "the firstborn from the dead" (Col 1:18). Jesus became the life giving spirit in his resurrection. He can make people alive, he can raise them from the dead (1 Cor 15:45; Jn 5:21). He can say (Rv 1:17-18):

Fear not, I am the first and the last, and the living one.
I died, and behold I am alive forevermore, and I have
the keys of Death and Hades.

Because Jesus was the first to rise from the dead who would never die again, it is important to note that the saints who were raised according to Mt 27:52-53, were raised "after his resurrection":

52 The tombs also were opened. And many bodies of
the saints who had fallen asleep were raised, 53 and
coming out of the tombs after his resurrection they

went into the holy city and appeared to many.¹⁴⁰

The resurrection of Jesus Christ is the source of life for Christians (Rom 6:4-5.9; 6:10.11.13; 7:4; 8:11.13; 2 Cor 5:15; Gal 2:19-20; 5:24-25; Phil 1:21; 1 Thes 5:10; 1 Pt 2:24; 3:18.21; 4:6; 1 Jn 4:9-10; Eph 5:14; Eph 2:5-6; Col 2:12). This spiritual life is accessible by the work of the Holy Spirit and the words of Jesus Christ (Jn 6:63; 2 Cor 3:6).

Peter explains very nicely how the resurrection Christ has opened the door for our spiritual life by God's loving intervention (1 Pt 1:3):

Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ!
According to his great mercy, he has caused us to be
born again to a living hope through the resurrection
of Jesus Christ from the dead.¹⁴¹

The resurrection of Jesus is also the source of justification for Christians. God raised Jesus Christ "for our justification" (Rom 4:24-25). The risen Christ "is at the right hand of God, who indeed is interceding for us" so that nobody could condemn us (Rom 8:34).

The resurrection of Jesus is at the heart of saving faith (Rom 10:9):

because, if you confess with your mouth that Jesus is
Lord and believe in your heart that God raised him
from the dead, you will be saved.

140. 52 καὶ τὰ μνημεῖα ἀνεψήθησαν καὶ πολλὰ σώματα τῶν κεκοιμημένων ἁγίων ἠγέρθησαν, 53 καὶ ἐξελθόντες ἐκ τῶν μνημείων μετὰ τὴν ἔγερσιν αὐτοῦ εἰσῆλθον εἰς τὴν ἁγίαν πόλιν καὶ ἐνεφανίσθησαν πολλοῖς.

141. Εὐλογητὸς ὁ θεὸς καὶ πατὴρ τοῦ κυρίου ἡμῶν Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ, ὁ κατὰ τὸ πολὺ αὐτοῦ ἔλεος ἀναγεννήσας ἡμᾶς εἰς ἐλπίδα ζῶσαν δι' ἀναστάσεως Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ ἐκ νεκρῶν

The resurrection of Jesus Christ first happened for Israel (Acts 3:26). It gives the pattern for the resurrection of the believers (1 Cor 15:42-49) and guarantees their resurrection (2 Cor 4:14).

Chapter 5

Soteriology - about Salvation

5.1 Salvation

5.1.1 In the Old Testament

Here we shall look at words from the root **יָשַׁע** yš‘ which convey the idea of salvation.

יְשׁוּעָה yəšû‘āh **Salvation**

Yəšû‘āh, noun f., means 1. welfare, prosperity, 2. deliverance, 3. salvation, 4. victory.¹

1. Brown, Driver, and Briggs, Hebrew and English Lexicon of the Old Testament, p. 447. According to the OSMHB text it is used in 76 verses in the OT.

God and *yəšû‘āh* (salvation). The Old Testament often speaks of God as one's salvation or source of salvation (Gn 49:18; Ex 15:2; Ps 69:30; 70:5; 74:12; 78:22; 80:2; 88:2; 91:16; 106:4; 118:14.15.21; 140:8; 149:4; Is 12:2; 33:2.6).

God is the rock of salvation (Dt 32:15; Ps 89:26). God's salvation is a reason for joyful praise (Ps 9:15; 13:6; Is 25:9). God's salvation is eternal, even if heavens and earth pass away (Is 51:6.8). The good news of salvation is the news of God's kingdom (Is 52:7).

The salvation granted by God is often the victory over the enemy in battle (Ex 14:13-14; 2 Chr 20:17; 1 Sm 2:1; 1 Sm 14:45). The idea in Hb 3:8 that God rode on his horses, on his chariots of salvation, means that he rode on his "victorious chariots", that his army swept his enemies away. People who pray, request God's salvation for Israel (Ps 14:7; 53:6; 44:5) or they praise God for giving Israel salvation (Ps 68:19). The New Jerusalem in Isaiah is a city of divine salvation (Is 26:1; 60:18; 62:1).

God's blessings on Israel can lead Gentile nations to recognize and find God's salvation (Ps 67:1-2; 98:2-3). God's salvation is good news for every day in every nation (1 Chr 16:23; Ps 96:2). The passage in Isaiah which leads up to Is 53 speaks of the fact that all nations see God's salvation through his revealed arm (Is 52:10; 53:1).

God's salvation is related to righteousness (Is 51:6.8; 56:1; 59:11; 59:17). The Old Testament ideas about divine salvation can very aptly be summarized with the slogan "Salvation belongs to the LORD" (Ps 3:8; Jon 2:10).

The anointed King and *yəšû‘āh* (salvation). God's salvation is also a very important gift for the present anointed king and is especially often spoken of with regard to David and his offspring (2 Sm

22:51; Ps 3:2; 18:50; 20:5-6; 21:1.5; 28:8; 35:3.9; 62:1.2.6).

God's salvation is also a key gift with regard to the coming anointed king, the Christ (2 Sm 22:51; Ps 22:1.21-22). The Christ is in person God's salvation to the ends of the earth and a covenant to the people of Israel (Is 49:6.8).

Believers and *yēšû‘āh* (salvation). In Job 13:16 the suffering Job still hoped for his "salvation" or "vindication" before God that he would be permitted to present his case before the Almighty. But in Job 30:15 he states that his "salvation - vindication" has passed away like a cloud, because he feels that God has rejected his case (Job 30:19-21).

In the Psalms we find the troubled believer waiting faithfully for God and his salvation (Ps 42:5.11; 43:5; 119:123; 119:166; 119:174). Believers know that they cannot save themselves, especially facing the challenge of death, but God will raise even the dead (Is 26:18-19).

A believer can speak of lifting up "the cup of salvation" (Ps 116:13). For the times of the coming Christ the promise to the faithful is: "With joy you will draw water from the wells of salvation" (Is 12:3). But salvation is far from the wicked, for they do not seek God's statutes (Ps 119:155).

יְשׁוּעָה *yēša‘* Salvation

yēša‘, noun m., means 1. safety, welfare, prosperity, 2. salvation, 3. victory.²

2. Brown, Driver, and Briggs, Hebrew and English Lexicon of the Old Testament, p. 447. According to the OSMHB text it is used in 35 verses in the OT.

God and yēša‘ (salvation). God's salvation is requested in prayer for Israel (Ps 79:9; 85:4.7.9). He is the rock of their salvation (Ps 95:1; cf. Is 17:10) and in person Zion's salvation (Is 62:11). He fights for his people to save them from the wicked (Hb 3:13).

Isaiah sees God's salvation also coming to the nations (Is 51:5). There are some special phrases talking of God's salvation given like a garment to the priests (Ps 132:16) or to the person speaking in Is 61:10.

God gives his salvation

1. to the poor and the needy (Ps 12:6),
2. to those who mourn (according to Eliphaz in Job 5:11),
3. to those of pure heart (Ps 24:5),
4. to those who are thankful towards God (Ps 50:23),
5. to Jerusalem's priests (Ps 132:16),
6. to the prophets Micah (Micah 7:7) and Habakkuk (Hb 3:18),
7. through Cyrus (Is 45:8).

The anointed King and yēša‘ (salvation). There is an extra emphasis on God's salvation given to the anointed king, especially David and his offspring. God's salvation is granted to David or in prayer requested for him (2 Sm 22:3.36.47; Ps 18:2.35.46; Ps 25:5; 27:1.9; 62:7.69.13). The repenting David requests: "Restore to me the joy of your salvation" (51:12).

When David puts the ark in a tent in Jerusalem, he asks in his song the "God of our salvation" for deliverance from the nations (1

Chr 16:35). In Ps 65:5 David calls the Lord "God of our salvation, the hope of all the ends of the earth and of the farthest seas".

According to the last words of David in 2 Sm 23:5 the eternal covenant of God with David is granting him all his desired salvation. God helps and saves the anointed king of the house of David (Ps 20:7; Hb 3:13).

תְּשׁוּ׳אָה təšû‘āh Salvation

Təšû‘āh, noun f., means 1. deliverance from oppression, victory, 2. salvation.³

God and təšû‘āh (salvation). The victory belongs to the Lord (Prv 21:31). God gives

1. victory over the Philistines to Samson Jgs 15:18,
2. deliverance to the people of Jabesh in Gilead through king Saul (1 Sm 11:9) which was a victory for all of Israel (1 Sm 11:13),
3. victory to Israel through David fighting Goliath and the Philistines (1 Sm 19:5),
4. victory through Eleazar the son of Dodo (2 Sm 23:10; 1 Chr 11:14) and through Shammah, the son of Agee the Hararite, the second and third of the three mighty men of David (2 Sm 23:12),

3. Brown, Driver, and Briggs, Hebrew and English Lexicon of the Old Testament, p. 448. According to the OSMHB text it is used in 32 verses in the OT.

5. victory to Syria through Naaman, commander of the army of the king of Syria (2 Kgs 5:1),
6. victory over Syria to Israel through Joash king of Israel (2 Kgs 13:17),
7. salvation to the righteous (Ps 37:39),
8. salvation through priests: "Let your priests, O LORD God, be clothed with salvation" (2 Chr 6:41).

God's salvation is related to his righteousness (Ps 71:15; Is 46:13) and to his word (Ps 119:41.81. In the last days God will prove himself to be the salvation of Israel (Jer 3:15-18.23). God's salvation for Israel will be eternal (Is 45:17). "It is good that one should wait quietly for the salvation of the Lord" (Lam 3:26).

David and *təšû'āh* (salvation). The Lord himself is David's salvation (Ps 38:22) and David speaks of God's salvation in the great congregation (Ps 40:10). David wishes that those who love God's salvation may say continually, "Great is the Lord!" (Ps 40:16). The God of David's salvation can deliver him from blood-guiltiness (Ps 51:16). God gives victory to kings, including David (Ps 144:10). Through his grieving over Absalom David turned the victory of that day into mourning for all the people (2 Sm 19:3).

Miscellaneous uses of *təšû'āh* (salvation). The word is used for saving help in battle while one helps the other, in 1 Chr 19:12 Abishai has to help his brother Joab. Good weaponry and horses alone are not enough for victory (Ps 33:16-17). The salvation of man is vain (Ps 60:11; Ps 108:12; Ps 146:3). "In abundance of counselors there is victory" (Prv 24:6; 11:14).

יָשַׁע yš‘ to save

The different verb forms of the root yš‘ mean in Niph‘al 1. be liberated, be saved, 2. be saved in battle, be victorious and in Hiph‘il 1. deliver, save, 2. save from moral troubles, 3. give victory.⁴ In most cases these verbs are used for God saving or delivering through direct intervention or through chosen people.

God and yš‘ to save.

God helps himself, saves himself. In some texts God has to help himself with his right hand or holy arm (Ps 98:1; Is 59:16; 63:5).

God saves Israel and Judah. God is Israel's Savior (Is 60:16; 43:3.15.17). There is no other savior (Is 43:11.12; Hos 13:4).

God saved Israel from the hand of the Egyptians (Ex 14:30; Is 63:8.9). He saves Israel from their enemies (Dt 20:4; 33:29; Is 33:22; Ps 106:8.10.21), also through the use of the holy trumpets (Nm 10:8-9). He saved them from all their calamities and their distresses (1 Sm 10:19).

God saves the house of Judah (Hos 1:7) and is willing to save the remnant of Judah from the king of Babylon (Jer 42:11) and from the lands of their captivity (Jer 46:27; Zec 8:7).

God has not lost his power to save Israel, but their sins have blocked their access to God (Is 59:1-2; Jer 8:19-20; Jer 14:8.9). Quite on the contrary God is still mighty to save (Is 63:1), but to

4. Brown, Driver, and Briggs, Hebrew and English Lexicon of the Old Testament, p. 446-7. According to the OSMHB text the verb forms are found in 198 verses in the OT.

receive God's salvation the Israelites have to return to God and rest trusting in him (Is 30:15).

There are special promises of God to save Israel and Judah at the time of the end (Is 25:9; Is 35:4; Jer 30:7.10.11; Jer 31:7; Zep 3:17.19; Zec 9:16; 10:6). This salvation will be worked through the coming Christ (Jer 23:6; Jer 33:16; Ez 34:22-24; Ez 37:23-24; Zec 9:9; 12:7). God will deliver Israel from all their uncleannesses by sprinkling clean water on them and giving them a new heart and a new spirit (Ez 36:25-29) which seems to be the Old Testament equivalent of the teaching of Jesus about the new birth (John 3:3.5.10). God saves Israel to be a blessing amongst the nations (Zec 8:13).

God saves through judges. More than once God saved his people from the enemies through his chosen judges (Jgs 2:16.18; 3:9.15.31; 6:14.15; 6:36.37; 7:2.7; 8:22; 10:1; 13:5; 1 Sm 7:8; Neh 9:27).

Because Israel left the Lord and followed the idols, God threatens not to save them any longer (Jgs 10:12.13.14). The Israelites wanted to compel God to help them against the Philistines by using the ark of the covenant in a magical way, but this failed and the ark got lost (1 Sm 4:3).

God saves through kings. The responsibility of the righteous king is to save the poor in righteousness (Ps 72:4.13).

Through king Saul God wanted to save Israel from the hand of the Philistines (1 Sm 9:16), but evil people despised Saul's ability to save (1 Sm 10:27). While Jabesh waited for a savior, God stirred Saul to save them from the Ammonites (1 Sm 11:3-7). God can save by many or by few, as is demonstrated through the faith of

Jonathan (1 Sm 14:6.23.39).

Through the faithful action of David in slaying Goliath it becomes clear "that the LORD saves not with sword and spear. For the battle is the LORD's, and he will give you into our hand" (1 Sm 17:47). Through David God saved Keilah (1 Sm 23:2.5) and Israel (2 Sm 3:18) from the Philistines. "And the LORD gave victory to David wherever he went" (2 Sm 8:6.14; 1 Chr 18:6.13). God helps David, but not his enemies (2 Sm 22:3.4.28.42; Ps 18:3.27.41).

When David was in danger to help himself by his own hand against Nabal, the Lord averted that danger through Abigail (1 Sm 25:26.31.33). God helped also through heroes of David 1 Chr 11:14.

Later God saved Israel through Jehoahaz the son of Jehu (2 Kgs 13:4-5) and by the hand of Jeroboam the son of Joash (2 Kgs 14:27).

According to Ob 1:21 "Saviors shall go up to Mount Zion to rule Mount Esau, and the kingdom shall be the Lord's." These eschatological saviors are neither called judges nor kings, but they represent the kingdom of the Lord.

God saves or helps ...

1. Zion or Jerusalem (Ps 69:35; Is 49:25.26). Hezekiah prays for the salvation of Jerusalem from Assyria so that all the world may know that the Lord is alone is the true God (Is 37:20; 2 Kgs 19:19). God answers this prayer (2 Chr 32:22) and saves because of himself and of David (Is 37:35; 2 Kgs 19:34). But Jerusalem has also to be cleansed from evil to get saved (Jer 4:14).
2. his anointed king (Ps 20:7.9), Hezekiah (Is 38:20),

3. the prophet Jeremiah (Jer 15:20) who knows that he will be saved if God saves him (Jer 17:14),
4. the righteous sufferer of Ps 22:21,
5. the poor (Ps 34:7; Job 5:15; 22:29),
6. the low (Ps 116:6),
7. the upright in heart (Ps 7:11),
8. those who walk in integrity (Prv 28:18),
9. the righteous (Ps 37:40),
10. the crushed in spirit (Ps 34:18),
11. sinners who repent and cry out to God for help from prison with forced labor and from deadly diseases (Ps 107:13,19),
12. those who fear him and cry out to him (Ps 145:19),
13. those who wait for the Lord (Prv 20:22),
14. all the humble of the earth (Ps 76:9),
15. those who seek refuge from their adversaries at God's right hand (Ps 17:7),
16. man and beast (Ps 36:6).

Prayers to God for salvation. People pray for Israel's salvation (1 Chr 16:35; Ps 28:9; 106:47; 118:25). God is asked to save his beloved ones (Ps 108:6). Habakkuk urges the LORD to save his people (Hb 1:2). In answer to the prayers of king Jehoshaphat and of Judah God granted great salvation (2 Chr 20:9.14-15). In a prayer of confession the people ask, "Behold, you were angry, and we sinned; in our sins we have been a long time, and shall we be saved? (Is 64:5). In Ps 80:3.7.18 we find the beautiful picture that we can get saved when God's face is shining kindly on us.

There are many individual prayers to God for personal salvation from enemies, often found in a psalm of David (Ps 3:8; 6:5; 7:2; 12:1; 31:2.16; 54:1; 55:16; 57:3; 59:2; 60:5; 69:1; 71:2.3; 86:2.16; 109:26.31; 138:7).

In Ps 119 the prayer is to save me while I keep and that I keep your commandments (Ps 119:94.117.146).

Gentile nations and to save (yš'). Hezekiah prays for Jerusalem's salvation from Assyria so that all the world may know that the Lord is alone is the true God (Is 37:20; 2 Kgs 19:19). There is a similar idea in Is 49:26 that God's salvation for Zion (49:14) will open the eyes of all of mankind "that I am the LORD your Savior". The Lord will save Egypt through a special sent savior (Is 19:20). God is the only Savior even of the Gentiles (Is 45:20.21.22).

Things that do not save (yš') **in themselves.** One can not get saved

1. by Idols which are useless (Is 46:7; Jer 2:27.28; 11:12; Hos 13:4),
2. by counselors practicing occultism (Is 47:13.15),

3. by mere human kings and rulers Hos 13:10,
4. by another nation (Hos 14:3; Lam 4:17),
5. by good weapons or a strong army (Hos 1:7). Salvation or victory does not lie in military power or great weapons, but in God's hand (1 Sm 17:47; Ps 33:16; 44:3.6.7).

Some miscellaneous uses of to save (yš'). Moses helps against the other shepherds to water the flock of the daughters of Reuel (Ex 2:17). Dt 22:27 speaks of saving an attacked virgin from rape. In Jo 10:6 Joshua is called upon to save the Gibeonites. In Jo 22:22 the eastern tribes speak, "If it was in rebellion or in breach of faith against the LORD, do not spare us today." A part of the curses in Deuteronomy imply that nobody will be able to save or help (Dt 28:29.31). Joash, the father of Gideon, asks, "Do you want to save Baal?" (Jgs 6:31).

One use of the verbs is also to save or help each other in war (2 Sm 10:11; 2 Sm 10:19; 1 Chr 19:12.19.2 Kgs 16:7). Jephthah accuses Ephraim that they did not help him against the Ammonites (Jgs 12:2.3). Another use is to ask help from the king as judge (2 Sm 14:4; 2 Kgs 6:26.27).

Job complains that he receives no help in his weakness (Job 26:2). In Job 40:14 God rebukes Job that he has not really enough power to save himself through his own right hand. Job in his weakness can not really condemn God as wrong.

5.1.2 In the New Testament

The use of σώζω "to save, to heal".

The verb σώζω *sō(i)zō* means "to keep safe, to protect, to save, to heal".⁵

God and "to save". Because God "desires all people to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth" (1 Tm 2:4) the believers should pray for all (1 Tm 2:1-3). "Everyone who calls upon the name of the Lord shall be saved" (Acts 2:21) where the word "Lord" is the name of God in this quotation from Joel 2:32 and to call upon him means to call upon him in prayer. In Acts 2 "Lord" is also a title of Jesus Christ (2:34-36) and Paul clearly implies that it is the prayer to Jesus as Lord which saves (Rom 10:9-13).

Jesus predicts that God would cut short the days of the great tribulation of Jerusalem and Israel for the sake of the elect, otherwise "no human being would be saved" (Mt 24:22; Mk 13:20). According to Paul God "saved us and called us to a holy calling, not because of our works but because of his own purpose and grace, which he gave us in Christ Jesus before the ages began" (2 Tm 1:9). In Tit 3:5 God saved us "not because of works done by us in righteousness, but according to his own mercy, by the washing of regeneration and renewal of the Holy Spirit". Paul is confident that the Lord will rescue him from every evil deed and bring him safely into his heavenly kingdom (2 Tm 4:18).⁶

James warns the believers not to judge others because there "is only one lawgiver and judge, he who is able to save and to destroy",

5. Bauer, Wörterbuch zum Neuen Testament, p. 1579-80.

6. ῥύσεται με ὁ κύριος ἀπὸ παντὸς ἔργου πονηροῦ καὶ σώσει εἰς τὴν βασιλείαν αὐτοῦ τὴν ἐπουράνιον•

namely God (Jas 4:12).

Jesus Christ and "to save". Jesus received his very name because he was destined to "save his people from their sins" (Mt 1:21). He came into the world to seek and save sinners (Lk 19:10; 1 Tm 1:15), and often those who seemed to be the greatest sinners, understood that best and were saved by their faith in him (Lk 7:50; 15:1-2). Jesus is the door through which the elect of God, his sheep, enter and get saved (Jn 10:9). In Jn 5:34 Jesus teaches in a way that the hearers may get saved.

To get saved it is necessary to have faith in the Lord Jesus (Acts 16:30.31). Because he lives forever he can save forever as a high priest interceding for his own (Hebrews 7:25). He saves us from God's wrath (Rom 5:9.10). God the Father did not send him "into the world to condemn the world, but in order that the world might be saved through him" (Jn 3:17). Therefore even if anyone hears his words and does not keep them, he does not judge them; for he did not come to judge the world but to save the world (Jn 12:47). The confession of the apostle Peter before the Jewish rulers and elders and scribes gathered in Jerusalem has become a famous inspiration for world missions (Acts 4:12):

And there is salvation in no one else, for there is no other name under heaven given among men by which we must be saved.

The link between the healing of the lame beggar at the Beautiful Gate of the temple in the name of Jesus (Acts 3:6-8.16 and this proclamation of worldwide salvation in the same name before the Jewish court is the fact that the Greek word *sōtēria* can mean both "salvation" and "healing" (= salvation from illness) and the Greek word *sō(i)zō* can mean both "to save" and "to heal".

Therefore the healing miracles of Jesus Christ are also demonstrations of this power to save forever (Mt 9:21-22; Mk 5:28.34; Lk 8:48; Mk 5:23; Mk 10:52). This also includes the being healed from demon possession (Lk 8:36).

His saving people from danger of death in storm (Mt 8:25; Mt 14:30) and his making people alive (Lk 8:50) presents Jesus as a man with the power of God.

Christ did not save himself and he was not saved from death (Mt 27:40.42.49; Mk 15:30.31; Lk 23:35.37.39; Jn 12:27). But after his death he was saved from death by his resurrection in answer to his own prayers and his godliness before his death (Hebrews 5:7-10).

If anybody is saved, he is saved by God's grace or Christ's grace alone, not by his own effort or good works (Acts 15:11; Eph 2:5.8; 2 Tm 1:9).

Believers and "to save". There are servants of God who are committed to their calling so that others get saved (1 Cor 9:22; 10:33; 2 Cor 2:15; 1 Tm 4:16); Jas 5:20; Jude 1:22.23).

Jude warns in his letter that some of those who were saved from the slavery in Egypt were later destroyed in the desert because they did not trust God (Jude 1:5).

God can discipline believers even to the point of letting them die, but still his intention is that they may be saved in the end (1 Cor 3:15; 1 Cor 5:5). Peter writes to persecuted Christians in his first letter (1 Pt 4:17-18):

17 For it is time for judgment to begin at the household of God; and if it begins with us, what will be the outcome for those who do not obey the gospel of God?

18 And "If the righteous is scarcely saved, what will become of the ungodly and the sinner?"

Therefore what is needed, is faith in Jesus Christ and perseverance.

Persevering faith and "to save". When Jesus healed somebody, he could point to their faith as having healed them⁷ (the woman suffering from a discharge of blood: Mt 9:22; Mk 5:34; Lk 8:48; blind Bartimaeus: Mk 10:52; Lk 18:42; the Samaritan amongst the 10 healed lepers (Lk 17:19). People with faith often received the desired healing (Mk 6:56; Acts 14:9).

To gain eternal salvation persevering faith in Jesus Christ to the end is crucial (Mt 10:22; 24:13; Mk 13:13). The disciple may look like destroying his life by clinging to Jesus, but in the end he will save his soul (Mt 16:25; Mk 8:35; Lk 9:24). The sinful woman of Luke 7:36-50 could go in peace, as Jesus told her, because her faith had saved her (Lk 7:50).

Faith leads to salvation, and lack of faith to condemnation (Mk 16:16). Saving faith is described by Paul as follows (Rom 10:9.13):

9 Because, if you confess with your mouth that Jesus is Lord and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved. 10 For with the heart one believes and is justified, and with the mouth one confesses and is saved.

According to Jas 2:14 it needs a living faith to get saved which proves itself alive by works. Saving faith in Christ has its origin in the preached word of God (Acts 11:14; 16:30.31; 1 Cor 1:18.21; 15:2; Jas 1:21).

7. ἡ πίστις σου σέσωκέν σε.

Water baptism together with faith has a saving effect (Mk 16:16; 1 Pt 3:21). In hope we are already saved, but it is a not yet seen or fulfilled hope, it is a hope in the future redemption of our bodies (Rom 8:23-25).

People can be saved ...

1. from illness Mt 9:21; Mk 6:56; Mk 10:52; Jn 11:12; Acts 4:9; Acts 14:9; Jas 5:15,
2. from deadly illness or from death Mk 5:23; Lk 8:50,
3. from drowning in water in a storm Mt 8:25; Mt 14:30; Acts 27:20.31,
4. from a crooked generation Acts 2:40,
5. from sins and eternal condemnation Mt 1:21; Lk 7:50; Lk 19:10; Jas 5:15,
6. even on a Sabbath Mk 3:4; Lk 6:9.
7. into the church Acts 2:47.

Israel and "to save" Israel as a nation has rejected the gospel and resisted even its being preached to the Gentiles (1 Thes 2:16). Paul loved his own nation and wanted them to be saved. One way to achieve this was for him that he preached to the Gentiles for the salvation of the Gentiles so that Israelites seeing this would become jealous and get saved as well (Rom 11:13-14). One great joy for Paul was his hope of the future salvation of Israel's remnant by the returning Christ after "the fullness of the Gentiles has come in" (Rom 11:25-26; cf. 9:27).

The family and "to be saved". In a mixed family situation the believing part may perhaps not really know whether he will be able "to save" the partner who is not yet believing in Jesus Christ (1 Cor 7:16). But it is also true that if the gospel enters a household and meets with faith, the whole family can be saved causing great joy (Acts 11:14; 16:30.31). For some ideas for the understanding of Paul's meaning in 1 Tm 2:15 see section 7.7.2.

Difficulties to get saved.

1. Being rich (Mt 19:25; Mk 10:26; Lk 18:26),
2. not understanding the word of God (Lk 8:12),
3. lack of love for the truth (2 Thes 2:10),
4. lack of striving to enter through the narrow door (Lk 13:23-24),
5. disturbance because of wrong teaching (Acts 15:1).

The use of σωτήρ "savior".

The meaning of σωτήρ *sōtēr* is "savior, keeper, protector, liberator".⁸

God as Savior. God is Savior of his people (Lk 1:47; 1 Tm 1:1; Jude 1:25). Christian slaves should make the teaching of God our Savior look beautiful by their way of serving (Tit 2:10).

God is also savior of all men: According to 1 Tm 2:3-4 he wants to save all people and according to 1 Tm 4:10 he is the "the Savior

8. See Bauer, Wörterbuch zum Neuen Testament, p. 1584.

of all people, especially of those who believe". In his "Institutes" Calvin understands the "all people" of 1 Tm 2:3-4 in the sense of "all kinds of people" including even some rulers:

He had commanded Timothy that prayers should be regularly offered up in the church for kings and princes; but as it seemed somewhat absurd that prayer should be offered up for a class of men who were almost hopeless (all of them being not only aliens from the body of Christ, but doing their utmost to overthrow his kingdom), he adds, that it was acceptable to God, who will have all men to be saved. By this he assuredly means nothing more than that the way of salvation was not shut against any order of men; that, on the contrary, he had manifested his mercy in such a way, that he would have none debarred from it... But since it clearly appears that he is there speaking not of individuals, but of orders of men, let us have done with a longer discussion.⁹

In his commentary on the passage Calvin strongly rejects that this passage is against his understanding of a double predestination of some to get saved and others to perish:

Hence we see the childish folly of those who represent this passage to be opposed to predestination. "If God" say they, "wishes all men indiscriminately to be saved, it is false that some are predestined by

9. John Calvin, *The Institutes of the Christian Religion*, trans. Henry Beveridge (Grand Rapids, MI: Christian Classics Ethereal Library, 2002), <http://www.ccel.org/ccel/calvin/institutes.html>, p. 695.

his eternal purpose to salvation, and others to perdition." They might have had some ground for saying this, if Paul were speaking here about individual men; although even then we should not have wanted the means of replying to their argument; for, although the will of God ought not to be judged from his secret decrees, when he reveals them to us by outward signs, yet it does not therefore follow that he has not determined with himself what he intends to do as to every individual man.¹⁰

But it is not possible to understand 1 Tm 4:10 in the same way Calvin understands 1 Tm 2:4 because of the contrast there between "of all people" on the one hand and "especially of those who believe" on the other. The "all people" here clearly means "all of mankind". Calvin consequently has to weaken the word Savior in his understanding of 1 Tm 4:10 that it does not relate to eternal salvation but that it is "here a general term, and denotes one who defends and preserves. He means that the kindness of God extends to all men."¹¹

We do not agree with Calvin here. According to our understanding these two sections in the same letter clearly point to a potential universalism of salvation according to the will of God or according to his being potentially the Savior of all. But it is still necessary to pray for all (1 Tm 2:1-3) and to preach the gospel to all (1 Tm 2:6-7). God as Savior gives his word to his servants so that salvation is preached (Tit 1:3). And added to this preaching the

10. See John Calvin, *Commentary on Timothy, Titus, Philemon* (Grand Rapids, MI: Christian Classics Ethereal Library, 1999), <http://www.ccel.org/ccel/calvin/calcom43.html>, p. 32

11. See *ibid.*, p. 72.

response of faith is necessary, the "coming to the knowledge of the truth" so that someone can be saved.

Christ as Savior. Christ is "Lord and Savior" or "God and Savior" (Lk 2:11; 2 Pt 1:1; 2 Pt 1:11; 2:20; 3:2; 3:18). Christ is especially the Savior of Israel (Acts 5:31; 13:23) but also of the whole world (Jn 4:42; 1 Jn 4:14). He is also the Savior of the church (Eph 5:23; Phil 3:20; Tit 1:4; 2:13). When Christ appeared "the goodness and loving kindness of God our Savior appeared" (Tit 3:4).

Jesus Christ is Savior from death and bringer of eternal life, being himself God (2 Tm 1:10). God the Father poured out the Holy Spirit on us richly through Jesus Christ our Savior (Tit 3:6).

The use of σωτηρία "salvation".

The meaning of σωτηρία *sōtēria* is "salvation, protection, keeping safe".¹²

God and salvation. Salvation is God's (Rv 7:10; 12:10; Rv 19:1). By God's power born again people "are being guarded through faith for a salvation ready to be revealed in the last time" (1 Pt 1:5). We should "count the patience of our Lord as salvation" (2 Pt 3:15).

Paul gives thanks for the believers that God chose them "for salvation" (2 Thes 2:13). He endures "everything for the sake of the elect, that they also may obtain the salvation" (2 Tm 2:10).

Christ and salvation. Jesus Christ is the "horn of salvation" in the house of David (Lk 1:69). The name of Jesus is the only name for salvation under heaven (Acts 4:12). In Acts 13:47 Paul quotes

12. See Bauer, Wörterbuch zum Neuen Testament, p. 1584.

the prophecy about the servant of the Lord in Is 49:6 that the servant should be the salvation of God to the end of the earth and says that this is the command of the Lord to Paul and his team. I think, Paul understands this verse of Isaiah as a prophecy about Jesus Christ who is the salvation for all nations and therefore Paul is commanded to preach Jesus also to Gentiles (see Acts 13:46-48).

Believing in one's heart that God raised Jesus from the dead and confessing with one's mouth that "Jesus is Lord" is enough for justification and for salvation (Rom 10:9-10. According to Heb 2:3 Jesus the Lord started the New Testament teaching of salvation. God the Father made Jesus, the founder of the salvation of the believers, perfect through suffering (Heb 2:10)¹³. Salvation is God's and Christ's (Rv 7:10).

Israel and salvation. Salvation is from the Jews (Jn 4:22). Christ is the horn of salvation in the house of David (Lk 1:69) and salvation is also for Israel (Lk 1:71.77). Zacchaeus is a good example for a son of Abraham lost and then found by Jesus. Salvation came to his whole house (Lk 19:9). Paul always first went into a synagogue in a given place and preached salvation to the children of Abraham (Acts 13:14.26). His urgent desire and prayer for them was their salvation (Rom 10:1).

Gentiles and salvation. Because Israel as a whole nation has not accepted the gospel, "salvation has come to the Gentiles" (Rom 11:11). In this time until the second coming of Christ, Jesus has to be preached as the salvation of God to the ends of the earth (Acts 13:47).

13. Ἐπρεπεν γάρ αὐτῷ... τὸν ἀρχηγὸν τῆς σωτηρίας αὐτῶν διὰ παθημάτων τελειῶσαι.

God's word and salvation. The Old Testament scriptures can help to salvation by faith in Jesus Christ (2 Tm 3:15). The Old Testament prophets were eagerly interested in the prophecies about the salvation of the New Testament times they had to deliver through the Spirit of Christ in them (1 Pt 1:10-12). God's preached word is a word of salvation (Acts 13:26), a gospel of salvation (Eph 1:13), is like good nourishing milk for young converts who are like Babies in Christ and should feed on the word of God that they may grow up to salvation (1 Pt 2:2).

God's servants and salvation. God uses his servants to preach salvation (Heb 2:3). In Philippi the slave girl who had a spirit of divination pointed to Paul and his team as preachers of the way of salvation, but this testimony was not acceptable in the eyes of Paul and he felt compelled to stop it by casting out this spirit (Acts 16:16-18).

God's true servants are prepared even to suffer for the salvation of others (2 Tm 2:10; 2 Cor 1:6). Paul is confident that his situation will turn out to his salvation by the intercession of the brothers and sisters in Philippi and the help of the Spirit of Jesus Christ (Phil 1:19).

Faith and perseverance, hope and obedience. Faith and the confession of this faith is needed for salvation (Rom 10:10). Courageous faith is needed in times of persecution (Phil 1:28). Paul can encourage to work for one's own salvation in obedience (Phil 2:12). Obedience towards Christ is crucial for salvation (Heb 5:9) and to remain faithful to him (Heb 6:9-12).

Our perseverance in faith is also related to God's power in preserving us for salvation (1 Pt 1:5). It may be necessary to fight for

the faith for the sake of salvation (Jude 1:3). It is even good to be sad if it leads to repentance and God and then salvation (2 Cor 7:10). The hope of salvation is like a helmet for the believer in his daily struggles (1 Thes 5:8).

Salvation can be ...

1. Salvation from slavery in Egypt through Moses (Acts 7:25),
2. salvation of the family of Noah for which he built the ark (Heb 11:7),
3. salvation from dying in the storm and drowning (Acts 27:34),
4. salvation from eternal condemnation and the wrath of God (Rom 1:16; 1 Thes 5:9),
5. salvation of souls (1 Pt 1:9),
6. forgiveness of sins (Lk 1:77; cf. Heb 9:28).

Times and Salvation. Salvation can only happen at a time when God has granted a day of salvation (2 Cor 6:2). Paul believes in the progress of salvation history and salvation coming nearer and nearer. Therefore we should be alert and spiritually awake (Rom 13:11).

The use of σωτήριος, ὄν "bringing salvation".

The meaning of the adjective σωτήριος, ὄν sōtēriōs, ὄν is "bringing salvation".¹⁴ It is used in Tit 2:11 and speaks of God's grace as having appeared in Jesus Christ in person:

14. See Bauer, Wörterbuch zum Neuen Testament, p. 1587.

11 For the grace of God has appeared, bringing salvation for all people,¹⁵ 12 training us to renounce ungodliness and worldly passions, and to live self-controlled, upright, and godly lives in the present age.

This adjective in the neuter form is also used as a noun τὸ σωτήριον *sōtēriōn* with the meaning of "means of salvation, salvation".¹⁶ It speaks of God's salvation for Israel and the nations (Luke 2:29-32; 3:6¹⁷; Acts 28:28). In Eph 6:17 every single believer needs "the helmet of salvation" as part of his spiritual armor. Every believer can trust in the reality of his being saved which protects him from the attacks of the enemy and helps him to stand even "on an evil day" (Eph 6:13).

5.2 Atonement – Sacrifice and Forgiveness of Sin

5.2.1 Atonement in the Old Testament

Words used.

In Hebrew the noun used for atonement is *kippurîm*¹⁸. It is used for the very important holy "day of the atonement" (Lv 23:27-28; 25:9)¹⁹; for the "atonement money" which had to be given in a census "to make atonement for your lives" (Ex 30:16); for "the sin of-

15. Ἐπεφάνη γὰρ ἡ χάρις τοῦ θεοῦ σωτήριος πᾶσιν ἀνθρώποις

16. See *ibid.*, p. 1587.

17. Luke 3:4-6 is quoting Is 40:3-6.

18. כִּפּוּרִים

19. The LXX version translates *ἡμερα ἐξιλασμου* or *ἡμερα του ιλασμου*. For *ἵλασμός* *hilasmōs* in the LXX see Lv 25:9; Nm 5:8; Ps 130:4; Ez 44:27; Dn 9:9 and Amos 8:14.

fering of atonement" (Ex 30:10; Nm 29:11) and "the ram of atonement" (Nm 5:8).

The most important Hebrew verb for "to atone" is the Pi'ēl "kipper"²⁰ which means "to pacify, make propitiation"²¹. In Gn 32:20 Jacob wants to pacify his brother Esau with a present: "I may appease him with the present that goes ahead of me, and afterward I shall see his face. Perhaps he will accept me." In Prv 16:14 it has a very similar meaning: "A king's wrath is a messenger of death, and a wise man will appease it."²²

The theological use of this verb with regard to God can be understood in the same way: Sins or impurity of man could endanger his good relationship with God, kindle the wrath of God. Therefore the sins or the impurity need to be "atoned" for so that the covenant relationship is uphold undisturbed. Atonement makes forgiveness possible (e.g. Lv 4:20).

Means of making atonement.

1. Blood is the ordained means of atonement and shall not be eaten (Lv 17:11):

For the life of the flesh is in the blood, and I
have given it for you on the altar to make atone-

20. כִּפֶּר

21. Brown, Driver, and Briggs, Hebrew and English Lexicon of the Old Testament, p. 497-498. The LXX version uses very often ἐξίλασκαμαι where kipper is used in Hebrew.

22. In Is 28:18 the verb is used with the meaning to annul ("then your covenant with death will be annulled") and in Is 47:11 Babylon can not "avert" the disaster falling on her ("disaster shall fall upon you, for which you will not be able to atone").

ment for your souls, for it is the blood that makes atonement by the life.²³

2. Burnt offering (עֹלָה 'olāh Lv 1:3-4; 9:7; 12:6-8; 14:18-31; 15:15.30; Nm 6:11; Ez 45:15.17),
3. sin offering (חַטָּאת ḥaṭṭā't Lv 4:20; 5:6; 9:7; 12:6-8; 14:18-31; 15:15.30; Nm 6:11; 15:25.28; 28:22.30; 29:52; 2 Chr 29:23-24; Neh 10:32-33; Ez 43:20.26; 45:15.17.19-20),
4. guilt offering (אֲשָׁם 'āšām Lv 5:16.18; 6:7; 7:7; 14:18-31; 19:22),
5. incense (קְטֹרֶת qəṭōret Nm 16:46-47; 1 Chr 6:49),
6. grain offering (מִנְחָה minḥāh Ez 45:15.17),
7. peace offerings (שְׁלָמִים šəlāmîm Ez 45:15.17).
8. Some special means:

(a) "Phinehas the son of Eleazar ... was jealous for his God and made atonement for the people of Israel" and turned back God's wrath from the people of Israel by killing a Midianite woman and an Israelite man who were committing idolatry and fornication (Nm 25:11-13).

(b) The blood of a murderer (Nm 35:33), in case of an unsolved murder a special procedure (Dt 21:8),

(c) seven male descendants of Saul hung before the Lord at Gibeah (2 Sm 21:3.6),

23. כִּי נִפְשׁ הַבָּשָׂר בַּדָּם הוּא וְאֵי נִתְחַיּוּ לָכֵם עַל-הַמִּזְבֵּחַ לְכַפֵּר עַל-נַפְשֹׁתֵיכֶם. כִּי-הָדָם הוּא בְנִפְשׁ יִכָּפֵר:

- (d) steadfast love and faithfulness (Prv 16:6),
- (e) destroying idols and their worship places (Is 27:9),
- (f) a "live coal" taken from the altar in heaven touching Isaiah's mouth (Is 6:6-7).

Priests and atonement.

Only an ordained priest can present atoning sacrifices (Lv 16:32.33; 5:6; 10:17; Nm 15:25.28). When the high priest (and his sons) are consecrated for seven days, atonement has to be made for the altar and the high priest (Ex 29:36.37; Lv 8:15.34). They have to eat those things with which atonement was made at their ordination and consecration (Ex 29:33). They also eat the sin offerings and the guilt offerings on a regular basis (Lv 7:7), but not such sin offerings "from which any blood is brought into the tent of meeting to make atonement in the Holy Place" (Lv 6:30; also 16:27). Somebody who presents a burnt offering lays his hands "on the head of the burnt offering, and it shall be accepted for him to make atonement for him". Then the animal is killed and "the priests shall bring the blood and throw the blood against the sides of the altar" (Lv 1:4-5).

Times for atonement.

The holy days of Israel were also special days of making atonement for the Israelites. In the week of eating unleavened bread the priests had to sacrifice "one male goat for a sin offering, to make atonement for you" (Nm 28:17.22). On the day of Pentecost they had to offer "one male goat, to make atonement for you" (Nm 28:26.30) and on the first day of the seventh month, the day of blowing the trumpets, they sacrificed "one male goat for a sin offering, to make atonement for you" (Nm 29:1.5).

But the most important day of the year with regard to atonement was "the day of atonement" (Lv 23:27-28; 25:9). The atonement of this day was so important that it was a day of fasting (Lv 16:29-30) and a day of rest without any work (Lv 23:28). The high priest had to offer sacrifices to atone for himself and his house (Lv 16:6.11.24) and for the people and the Holy Place (Lv 16:15-16.17.24; 16:30.32.33.34 and for the altar (Ex 30:10; Lv 16:18).

The high priest needed "a bull from the herd for a sin offering and a ram for a burnt offering" for himself (16:3). The people of Israel had to give him "two male goats for a sin offering, and one ram for a burnt offering" (16:5). Aaron had first to sacrifice the bull for himself and his house and take some of the blood of the bull into the most holy place and and "sprinkle it with his finger on the front of the mercy seat on the east side, and in front of the mercy seat ... sprinkle some of the blood with his finger seven times" (14).

The decision which of the two goats was for the Lord and which for Azazel was made by lot (8). The goat for the Lord was sacrificed as sin offering (16:15-19):

15 Then he shall kill the goat of the sin offering that is for the people and bring its blood inside the veil and do with its blood as he did with the blood of the bull, sprinkling it over the mercy seat and in front of the mercy seat. 16 Thus he shall make atonement for the Holy Place, because of the uncleannesses of the people of Israel and because of their transgressions, all their sins. And so he shall do for the tent of meeting, which dwells with them in the midst of their uncleanness... 18 Then he shall go out to the altar that is before the Lord and make atonement for it, and shall take some of the blood of the bull and some of

the blood of the goat, and put it on the horns of the altar all around. 19 And he shall sprinkle some of the blood on it with his finger seven times, and cleanse it and consecrate it from the uncleannesses of the people of Israel.

That the sprinkling of the blood is done "seven times" symbolizes the complete and perfect atoning and cleansing. The other "goat on which the lot fell for Azazel" which was "presented alive before the Lord to make atonement over it", was then "sent away into the wilderness to Azazel" (Lv 16:10.20-22). There was a special act of confessing the sins related to this goat:

21 And Aaron shall lay both his hands on the head of the live goat, and confess over it all the iniquities of the people of Israel, and all their transgressions, all their sins. And he shall put them on the head of the goat and send it away into the wilderness by the hand of a man who is in readiness. 22 The goat shall bear all their iniquities on itself to a remote area, and he shall let the goat go free in the wilderness.

We note that the priest's responsibility was to confess all known sins of Israel while making atonement for them. Afterwards the priest had to wash and clean himself (16:23-24) and offer his own burnt offering and the burnt offering of the people "and make atonement for himself and for the people" and burn "the fat of the sin offering" on the altar (16:24-25). We also should make a mental note of the content of 16:27 to come back to this later:

And the bull for the sin offering and the goat for the sin offering, whose blood was brought in to make

atonement in the Holy Place, shall be carried outside the camp. Their skin and their flesh and their dung shall be burned up with fire.

Because this sin offering is the only offering of which the blood was carried and sprinkled at the mercy seat, we can say that this was the most important offering with regard to atonement in the Old Testament.

The highest day of atonement imaginable in the Old Testament is the day of atonement with which the year of jubilee starts which was celebrated after 50 years (Lv 25:9-10):

9 Then you shall sound the loud trumpet on the tenth day of the seventh month. On the Day of Atonement you shall sound the trumpet throughout all your land. 10 And you shall consecrate the fiftieth year, and proclaim liberty throughout the land to all its inhabitants.²⁴ It shall be a jubilee for you, when each of you shall return to his property and each of you shall return to his clan.

The word for the proclaimed liberty is *dərôr* and is found in these texts: Lv 25:10; Is 61:1; Jer 34:8.15.17; Ez 46:17; Ex 30:23).

Places for atonement.

The place for atonement was the presence of the Lord which was first the tabernacle and later the temple in the Old Testament. We learn from 1 Chr 6:49 that especially two places were important in the tabernacle area for every day atonement during the year:

24.

וּקְרָאתֶם דְּרוֹר בְּאֶרֶץ לְכָל־יִשְׂרָאֵל

But Aaron and his sons made offerings on the altar of burnt offering and on the altar of incense for all the work of the Most Holy Place, and to make atonement for Israel, according to all that Moses the servant of God had commanded.

These two altars were related to atonement during the year and the normal feasts. But the most important place of atonement is the "mercy seat" (ESV for כַּפֹּרֶת *kappōret*)²⁵ which is God's movable throne on earth placed in the most holy place on the ark of the covenant and representing God's throne in heaven. We have just seen that on the day of atonement this is the place where the blood of the sin offerings is brought and sprinkled towards and that happens only once a year. It is the only occasion when one of the Israelites is allowed to enter the most holy place. Only the high priest is permitted here. The following quote from the law of God shows the great significance of the mercy seat (Ex 25:21-22):

21 And you shall put the mercy seat on the top of the ark, and in the ark you shall put the testimony that I shall give you. 22 There I will meet with you, and from above the mercy seat, from between the two cherubim that are on the ark of the testimony, I will speak with you about all that I will give you in commandment for the people of Israel.

25. See Ex 25:17.18.20.21; 25:22; 26:34; 30:6; 31:7; 35:12; 37:6.7.8.9; 39:35; 40:20; Lv 16:2; 16:13.14.15; Nm 7:89; 1 Chr 28:11. The LXX version often translates *kappōret* with ἱλαστήριον *hilastērion*, see Ex 25:17.18.19.20.21.22; 31:7; 35:12; 37:6.8.9; Lv 16:2.13.14.15; Nm 7:89; (Ez 43:14.17.20).

The mercy seat is the place where God thrones over the cherubim (Ps 80:1; 99:1; 18:10). Wherever the cherubim are mentioned, they are found belonging to the presence of God. Before falling in sin man enjoyed the presence of God in paradise (Gn 3:8). But after Adam and Eve had sinned, God "drove out the man and at the east of the garden of Eden he placed the cherubim and a flaming sword that turned every way to guard the way to the tree of life" (Gn 3:24). There are several hints that the tabernacle brings back the presence of God to man, that it is indeed "paradise regained" (Ex 25:8-9.40; 26:30; Heb 8:5). The golden lampstand seems to be part of a garden (Ex 25:33). Cherubim are not only visible over the mercy seat, but also in other places of the tabernacle (Ex 26:1). In the temple of Solomon there are also clear elements pointing to the paradise garden of the presence of God with cherubim in it (1 Kgs 6:27-35).

In agreement with the promise in Ex 25:22 the speaking of God to Moses in the book of Leviticus happens "from the tent of meeting" (Lv 1:1; cf. Nm 7:89). The fact that God thrones over the ark of the testimony in which the stone tablets with the ten words (the testimony) will be placed, shows him to be a God of justice and righteousness who has based his kingdom on these virtues (cf. Dt 32:4; Is 9:6-7). The people of God should reflect his holiness and perfection (Lv 19:2; Gn 17:1). Therefore any breaking of his commandments or any falling short of fitting purity and holiness needs atonement. And the most important place where this should happen, is the place where he reveals himself and meets Israel represented in the chosen servants of God (Ex 30:6; Lv 16:2). It is also of the highest significance that the most holy place of the temple is called "the room (or the house) for the mercy seat" in 1 Chr 28:11.

Atonement for whom and for what?

The high priest atones for himself and the people (Lv 9:7). Atonement is necessary for the mother after giving birth to a son or daughter (Lv 12:7.8); for the leper who was healed to cleanse him (Lv 14:18.19.20; Lv 14:21.29.31); for a house which has been healed from a leprous disease to cleanse it (Lv 14:53); for him who has a discharge (Lv 15:15); for a woman who has a discharge of blood for many days to cleanse her after her becoming well again (Lv 15:30); for a man with the vow of a Nazirite "if any man dies very suddenly beside him" (Nm 6:9.11); for the whole tribe of the Levites at the time of their consecration²⁶ (Nm 8:12-14.21).

Aaron atoned with his censer and incense for the people who rebelled against him and Moses Nm 16:46-47. "Phinehas the son of Eleazar ... was jealous for his God and made atonement for the people of Israel" and got the covenant of a perpetual priesthood (Nm 25:11-13). After the victory over the Midianites the officers of the army of Israel "brought the Lord's offering, what each man found, articles of gold, armlets and bracelets, signet rings, earrings, and beads, to make atonement for ourselves before the Lord", because they had lost not one man in action and realized that this was God's special protection (Nm 31:50).

After Israel had sinned in the incident with the golden calf Moses went up to the Lord to try to atone for the sin of the golden calf (Ex 32:30). It is interesting to see what he offers to atone for their sin and what the Lord answers him (Ex 32:31-33):

31 So Moses returned to the Lord and said, "Alas,

26. God has "given the Levites as a gift to Aaron and his sons from among the people of Israel, to do the service for the people of Israel at the tent of meeting and to make atonement for the people of Israel" (Nm 8:19).

this people have sinned a great sin. They have made for themselves gods of gold. 32 But now, if you will forgive their sin—but if not, please blot me out of your book that you have written.” 33 But the Lord said to Moses, “Whoever has sinned against me, I will blot out of my book.”²⁷

The best interpretation of this mysterious book is that it is the book of life.²⁸ Moses offers his eternal life in exchange for the forgiveness of the sins of about six hundred thousand men on foot, besides women and children (Ex 12:37; cf. Paul's intercession in Rom 9:1-3). Anything else would not have weighed enough according to his own estimate. He was over eighty at the time of this plea (Ex 7:7; 40:17) which was according to his own psalm what a man could expect to live and not much longer (Ps 90:10). But God rejects this offer and at the same time does not consume them as threatened before (Ex 32:10). Later the tabernacle is built as planned before and the sacrificial system of atonement is inaugurated. God in his sovereignty accepted the intercession of Moses (cf. Ex 32:14)²⁹ and kept Israel alive.

God's sovereignty and atonement.

God himself atones for sins (Ps 65:3; Ez 16:63), being compassionate (Ps 78:38; 79:8-9) and in answer to the prayer of Hezekiah at the special Passover (2 Chr 30:18-20). God makes atonement for his land, his people (Dt 32:43).

27.

מִי אֲשֶׁר חָטָא לִי אֶמְחֶה מִסֵּפֶרִי:

28. Cf. Ps 69:28; Dn 12:1; Is 4:3; Mal 3:16; Lk 10:20; Phil 4:3; Rv 13:8; 17:8; 20:12

29. LXX: και ιλασθη κυριος περι της κακιας ης ειπεν ποιησαι τον λαον αυτου

God can decide that certain sins will not be atoned for and so not forgiven, for example the iniquity of Eli's house (1 Sm 3:14) and the sin of the Jerusalemites that they feast instead of repenting (Is 22:14). Jeremiah prayed that the sin of plotting his assassination may not be atoned for by God (Jer 18:23).

Prophesied future Atonement.

There are several interesting Old Testament prophecies which point beyond the Old Testament sacrificial system and towards Christ. David realized that God does not really delight in animal sacrifices, but looks at the heart and spirit of the repentant sinner (Ps 51:16-17). Ps 110 is a psalm of David where "his Lord" is invited to sit at the right hand of God to be the king of the world and "a priest forever after the order of Melchizedek" (110:1.4). Because the office of atonement is in the hands of the ordained priests this eternal priest and king would mean an enormous change of the system (cf. Heb 7:11-28).

Isaiah experienced that one of the seraphim touched his mouth with the live coal and said: "Behold, this has touched your lips; your guilt is taken away, and your sin atoned for" (Is 6:7). The prophet explains this visionary element later in 53:5-6:

5 But he was wounded for our transgressions;
he was crushed for our iniquities;
upon him was the chastisement that brought us peace,
and with his stripes we are healed.
6 All we like sheep have gone astray;
we have turned every one to his own way;
and the Lord has laid on him the iniquity of us all.

The live coal in Is 6:6-7 had been taken from the altar in the vision.

The altar is the place where sacrifices are placed, blood is sprinkled and atonement is made. Is 53 shows the servant of the Lord, Christ, who has given his life as a guilt offering (53:10) when "he was cut off out of the land of the living, stricken for the transgression of my people" (53:8). He even sprinkles many nations (with his blood) to cleanse them and save them (52:15; 53:11-12). A combination of Is 6 and 53 leads us to see the glory of Christ as Isaiah saw it according to Jn 12:37-41. It is also important to note that the servant of the Lord is also in his own person "a covenant for the people" (Is 42:6; cf. 54:10; 55:3).

In Is 61:1-2 the coming Christ uses the language of the jubilee to "proclaim the year of the Lord's favor". While the normal year of jubilee could perhaps be celebrated twice in a lifetime of 70 or 80 years, this "year of the Lord's favor" proclaimed by the coming Christ would be unique in all of salvation history. It would be the ultimate fulfillment of all days of atonement and of all years of jubilee (cf. Lk 4:16-21).

Jeremiah promises a new covenant for the future where God will write his will not on stone tablets but on the hearts of the Israelites and will forgive their sins (Jer 31:31-34; cf. Heb 8:6-13). He also mentions that the name of the coming Christ from the house of David, the "righteous Branch" will be: "The Lord is our righteousness" (23:5; cf. 33:15-16 where the same name is given to Jerusalem).

In Zec 3:8-9 we have the "servant of the Lord", the "Branch", a "stone with seven eyes" and God's promise, "I will remove the iniquity of this land in a single day". It is possible to understand the "Branch" in Zec 6:9-15 as the Christ who will combine the offices of king and priest and who will build the temple of God in a magnificent way. Zec 9:9-11 mention the coming Christ to Zion mounted on a donkey and the blood of God's covenant with Zion

because of which the prisoners are freed "from the waterless pit". In Zec 12:10 God pours out on the inhabitants of Jerusalem a spirit of grace and pleas for mercy and consequently they look on God whom they have pierced and mourn for him weeping bitterly. The result of this revival is:

On that day there shall be a fountain opened for the house of David and the inhabitants of Jerusalem, to cleanse them from sin and uncleanness.

If we combine all these passages of Zechariah it seems that this prophet already proclaimed the coming Christ as the suffering Christ and God in one person. He would be pierced and thus killed. To recognize him would result in receiving forgiveness and the Holy Spirit. They would see him alive and in divine glory (cf. Zec 14:3-4).

Daniel 9:24 speaks of atonement in the last days with these words:

24 Seventy weeks are decreed about your people and your holy city, to finish the transgression, to put an end to sin, and to atone for iniquity, to bring in everlasting righteousness, to seal both vision and prophet, and to anoint a most holy place.³⁰

It is clear from this little survey of prophesied future atonement within the Old Testament that this first great part of the Bible was looking forward to a time when God would solve the problem of sin and of atonement once and for all time.

שְׁבָעִים שָׁבָעִים נְחָתָהּ עַל-עַמָּךְ וְעַל-יְרוּשָׁלַיִם לְכַלֵּא הַפֶּשַׁע וְלַחַתֵּם חַטָּאוֹת וּלְכַבֵּר עֹן וּלְהָבִיא צֶדֶק עַל־מִיִּם וְלַחַתֵּם חֲזוֹן וּנְבִיא וְלַמָּשַׁח קֹדֶשׁ קִדְּשִׁים:

5.2.2 Atonement in the New Testament

Most of the subject of atonement in the New Testament can be covered by following all the verses in their context where the blood of Jesus Christ is mentioned. The blood of Christ means here the shed blood of Christ that is his sacrificed life (cf. Lv 17:10-11). We start with Christ's own teaching about the importance of his blood which is found in the institution of the Lord's supper. We know that Jesus taught that he had come to fulfill the law and the prophets (Mt 5:17-20) and that he especially saw his suffering as a fulfillment of prophecies (Mt 26:54.56). Therefore the best background to interpret the following words of Jesus about the significance of his death is the Old Testament.

The Lord's supper.

The Lord's supper, as it is instituted by Jesus himself, shows us Christ's own view of his death and how he wanted it to be remembered by the church until his second coming. Let us look at the fourfold testimony of the apostles about the words of Jesus when he presented the cup and spoke of his own blood:

| | | | |
|---|-------------------------------|-------------------------------------|-------------------------------|
| Mt 26:28 | Mk 14:24 | Lk 22:20 | 1 Cor 11:25 |
| for this is | This is | This cup that is poured out for you | This cup is |
| my blood of the covenant, | my blood of the covenant, | is the new covenant in my blood. | the new covenant in my blood. |
| which is poured out for many for the forgiveness of sins. | which is poured out for many. | | |

| | | | |
|--------------|--------------|---------------|---------------|
| Mt 26:28 | Mk 14:24 | Lk 22:20 | 1 Cor 11:25 |
| 28 τοῦτο γάρ | Τοῦτό ἐστιν | Τοῦτο τὸ | Τοῦτο τὸ |
| ἐστιν | | ποτήριον | ποτήριον |
| τὸ αἷμά μου | τὸ αἷμά μου | ἡ καινὴ | ἡ καινὴ |
| τῆς διαθήκης | τῆς διαθήκης | διαθήκη ἐν τῷ | διαθήκη ἐστιν |
| | | αἵματί μου, | ἐν τῷ ἐμῷ |
| | | | αἵματι• |
| τὸ περὶ | τὸ | τὸ ὑπὲρ ὑμῶν | |
| πολλῶν | ἐκχυννόμενον | ἐκχυννόμενον. | |
| ἐκχυννόμενον | ὑπὲρ πολλῶν. | | |
| εἰς ἄφεσιν | | | |
| ἁμαρτιῶν• | | | |

The first thing to note here is that Jesus gave us the Lord's supper at the occasion of the last supper which was a passover meal. The bread used to symbolize his body was taken from the bread of the passover meal. The cup with the wine was actually one of the cups used for the passover meal. This means that Jesus identifies himself as the lamb of the passover (cf. Jn 19:36; 1 Cor 5:7; 1 Pt 1:13.19-20). We remember that the basic salvation of the Old Testament is that the Lord saved Israel from the slavery in Egypt (Ex 20:2). And the consummation of this saving act was the protection of Israel by the blood of the passover lamb put on the door posts of their houses during the tenth plague. That was the night when they could finally leave Egypt.

According to all four witnesses Jesus understood the shedding of his blood as inaugurating a covenant. Luke and Paul specify this as the "new covenant" which points to Jer 31:31-34, and Matthew adds "for the forgiveness of sins" which is also found in Jer 31:31-34 (see section 5.2.1). As Jer 31:31-34 itself speaks of the Sinai covenant and Jesus uses the words "the blood of the covenant" which is found exactly so in Ex 24:8 we can see Ex 24:1-11 as another text shedding light on the words of Jesus.

This means that Jesus saw himself bringing a covenant of enormous importance, only to be compared with the covenant of Sinai which was the foundation from the time of Moses until the time of Jesus. The shedding of his blood would inaugurate a new time with a covenant which is even of greater importance and durability as the Sinai covenant. It is the new covenant ushering in the new world which lasts for ever.

As we have seen above, there was another line of prophecies in Isaiah about the servant of the Lord being himself in person "a covenant for the people" (Is 42:6; cf. 54:10; 55:3). We know from Lk 22:37 that Jesus understood Is 53:12 as pointing to himself. In Is 52:13-53:12 it is mentioned that "many" will profit from the sacrifice of the servant: He "shall ... sprinkle many nations" purifying them before God (52:15). "By his knowledge shall the righteous one, my servant, make many to be accounted righteous, and he shall bear their iniquities. Therefore I will divide him a portion with the many" (53:11-12). The statement of Jesus that his blood is "poured out for many" is best understood with Isaiah in mind.

If we combine all this we get the picture that Jesus saw his own death at the cross (Jn 12:23-24.31-33; Mt 16:21.24) as the beginning of the new era of the new covenant of Jer 31 and himself as the branch of David of Jer 33:15-16 to save Jerusalem and Judah. He further understood himself as the servant of the Lord who gives his life for Israel and many amongst the nations being himself "light of the nations" (Is 42:6) and "salvation ... to the end of the earth" (Is 49:6).

John does not mention the institution of the Lord's supper but he seems to presuppose its knowledge already given by Matthew, Mark and Luke. When Jesus presents himself in John 6:51 as "the living bread that came down from heaven", and explains that the bread that he "will give for the life of the world" is his "flesh", it

is reasonable to relate this speech to the Lord's supper. "Whoever feeds on my flesh and drinks my blood has eternal life, and I will raise him up on the last day" (Jn 6:54; cf. 6:53.55.56). According to 6:63 the eating has to be spiritual to be useful. The eating happens by coming to him and believing in him (6:35).

In John 19:34-35 the side of the crucified Jesus is pierced so that blood and water comes out which proves his death in the flesh. Then Jesus is identified as the true passover lamb of which no bone should be broken (19:36; cf. 1:29; Ex 12:46) and as the pierced Lord God of Zec 12:10 (19:37) by whose recognizing they will receive the Holy Spirit and the cleansing from sin and uncleanness (Zec 13:1).

The witness of John the Baptist in John 1:29, "Behold, the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world!" seems to relate to Is 53:6-7. John himself knows of the identity of Jesus because the Spirit came down on Jesus after his water baptism and stayed on him (John 1:32-34). The voice of God the Father said at this opportunity, "You are my beloved Son; with you I am well pleased" (Mk 1:11; cf. Lk 3:22). This was a testimony of the Father for his son. It also seems to have been a witness for John the Baptist about the identity of Jesus (Mt 3:17). The Father here combined Ps 2:7 and Is 42:1 and thus identified Jesus with the coming Christ of Ps 2 and with the servant of the Lord in Isaiah 42:1. Because the calling of John was based on Is 40:3 (John 1:23), John must have studied this book very well. If Jesus was God's servant of Is 42:1, he also was the servant of Is 53:6-7, he was the lamb of God carrying away the sin of all and atoning for them.

Paul sees the Lord's supper as "a participation" in the blood and in the body of Christ (1 Cor 10:15-16). "Whoever ... eats the bread or drinks the cup of the Lord in an unworthy manner will be guilty of profaning the body and blood of the Lord... For anyone who eats

and drinks without discerning the body eats and drinks judgment on himself. 30 That is why many of you are weak and ill, and some have died" (1 Cor 11:27.29-30). This reminds of certain texts in the Old Testament where profaning the sacred also led to judgment of the offenders (e.g. Lv 10:1-3; 1 Sm 2:12-17.22; 2 Sm 6:6-7.12-13).

Other verses in Gospels and Acts.

The Gospels and Acts mention Christ's blood in some other places as well. Matthew emphasizes the innocent blood of Christ in the process of his condemnation by the different parties (Mt 27:4.6.8.24.25). The physician Luke speaks of the earnest prayer of Christ and that "his sweat became like great drops of blood falling down to the ground" (Lk 22:44).

In Acts the leadership in Jerusalem speaks of the blood of Jesus only as a threat to their life fearing that they might be punished for shedding his blood (5:28). Therefore they had forbidden the apostles to mention the name of Jesus in public (Acts 4:17-18), a commandment they ignored.³¹

Paul speaks in Acts 20:28 of "the church of God, which he obtained with his own blood".³² Here, of course, the blood of Jesus Christ is in mind, but it is called God's blood which presupposes that Jesus Christ is God incarnate.

31. In Acts the Gentile Christians are told to abstain from eating blood (Acts 15:20.29; 21:25) which is very probably related to Lv 17:10-11 and its importance for the Jewish Christians.

32. προσέχετε ἑαυτοῖς καὶ παντὶ τῷ ποιμνίῳ, ἐν ᾧ ὑμᾶς τὸ πνεῦμα τὸ ἅγιον ἔθετο ἐπισκόπους, ποιμαίνειν τὴν ἐκκλησίαν τοῦ θεοῦ, ἣν περιεποιήσατο διὰ τοῦ αἵματος τοῦ ἰδίου.

Other verses in Paul's letters.

The apostle Paul speaks of the blood of Christ in very important contexts which are all related to salvation. After Paul had proven all men, Jews and Gentiles, to be under sin in Rom 1:18-3:20, he starts to teach about the righteousness of God in 3:21-26:

21 But now the righteousness of God has been manifested apart from the law, although the Law and the Prophets bear witness to it - 22 the righteousness of God through faith in Jesus Christ for all who believe. For there is no distinction: 23 for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God, 24 and are justified by his grace as a gift, through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus, 25 whom God put forward as a propitiation by his blood, to be received by faith. This was to show God's righteousness, because in his divine forbearance he had passed over former sins.³³ 26 It was to show his righteousness at the present time, so that he might be just and the justifier of the one who has faith in Jesus.

Paul explains the genitive "the righteousness of God" in 3:26 both as "that he might be just" and as "the justifier of the one who has faith in Jesus". Both aspects of God's righteousness could have been questioned. God's own being just could have been questioned "because in his divine forbearance he had passed over former sins".

33. 24 δικαιούμενοι δωρεὰν τῇ αὐτοῦ χάριτι διὰ τῆς ἀπολυτρώσεως τῆς ἐν Χριστῷ Ἰησοῦ• 25 ὃν προέθετο ὁ θεὸς ἱλαστήριον διὰ πίστεως ἐν τῷ αὐτοῦ αἵματι εἰς ἔνδειξιν τῆς δικαιοσύνης αὐτοῦ διὰ τὴν πάρεσιν τῶν προγεγονότων ἁμαρτημάτων.

God's forbearance made it possible for many sinners to go on sinning without being visibly punished (see Ps 73:1-17). This raised the question of a just government of the world and whether there is a just God ruling everything. Paul says that the cross and the blood of Christ answer this question. The question whether God can bestow his righteousness on repenting sinners is also answered by the same sacrificial death of Christ who shed his blood to atone for the sins of all sinners.

The fact that all "fall short of the glory of God" means that "all fall short of the honor or acknowledgement of God". It is the glory or honor that God bestows on man (as in John 12:43): "Well done!" God can not say this to sinners. He can not acknowledge them. But their sins can be forgiven, if they put their faith in the blood of Christ that was shed for them.

For our subject of atonement 3:25 is important and shows how the shed blood of Christ, that means his death at the cross, is the source of salvation for Jews and Gentiles. God put Christ forward as "a propitiation by his blood, to be received by faith". The Greek word translated here with "propitiation" is *hilastēriōn* which was the normal translation of the Hebrew word for "mercy seat" in the LXX. The only other time it is used in the New Testament it clearly means the "mercy seat" (Heb 9:5). Paul seems to think of the day of the atonement when the blood of the sin offering was sprinkled on and towards the mercy seat (see section 5.2.1). We have seen that Isaiah 61:1-2 presents the coming Christ as bringing the super jubilee year with the special day of atonement. Good Friday was the day of days with regard to atonement. It was the day God was looking forward to throughout all of sinful human history to put the sin of the world on the lamb of God (Is 53:6-7; Jn 1:29; 2 Cor 5:18-21).

According to Eph 2:13 believing Gentiles are brought near to

God by the blood of Christ (cf. Is 52:15). 2 Cor 5:18-21 is a very important section about reconciliation, but it is also significant with regard to the subject of atonement, especially the last verses (2 Cor 5:20-21):

20 Therefore, we are ambassadors for Christ, God making his appeal through us. We implore you on behalf of Christ, be reconciled to God. 21 For our sake he made him to be sin who knew no sin,³⁴ so that in him we might become the righteousness of God.

The decisive phrase for our subject is "he made him to be sin who knew no sin". Now to understand this passage it is helpful to know that the word for sin and for sin offering is the same in certain contexts of the Old Testament. We have seen above that the sin offering is *ḥaṭṭā'at* in Hebrew (חַטָּאת) for example in Lv 4:20, 5:6 and 9:7. The LXX translates it in all these verses with the Greek word for "sin", ἁμαρτία *hamartia* which here in these verses in Leviticus, of course, means "sin offering".

The same meaning can be understood in 2 Cor 5:21:³⁵ "For our sake he made him to be a sin offering who knew no sin, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God." Rom 8:3 is a close parallel: "By sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh and for sin, he condemned sin in the flesh." The phrase "for sin"³⁶ here can also be understood "as a sin offering" (cf. Is 53:10 in the LXX). The idea of Paul is that the death of Christ at the cross is the atonement of the sins of the whole world, because God was in him

34. τὸν μὴ γνόντα ἁμαρτίαν ὑπὲρ ἡμῶν ἁμαρτίαν ἐποίησεν

35. So with F. F. Bruce, 1 and 2 Corinthians, New Century Bible Commentary (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1990 <1971>), p. 210.

36. περὶ ἁμαρτίας *peri hamartias*

when he was sacrificed as a sin offering. Therefore the whole world is now potentially reconciled with God in Christ. But every single person has to accept the death of Jesus Christ as his reconciliation with God to get the benefit of it.

Christ's blood in Hebrews

The letter to the Hebrews is deeply rooted in the Old Testament language, imagery and sacrificial system. According to Hebrews 2:14-18 God's purpose in the incarnation of his son was atonement through his death:

Hebrews 2:14 14 Since therefore the children share in flesh and blood, he himself likewise partook of the same things, that through death he might destroy the one who has the power of death, that is, the devil, 15 and deliver all those who through fear of death were subject to lifelong slavery. 16 For surely it is not angels that he helps, but he helps the offspring of Abraham. 17 Therefore he had to be made like his brothers in every respect, so that he might become a merciful and faithful high priest in the service of God, to make propitiation for the sins of the people. 18 For because he himself has suffered when tempted, he is able to help those who are being tempted.

In becoming flesh, Jesus took his share in flesh and blood, lived a holy life and then offered himself with his blood in his death as an atoning sacrifice to God (2:14), destroying the power of the devil (cf. Jn 12:31; 16:11; Col 2:14-15; Rv 12:10-11), atoning for the sins of the people (Heb 2:17)³⁷. The devil or Satan is the accuser of the

37. εἰς τὸ ἰλάσκεσθαι τὰς ἁμαρτίας τοῦ λαοῦ

people of God. "Accuser" is the meaning of the Hebrew שָׂטָן śāṭān and the Greek διάβολος diabōlōs. His whole power of accusing people is based on their not forgiven sins. If the sins are atoned for, the power base of the devil is destroyed, he himself loses his area of activity. Death is related to sin, because "the wages of sin is death" (Rom 6:23). Perhaps because the devil had tempted and brought mankind in Adam and Eve into sin, he came into the position to be the one "who had the power of death", of course under God's sovereign rule.

In Heb 9 the writer first talks about the sacrificial system of the tabernacle and the use of blood there (Heb 9:7) and then he presents the better service of Christ bringing the new covenant (Heb 9:11-15):

11 But when Christ appeared as a high priest of the good things that have come, then through the greater and more perfect tent (not made with hands, that is, not of this creation) 12 he entered once for all into the holy places, not by means of the blood of goats and calves but by means of his own blood, thus securing an eternal redemption. 13 For if the sprinkling of defiled persons with the blood of goats and bulls and with the ashes of a heifer sanctifies for the purification of the flesh, 14 how much more will the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered himself without blemish to God, purify our conscience from dead works to serve the living God. 15 Therefore he is the mediator of a new covenant, so that those who are called may receive the promised eternal inheritance, since a death has occurred that redeems them from the

transgressions committed under the first covenant.

On the day of atonement the Old Testament high priest had to enter the most holy place of the tabernacle on the day of atonement with the blood of the sin offering. Christ entered not the earthly tent, but the heavens themselves to come into the presence of God the Father by means of his own blood. And this happened "once for all". The earthly high priest entered once a year and left again until next year. Jesus entered the heavens to stay, to sit at the right hand of the Father. On earth the blood of many sacrifices was offered, year after year, but now the blood of Christ has been offered once and for all.³⁸ It is unique, not to be repeated, it is valid for ever, for all eternity.

In Heb 9:16-21 the writer uses the fact that the word for covenant and the word for testament is one and the same in Greek and so explains that somebody or some animal had to die to make the covenant or testament valid which also shows the importance of blood in inaugurating the covenant (see Heb 9:18.19.20.21. Then he further explains the necessity of blood for atonement and forgiveness and the importance of Christ's blood in this context (Heb 9:22-26):

22 Indeed, under the law almost everything is purified with blood, and without the shedding of blood there is no forgiveness of sins. 23 Thus it was necessary for the copies of the heavenly things to be purified with these rites, but the heavenly things themselves with better sacrifices than these. 24 For Christ has entered, not into holy places made with hands, which are copies of the true things, but into

38. Cf. Heb 7:27; 9:12.26.28; 10:10; Rom 6:10; 1 Pt 3:18.

heaven itself, now to appear in the presence of God on our behalf. 25 Nor was it to offer himself repeatedly, as the high priest enters the holy places every year with blood not his own, 26 for then he would have had to suffer repeatedly since the foundation of the world. But as it is, he has appeared once for all at the end of the ages to put away sin by the sacrifice of himself.

After pointing out that the blood of animals never really took away sins (Hebrews 10:3-4) the writer encourages us to enter into the heavenly presence of God by trusting the power of the blood of Jesus (Heb 10:19-22):

19 Therefore, brothers, since we have confidence to enter the holy places by the blood of Jesus, 20 by the new and living way that he opened for us through the curtain, that is, through his flesh, 21 and since we have a great priest over the house of God, 22 let us draw near with a true heart in full assurance of faith, with our hearts sprinkled clean from an evil conscience and our bodies washed with pure water.

At the time of Christ's death the curtain in the temple was torn apart from top to bottom (Mt 27:50-51; Mk 15:37-38) showing that this was a work of God himself. This passage in Hebrews now explains the spiritual meaning of this deed of God: The way to the most holy place is no longer blocked. The curtain was a typological symbol of the body of Christ, of his flesh. When his flesh was broken, when he died, the hindrance was removed. Now we can enter. Not only our high priest, Christ, but we

in Christ in the Holy Spirit enter into the heavenly presence, nowadays in prayer and giving thanks, and hereafter forever, sprinkled in our hearts with the "blood that speaks a better word than the blood of Abel" (Heb 12:22-24; cf. Is 52:15). This blood is so important that to view this holy "blood of the covenant" as profane would be blocking the way to the Father for ever (Heb 10:29; 13:20).

The fact that the bodies of the sin offerings on the day of atonement were burned outside the camp is typologically related to the suffering of Jesus outside the gates of Jerusalem. Therefore we as believers should join him there in his rejection and shame (Heb 13:11-13).

Christ's blood in the catholic epistles.

Peter writes his first letter to those "who are elect exiles ... according to the foreknowledge of God the Father, in the sanctification of the Spirit, for obedience to Jesus Christ and for sprinkling with his blood" (1 Pt 1:1-2; cf. 1:18). John speaks in the beginning and in the end of his first letter of the blood of Christ. If we walk in God's light, then "the blood of Jesus his Son cleanses us from all sin" (1 Jn 1:7). This happens, if "we confess our sins" (1:9). Jesus Christ "came by water and blood" (1 Jn 5:6.8). The "blood" points to the death of Jesus at the cross (see John 19:34-35. He was a real human being with blood and flesh, God's Word incarnate (John 1:1-3.14), and dying he became a sacrifice atoning for the world's sin (1 Jn 2:1-2):

1 My little children, I am writing these things to you so that you may not sin. But if anyone does sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the

righteous. 2 He is the propitiation for our sins, and not for ours only but also for the sins of the whole world.³⁹

The Greek word used in 1 Jn 2:2 and also 1 Jn 4:10 is *hilasmōs* which is the exact word used in the LXX as translation for the Hebrew word for atonement. Both 1 Jn 2:2 and Jn 1:29 present the potential efficiency of the atoning salvation of Christ's blood as universal. But the sacrifice has to be accepted by faith. Faith is necessary for salvation (Jn 3:16). John does not only put an emphasis on the importance of the blood of Christ in his gospel and his letters but also in Revelation.

Christ's blood in Revelation.

One of the main titles of Christ in Revelation is the lamb.⁴⁰ Christ loved us and freed us from our sins by his blood⁴¹ (Rv 1:5). As a sacrificial lamb he was slaughtered and by his blood he "ransomed people for God from every tribe and language and people and nation" (Rv 5:9). The people who arrive in the New Jerusalem in the presence of God "have washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb" (Rv 7:14). They have conquered Satan "by

39. καὶ αὐτὸς ἱλασμός ἐστιν περὶ τῶν ἁμαρτιῶν ἡμῶν, οὐ περὶ τῶν ἡμετέρων δὲ μόνον ἀλλὰ καὶ περὶ ὅλου τοῦ κόσμου.

40. τὸ ἄρνιον *arniōn*. See Rv 5:6; 5:8; 5:12; 5:13; 6:1; 6:16; 7:9; 7:10; 7:14; 7:17; 12:11; 13:8; 14:1; 14:4; 14:10; 15:3; 17:14; 19:7; 19:9; 21:9; 21:14; 21:22; 21:23; 21:27; 22:1; 22:3. Both the beast and the false prophet of Rv 13 imitate the lamb. The beast as having been slain and coming to life again (13:3; cf. 5:6) and the false prophet as having "two horns like a lamb" 13:11.

41. λύσαντι ἡμᾶς ἐκ τῶν ἁμαρτιῶν ἡμῶν ἐν τῷ αἵματι αὐτοῦ

the blood of the Lamb and by the word of their testimony, for they loved not their lives even unto death" (Rv 12:11).

When Christ comes riding on a white horse and with a robe dipped in blood (Rv 19:13), it is probably not his own blood, but the blood of those killed while he is treading "the winepress of the fury of the wrath of God the Almighty" (19:15; cf. Is 63:1-6).

5.3 Redemption and Ransom

This subject is very closely related to the subject of atonement we have just looked at. One reason for this is that the price which was paid to ransom us or redeem us, is the blood of Christ. Another reason for this is that more than once both ideas are combined in the New Testament in one context. As we have seen, atonement is necessary for us so that our sins or our impurity do not kindle the wrath of God. It is necessary to uphold a friendly covenant relationship with God. The Greek vocabulary which is used in the New Testament for redemption or ransom was originally used for freeing a prisoner or slave by paying ransom money.⁴² Consequently redemption in this original Greek sense implies that somebody is redeemed from some kind of slavery, be it the slavery of Egypt or the slavery of sin.

But, as we think, more important than the original Greek background of these New Testament words is their background in the

42. See the explanation of ἡ ἀπολύτρωσις *apōlytrōsis* in Bauer, *Wörterbuch zum Neuen Testament*, p. 190. The word for ransom money is τό λύτρον *lytrōn*, *ibid.*, p. 954. λυτρόω *lytrōō* is originally to free by paying ransom, *ibid.*, p. 954. ἡ λύτρωσις *lytrōsis* is both setting free, redemption and the money paid for setting somebody free, *ibid.*, p. 954-955. ὁ λυτρωτής *lytrōtēs* is the redeemer, *ibid.*, p. 955.

use of the Old Testament in Hebrew. The LXX translated Hebrew words with Greek vocabulary. We still can see what Hebrew words have been translated by the LXX with what Greek words. And we can analyze what possible meanings the Hebrew words could have.

5.3.1 Redemption and Ransom in the Old Testament

The Hebrew word כֹּפֶר *kōper*

is sometimes translated by the LXX with λύτρον *lytrōn* and means "ransom, ransom money", but in Hebrew it is not necessarily money to free slaves. It is used in other contexts as well. In Ex 21:30 ransom money can be paid by the owner of a dangerous bull which killed somebody because of the carelessness of the owner. The ransom money saves the owner from the death penalty. In a census each shall give a ransom for his life to the LORD (Ex 30:12), "that there be no plague among them when you number them". A ransom for the life of a murderer is not acceptable (Nm 35:31). A ransom "for him who has fled to his city of refuge, that he may return to dwell in the land before the death of the high priest" is equally not acceptable (Nm 35:32). It is very dangerous to commit adultery because the injured husband will accept no compensation (Prv 6:35). "The ransom of a man's life is his wealth, but a poor man hears no threat" (Prv 13:8).

It has to be noted that *kōper* can be traced back to the same root⁴³ as the Hebrew words for "atonement" (*kippurîm*), "to atone" (*kipper*) and mercy seat (*kappōret*). This is another and

43. Brown, Driver, and Briggs, Hebrew and English Lexicon of the Old Testament, p. 497.

strong link between the two subjects of atonement and redemption or ransom. The ransom money is sometimes clearly "atonement money" as in Ex 30:12.16!

In 1 Sm 12:3 and Amos 5:12 *kōṣer* is used for a bribe and in this sense rejected as sin. Elihu mentions the concept of ransom twice (Job 33:24; 36:18). Ps 49:7.8.15 states that no man can ransom another so that this other could live for ever, but God can and will ransom the believer from the power of Sheol. The context makes it clear that this includes eternal life! "The wicked is a ransom for the righteous, and the traitor for the up-right" (Prv 21:18). God gives Egypt as Israel's ransom, Cush and Seba in exchange for them (Is 43:3).

Words from the root פָּדָה *pāḏh*

which convey the idea of redemption. פָּדָה *pāḏāh*, Qal, is "to ransom" and used most often. The Niph'al is also used and has a passive meaning.⁴⁴ פְּדוּת *pəḏût* noun f., ransom.⁴⁵ פִּדְיוֹם *pidyôm* noun m., ransom.⁴⁶ פִּדְיוֹן *pidyôn* noun m., ransom.⁴⁷ The different actions of redemption in the Old Testament expressed with these words can be summarized as follows.

1. To redeem the firstborn (Ex 13:13.15; 34:20; Nm 18:15-16).
2. The Levites are taken as ransom for the firstborn sons of Israel. For the 273 who are more firstborn sons above the number of the Levites five shekels per head are taken as redemption money (Nm 3:12.46-51).

44. *ibid.*, p. 804.

45. *ibid.*, p. 804.

46. *ibid.*, p. 804.

47. *ibid.*, p. 804.

3. To redeem a slave (Lv 19:20).
4. No devoted thing⁴⁸ can be redeemed (Lv 27:29).
5. The firstborn of a cow, a sheep, or a goat can not be redeemed. They are holy and have to be sacrificed (Nm 18:17).
6. The main emphasis is on God's actions of redemption:
 - (a) He redeemed Abraham (Is 29:22); David (Ps 31:5; 55:18; "out of every adversity" 2 Sm 4:9; 1 Kgs 1:29); Jeremiah (Jer 15:21 "from the grasp of the ruthless").
 - (b) He redeemed Israel from Egypt Dt 7:8 (out of love); 9:26; 13:5; 15:15; 21:8; 24:18; 2 Sm 7:23; 1 Chr 17:21; Neh 1:10; Ps 78:42; 111:9; Mi 6:4.
 - (c) He redeems Israel in the future (Jer 31:11; Zec 10:8; from Babylon or other countries of their exile); from all his iniquities (Ps 130:8); from the "hand" (= power) of Sheol (Hos 13:14). The redeemed of the Lord come home (Is 35:10; 51:11.)
 - (d) God would redeem them, but they speak lies against him (Hos 7:13).
 - (e) Prayers that God may redeem: Israel out of all his troubles (Ps 25:22); David (Ps 26:11); the people who pray (Ps 44:26; Ps 119:134);
 - (f) With God is plentiful redemption (Ps 130:7); he redeems the life of his servants (Ps 34:22; Ps 71:23).
 - (g) God can redeem from Sheol what man can not (Ps 49:7-8.15).

Words from the root גאל gāl

which convey the idea of redemption. גאל gāl, Qal, is "to redeem, act as kinsman" and used most often. The Niph'al is also used and has a passive or reflexive meaning.⁴⁹ גא'ullah noun f., 1. kin, 2. redemption, 3. right of redemption, 4. price of redemption.⁵⁰ גא'ûlîm noun abstract, redemption.⁵¹ The different actions of redemption in the Old Testament expressed with these words can be summarized as follows.

1. The nearest relative גא'el has the duty to help his brother in redeeming his property (Lv 25:25; Ruth 2:20; 3:9.12.13; 4:1.3.4; 4:6.8.14) and in redeeming him from temporary slavery (Lv 25:48.49.54). One of the nearest relatives has as "the avenger of blood" even the responsibility to kill the murderer of his relative (Nm 35:12.19.21; Nm 35:24.25.27).
2. A house in a walled city can be redeemed within a year (Lv 25:29.30). Houses in a village without walls can be redeemed and are released in the year of jubilee (Lv 25:31). Houses of the Levites in one of their walled cities can always be redeemed (Lv 25:32-33).
3. It is possible to redeem a piece of land (Lv 25:24.26).
4. The price to redeem an Israelite who sold himself as a temporary slave to another depends on the years to the next year of jubilee (Lv 25:51.52).

49. Brown, Driver, and Briggs, *Hebrew and English Lexicon of the Old Testament*, p. 145.

50. *ibid.*, p. 145.

51. *ibid.*, p. 145.

5. It is possible to redeem all these things by paying its price plus twenty percent: a vowed unclean animal (Lv 27:13); a firstborn unclean animal (Lv 27:27); a vowed house (Lv 27:15); a vowed field (Lv 27:19,20); some of the tithe (Lv 27:31).
6. But no devoted thing⁵² can be redeemed Lv 27:28 and in tithing the tenth animal can not be redeemed (Lv 27:33).
7. As a good ruler the righteous king redeems the poor from life threatening oppression (Ps 72:14).
8. One important emphasis is on God's actions of redemption:
 - (a) God himself is like the "nearest relative", the **גֹּאֵל** gō'ēl, the redeemer of Israel: Gn 48:15-16; Ps 78:35; Is 41:14; 43:1.14; 44:06.22; 44:23.24; 47:4; 48:17.20; 49:7.26; 52:9; 54:5.8; 59:20; 60:16; 62:12; 63:4.9.16.
 - (b) God redeemed Israel from Egypt: Ex 6:6; 15:13; Ps 74:2; 77:15; 106:10; Is 51:10; 63:9.
 - (c) God redeems Israel from Babylon (Is 52:3; Jer 50:34; Mi 4:10) and in a second exodus (Jer 31:11).
 - (d) God is also the redeemer of individuals: Job 19:25 (Job); Ps 19:14; 103:4 (David); 107:2 (the redeemed from all kind of trouble); Lam 3:58 (redeemed my life from the enemies);
 - (e) God is especially the redeemer of orphans (Prv 23:11).
 - (f) People pray to God to redeem them enemies (Ps 69:18) and from injustice (119:154).

- (g) God's future redeeming work: Is 35:9 (the redeemed come home to Zion); 63:4 (my year of redemption had come); Hos 13:14 (from death and from Sheol).

5.3.2 Redemption and Ransom in the New Testament

ἡ ἀπολύτρωσις apōlytrōsis **redemption**.

We have seen above that this Greek word was originally used for freeing a prisoner or slave by paying ransom money (lytrōn). When Jesus teaches about the last days and says, "Now when these things begin to take place, straighten up and raise your heads, because your redemption is drawing near" (Lk 21:28), he seems to think of an action of God which redeems them from all troubles and puts the tribulations of the end times for them to an end forever.

In the following verses Paul and the writer of Hebrews⁵³ understand "redemption" as the forgiveness of the sins the believers already have in Christ (Rom 3:23-24; Eph 1:7; Col 1:14; Heb 9:15). The closest parallel to this in the Old Testament is the promise that God will redeem Israel from all his iniquities (Ps 130:8).

In the following verses Paul understands the redemption in a similar way as in Lk 21:28 as an eschatological deed of God: In Rom 8:23 it is our receiving the resurrection body, "we wait eagerly for adoption as sons, the redemption of our bodies". In Eph 1:14 the Holy Spirit is "the guarantee of our inheritance" until God redeems what he has acquired for himself to the praise of his glory. Eph 4:30 points to the same event by saying that the believers were sealed by the Holy Spirit of God for the day of redemption, this means the day

53. If Paul is the author of Hebrews, as was the belief of much of the old church, then of course the two are the same.

when God will redeem them for ever from all troubles. This day is the day of the second coming of Christ, the day of resurrection.

When Paul says that Christ is "our wisdom and our righteousness and sanctification and redemption (1 Cor 1:30), the word redemption seems to be general, including the forgiveness of sins and the redemption of our bodies. Christ redeems us from all our troubles.

According to Heb 11:35 some believers refused to accept the temporary redemption as a prolonging of their life in favor of gaining the better resurrection into eternal life.

τό λύτρον, lytrōn ransom, ransom money.

When the sons of Zebedee and their mother requested the favor to sit at the right and the left hand of Jesus in his kingdom, Jesus took the opportunity to teach all twelve disciples to adopt a servant attitude as career choice (Mt 20:25-28; cf. Mk 10:45):

25 ... You know that the rulers of the Gentiles lord it over them, and their great ones exercise authority over them. 26 It shall not be so among you. But whoever would be great among you must be your servant, 27 and whoever would be first among you must be your slave, 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.⁵⁴

Jesus sees his own life as the life of a servant. His ultimate service will be to lay down his life as a ransom money payment to redeem many. Again the best place to look into the Old Testament for the

54. καὶ δοῦναι τὴν ψυχὴν αὐτοῦ λύτρον ἀντὶ πολλῶν.

interpretive background is Is 52:13-53:12: The last special servant section in Isaiah where this servant dies for the sins of the "many" (52:15; 53:11-12) and makes them thus righteous.

λυτρόω, *lytrōō*, to redeem.

The two disciples on their way to Emmaus talked to the supposed stranger that they "had hoped" that Jesus "was the one to redeem Israel"⁵⁵ (Lk 24:21). But their hope had died with Jesus.

Paul gives a wonderful presentation of God's grace and redeeming power in Titus 2:11-14:

11 For the grace of God has appeared, bringing salvation for all people, 12 training us to renounce ungodliness and worldly passions, and to live self-controlled, upright, and godly lives in the present age, 13 waiting for our blessed hope, the appearing of the glory of our great God and Savior Jesus Christ, 14 who gave himself for us to redeem us from all lawlessness and to purify for himself a people for his own possession who are zealous for good works.

One part of God's grace is that Christ gave himself to die at the cross for us "to redeem us from all lawlessness"⁵⁶. Lawlessness is a word for sin putting the emphasis on the breaking of God's law. In his letter to Titus Paul again and again stresses the necessity of the changed lives of the believers. This is in agreement with

55. ἡμεῖς δὲ ἠλπίζομεν ὅτι αὐτός ἐστιν ὁ μέλλων λυτροῦσθαι τὸν Ἰσραήλ.

56. ὃς ἔδωκεν ἑαυτὸν ὑπὲρ ἡμῶν ἵνα λυτρώσῃται ἡμᾶς ἀπὸ πάσης ἀνομίας

Christ's giving himself to redeem us from all lawlessness, all rebellion against God's will. The redeeming power is again his sacrificed life, his shed blood.

The same is true for the next and last section with the word *lytrōō* in 1 Pt 1:13-21 where Peter presents Christ as the passover lamb through whose blood we have been ransomed:

13 Therefore, preparing your minds for action, and being sober-minded, set your hope fully on the grace that will be brought to you at the revelation of Jesus Christ. 14 As obedient children, do not be conformed to the passions of your former ignorance, 15 but as he who called you is holy, you also be holy in all your conduct, 16 since it is written, "You shall be holy, for I am holy." 17 And if you call on him as Father who judges impartially according to each one's deeds, conduct yourselves with fear throughout the time of your exile, 18 knowing that you were ransomed from the futile ways inherited from your forefathers, not with perishable things such as silver or gold, 19 but with the precious blood of Christ, like that of a lamb without blemish or spot.⁵⁷ 20 He was foreknown before the foundation of the world but was made manifest in the last times for your sake, 21 who through him are believers in God, who raised him from the dead and gave him glory, so that your faith and hope are in God.

The ransom price is not gold or silver, but "the precious blood of Christ like that of a lamb without blemish or spot" (1:18-19). That

57. 18 εἰδότες ὅτι οὐ φθαρτοῖς, ἀργυρίῳ ἢ χρυσίῳ, ἐλυτρώθητε ἐκ τῆς ματαίας ὑμῶν ἀναστροφῆς πατροπαραδότου, 19 ἀλλὰ τιμίῳ αἵματι ὡς ἄμνοῦ ἁμώμου καὶ ἀσπίλου Χριστοῦ

is sacrificial language. Christ was without sin. And the fact that the sacrificial lambs had to be without blemish or spot (Lv 22:20) reflects Christ's perfection typologically. There are two more hints in the text that Peter thinks especially of the passover lamb. The passover lamb had to be chosen on the 10th of the first month to be sacrificed on the fourteenth (Ex 12:03.06). So Christ was also chosen some time before he was sacrificed, but not a few days before but he "was foreknown before the foundation of the world, but was made manifest in the last times for your sake" (1:20).

The beginning of 1 Pt 1:13 "Therefore, preparing your minds for action..." is literally "Wherefore gird up the loins of your mind" (KJV).⁵⁸ which reflects the commandment for the night of the passover in Ex 12:11: "In this manner you shall eat it: with your belt fastened, your sandals on your feet, and your staff in your hand. And you shall eat it in haste. It is the LORD's Passover." The Israelites were waiting for the Lord to move and lead them out of the slavery of Egypt.

So the Christians should wait for the Lord to move: "Therefore, preparing your minds for action, and being sober-minded, set your hope fully on the grace that will be brought to you at the revelation of Jesus Christ" (1 Pt 1:13). The move of the Lord is the second coming of Christ, here called "the revelation of Jesus Christ". When Christ comes, he will lead the "elect exiles of the dispersion in Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia, and Bithynia" (1 Pt 1:1) and all over the world home to the promised land, the inheritance, kept in heaven for you (1:4).

This hope of a great and eternal salvation and joy is based on one thing, "you were ransomed from the futile ways inherited from your forefathers ... with the precious blood of Christ, like that of

58. Διὸ ἀναζωσάμενοι τὰς ὀσφύας τῆς διανοίας ὑμῶν

a lamb without blemish or spot". When the blood of the lamb was put "on the two doorposts and the lintel of the houses in which" the Israelites were eating it, it was high time for redemption, for the deliverance from the slavery in Egypt. So the Christians have to be ready, with the blood of the lamb in front of their eyes, to leave this world any minute.

ἡ λύτρωσις, *lytrōsis* redemption.

When Zechariah, the father of John the Baptist, could speak again after obediently writing John's name on a tablet, he praised God "that he has visited his people and prepared a redemption for them"⁵⁹ (Lk 1:68). I understand the "prepared redemption" for God's people to be the Christ Zechariah is pointing to at the end of his praise in Lk 1:77-79 using the Old Testament picture of the "branch" (Jer 23:5-6; 2 Sm 23:5; Zec 3:8-9; 6:12) and the child on the throne of David (Is 9:1-7).

When Joseph and Mary took the small child Jesus to the temple to present him to the Lord as the firstborn son, "there was a prophetess, Anna, the daughter of Phanuel, of the tribe of Asher ... And coming up at that very hour she began to give thanks to God and to speak of him⁶⁰ to all who were waiting for the redemption of Jerusalem" (Lk 2:36.38). Again the word "redemption" is related to the child Jesus. They were waiting for the redemption of Jerusalem, but the redeemer of Jerusalem would be the Christ, this child when grown up. And this would happen with the severe pain of the mother of this child described in Lk 2:34-35.

59. Translation mine. The Greek ἵδῃ ἐπεσκέψατο καὶ ἐποίησεν λύτρωσιν τῷ λαῷ αὐτοῦ,

60. Meaning: Jesus, the child.

The letter to the Hebrews describes the "eternal redemption" accomplished by Christ as follows (9:11-12):

11 But when Christ appeared as a high priest of the good things that have come, then through the greater and more perfect tent (not made with hands, that is, not of this creation) 12 he entered once for all into the holy places, not by means of the blood of goats and calves but by means of his own blood, thus securing an eternal redemption.

Eternal redemption is that Christ crucified has risen from the dead and reaches the throne of God the father in heaven by means of his own blood and takes his seat of honor and power at the right hand of his father for ever. He is the king of kings and the eternal high priest "after the order of Melchizedek" (Heb 7:17; Ps 110:1.4) and he can save for ever (Heb 7:25).

ὁ λυτρωτής, *lytrōtēs* redeemer.

When Stephen says about Moses in his speech, "This Moses, whom they rejected, saying, 'Who made you a ruler and a judge?' - this man God sent as both ruler and redeemer by the hand of the angel who appeared to him in the bush" (Acts 7:35), he, of course, implies more than this. He wants to say that there is a parallel between Moses and Jesus. Israel rejected Moses, but God send him as ruler and redeemer. And Israel rejected Jesus, but God send him as an even greater ruler and greater redeemer. That is the whole reason, why Stephen talks so much about Joseph and Moses. Both were leaders chosen by God, but rejected by their brother Israelites. The same is true for Jesus (Acts 7:52-53). God approves of this interpretation of Stephen by showing him the heavens opened and

Jesus standing at the right hand of God in heaven (Acts 7:55-56), the place of greatest power and authority.

Further NT phrases of being bought with a price.

Because we have been bought with a price, we should flee from sexual immorality and lead a holy life which honors the fact that our body "is a temple of the Holy Spirit within" us (1 Cor 6:20). We "were bought with a price", so we should "not become slaves of men" (1 Cor 7:23). In both cases the price we have been bought with is, of course, again the death of Christ, his blood shed for us. As Paul says in Gal 3:13-14:

Christ redeemed us from the curse of the law by becoming a curse for us⁶¹ - 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.

The blood of Christ shed at the wooden cross is our being bought free from the curse of the law bringing us the blessing of Abraham with the Holy Spirit of God. Paul continues this idea in Gal 4:4-5 by saying that Christ buys us free from being under the law to present us as legally fully empowered heirs:

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 law⁶², so that we might receive adoption as sons.

61. Χριστὸς ἡμᾶς ἐξηγόρασεν ἐκ τῆς κατάρας τοῦ νόμου γενόμενος ὑπὲρ ἡμῶν κατάρα

62. ἵνα τοὺς ὑπὸ νόμον ἐξαγοράσῃ

As heirs we receive the Spirit of God's Son crying, "Abba! Father!"

Peter predicts that there will be false teachers among the people of God "who will secretly bring in destructive heresies, even denying the Master who bought them, bringing upon themselves swift destruction" (2 Pt 2:1). The master who bought them is Christ, and he bought them with his sacrificed life (see 1 Pt 1:18-19).

Jesus Christ is worshiped in Rv 5 as the one who is worthy to take and open the scroll. The proclaimed reason why he alone is worthy to do this is his being slaughtered and having bought people for God by his blood (Rv 5:9-10):

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, 10 and you have made them a kingdom and priests to our God, and they shall reign on the earth."

In Rv 14:1-5 John sees Christ standing on "Mount Zion" as "the Lamb, and with him 144,000 who had his name and his Father's name written on their foreheads". These 144,000 have some special qualities. For example, they have "been redeemed from the earth" (14:3) and they "have been redeemed from mankind as firstfruits for God and the Lamb" (14:4).⁶³ We again can understand that the price by which they have been redeemed was the blood of the Lamb (cf. 5:9-10).

⁶³ οἱ ἡγορασμένοι ἀπὸ τῆς γῆς ... οὗτοι ἡγοράσθησαν ἀπὸ τῶν ἀνθρώπων

5.4 Reconciliation

Reconciliation is the restoration of peace between two parties.

5.4.1 Words Used

In the active voice the verb καταλλάσσω *katallassō* means "to reconcile somebody (in accusative case) to somebody (in dative case)" (see 2 Cor 5:18-19). In the passive voice it means "to be reconciled" (see Rom 5:10; 2 Cor 5:20; 1 Cor 7:11).⁶⁴ The noun ἡ καταλλαγή *katallagē* means "reconciliation".⁶⁵ The verb ἀποκαταλλάσσω *apokatalassō* also means "to reconcile".⁶⁶

5.4.2 God Reconciles

In the New Testament the above mentioned words are mostly used for the reconciliation of men to God. Only in 1 Cor 7:10-11 we have a reconciliation between two human parties: Talking of Christian couples Paul says that "the wife should not separate from her husband (but if she does, she should remain unmarried or else be reconciled to her husband), and the husband should not divorce his wife". He also refers to the fact that this is the command of the Lord Jesus.

In all other texts the reconciliation is between God and man or between God and the whole world. And the one who initiates the reconciliation is God through the sacrificial death of Christ at the cross. In his great discourse about justification by faith (Rom 3:21-5:21) Paul also has a passage about reconciliation (5:9-11):

64. Bauer, Wörterbuch zum Neuen Testament, p. 818.

65. *ibid.*, p. 818.

66. *ibid.*, p. 183.

9 Since, therefore, we have now been justified by his blood, much more shall we be saved by him from the wrath of God. 10 For if while we were enemies we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son, much more, now that we are reconciled, shall we be saved by his life. 11 More than that, we also rejoice in God through our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom we have now received reconciliation.⁶⁷

God's wrath on judgment day (Rom 2:5) will only target his enemies. The reconciled believers are his friends. They can be proud of their God and rejoice in him. Speaking of his fellow Israelites as far as they are not believers in Christ, Paul says (Rom 11:15):

15 For if their rejection means the reconciliation of the world, what will their acceptance mean but life from the dead?⁶⁸

Because the major part of Israel rejected Christ and was therefore temporarily set aside by God, the Gentiles of the whole world now get the opportunity to hear the gospel and accept it and become friends of God. It seems according to Paul that the future acceptance of all of Israel by God, of the whole remnant of Israel of that time, will coincide with the resurrection of the dead.

That the whole world is already reconciled with God through the death of Christ at the cross is the emphasis of 2 Cor 5:18-21:

67. 10 εἰ γὰρ ἐχθροὶ ὄντες κατηλλάγημεν τῷ θεῷ διὰ τοῦ θανάτου τοῦ υἱοῦ αὐτοῦ, πολλῶ μᾶλλον καταλλαγέμεθα σωθησόμεθα ἐν τῇ ζωῇ αὐτοῦ. 11 οὐ μόνον δέ, ἀλλὰ καὶ καυχώμενοι ἐν τῷ θεῷ διὰ τοῦ κυρίου ἡμῶν Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ, δι' οὗ νῦν τὴν καταλλαγὴν ἐλάβομεν.

68. εἰ γὰρ ἡ ἀποβολὴ αὐτῶν καταλλαγὴ κόσμου, τίς ἢ πρόσλημις εἰ μὴ ζωὴ ἐκ νεκρῶν;

18 All this is from God, who through Christ reconciled us to himself and gave us the ministry of reconciliation; 19 that is, in Christ God was reconciling the world to himself, not counting their trespasses against them, and entrusting to us the message of reconciliation. 20 Therefore, we are ambassadors for Christ, God making his appeal through us. We implore you on behalf of Christ, be reconciled to God.⁶⁹ 21 For our sake he made him to be sin⁷⁰ who knew no sin, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God.

It is clear that it is necessary to accept the friendship of God, to accept his offer of peace. Paul and other servants of God are ambassadors for Christ. To accept their message is to accept Christ's offer of peace and to be reconciled. Those who reject even that outstretched hand of God in the crucified Christ, can have no other hope of peace with God. God in the crucified Christ is the reconciliation of the world. Again a sound Christology including the divinity of Christ is the foundation of the salvation of the world.

In Eph 2:11-18 Paul combines the same subject of reconciliation with the unity of Jewish and Gentile believers in Christ:

11 Therefore remember that at one time you Gentiles in the flesh, called "the uncircumcision" by what

69. 18 τὰ δὲ πάντα ἐκ τοῦ θεοῦ τοῦ καταλλάξαντος ἡμᾶς ἑαυτῷ διὰ Χριστοῦ καὶ δόντος ἡμῖν τὴν διακονίαν τῆς καταλλαγῆς, 19 ὥς ὅτι θεὸς ἦν ἐν Χριστῷ κόσμον καταλλάσσειν ἑαυτῷ, μὴ λογιζόμενος αὐτοῖς τὰ παραπτώματα αὐτῶν, καὶ θέμενος ἐν ἡμῖν τὸν λόγον τῆς καταλλαγῆς. 20 ὑπὲρ Χριστοῦ οὖν πρεσβεύομεν ὡς τοῦ θεοῦ παρακαλοῦντος δι' ἡμῶν δεόμεθα ὑπὲρ Χριστοῦ, καταλλάγητε τῷ θεῷ.

70. Or: "to be a sin offering".

is called the circumcision, which is made in the flesh by hands - 12 remember that you were at that time separated from Christ, alienated from the commonwealth of Israel and strangers to the covenants of promise, having no hope and without God in the world. 13 But now in Christ Jesus you who once were far off have been brought near by the blood of Christ. 14 For he himself is our peace, who has made us both one and has broken down in his flesh the dividing wall of hostility 15 by abolishing the law of commandments and ordinances, that he might create in himself one new man in place of the two, so making peace, 16 and might reconcile us both to God in one body through the cross, thereby killing the hostility.⁷¹ 17 And he came and preached peace to you who were far off and peace to those who were near. 18 For through him we both have access in one Spirit to the Father.

The unity of Jews and Gentiles in the body of Christ, his church, is based on the death of Christ at the cross. The Gentiles have been brought near by the blood of Christ. Certain regulations of the law of the Old Testament which served to separate Israel from all other nations were made ineffective so that the believers of Israel and the believers of the Gentiles could be united in one new mankind. The peace is between them now and both are reconciled to God. They come into his presence in one Spirit and they form one family of God's household and one holy temple in the Lord (Eph 2:19-22).

While Paul has a strong emphasis on the church as Christ's body in Ephesians he has also a certain cosmological perspective

71. 16 καὶ ἀποκαταλλάξῃ τοὺς ἀμφοτέρους ἐν ἐνὶ σώματι τῷ θεῷ διὰ τοῦ σταυροῦ ἀποκτείνας τὴν ἔχθραν ἐν αὐτῷ•

in Colossians in addition to that when he talks of the reconciliation (Col 1:18-22):

18 And he is the head of the body, the church. He is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead, that in everything he might be preeminent. 19 For in him all the fullness of God was pleased to dwell, 20 and through him to reconcile to himself all things, whether on earth or in heaven, making peace by the blood of his cross. 21 And you, who once were alienated and hostile in mind, doing evil deeds, 22 he has now reconciled in his body of flesh by his death,⁷² in order to present you holy and blameless and above reproach before him.

The reconciliation of all things on earth or in heaven has the effect that there will be peace everywhere and everything will be submitted to God (cf. 1 Cor 15:24-28). The powers who do not want to submit will be dealt with and be done away (cf. Col 2:15). According to Heb 2:14-18 God became man to help and save human beings. This was not intended to help angels (Heb 2:16), probably meaning fallen angels. Quite on the contrary, this was meant to "destroy the one who has the power of death, that is, the devil" (Heb 2:14). The effect of the blood of Christ for people on earth is that their sins are forgiven. The effect of the blood of Christ in heaven is that the accuser of the brothers and sisters is no longer successful in heaven but is thrown out and overcome by the blood

72. 20 καὶ δι' αὐτοῦ ἀποκαταλλάξαι τὰ πάντα εἰς αὐτόν, εἰρηνοποιήσας διὰ τοῦ αἵματος τοῦ σταυροῦ αὐτοῦ, δι' αὐτοῦ εἴτε τὰ ἐπὶ τῆς γῆς εἴτε τὰ ἐν τοῖς οὐρανοῖς• 21 καὶ ὑμᾶς ποτε ὄντας ἀπηλλοτριωμένους καὶ ἐχθροὺς τῇ διανοίᾳ ἐν τοῖς ἔργοις τοῖς πονηροῖς - 22 νυνὶ δὲ ἀποκατηλλάγητε ἐν τῷ σώματι τῆς σαρκὸς αὐτοῦ διὰ τοῦ θανάτου

of the lamb (Rv 12:10-11). The final result is peace everywhere by the blood of Christ. God wins back his peaceful control of the whole creation.

5.5 God's Righteousness and the Justification of the Sinner

5.5.1 In the Old Testament

Words used.

Here we will look at words of the root צדק *ṣḏq* which are used for the concept of righteousness in the Old Testament.⁷³

צִדְקָה *ṣəḏāqāh* - **righteousness**. *ṣəḏāqāh* is used in about 150 Verses in the OT.⁷⁴ Even Shoshan⁷⁵ counts 157 occurrences in the Old Testament. The difference may be traced back to the fact that the word can be used more than once in a verse.

73. For a survey of righteousness in the Old Testament and the different synonyms and antonyms used in the context of the concept of righteousness see Eddy Lanz, *Righteousness in the Old and New Testaments* (Rawalpindi: Eved Adonai - Is 53:11, 2013), <http://www.lanz.li/engsu/Right-130902-en.pdf>, p. 1-23.

74. The Hebrew text was searched according to OpenScriptures.org, ed., *Westminster Leningrad Codex*, [accessed September 1, 2012], 2010, <http://www.crosswire.org/sword/modules/ModInfo.jsp?modName=OSMHB>.

75. Even-Shoshan, *A New Concordance of the Bible*, p. 977.

שֶׁדֶק *ṣēdeq* - **righteousness**. *ṣēdeq* is used in about 112 Verses in the OT.⁷⁶ Even Shoshan⁷⁷ counts 119 occurrences in the Old Testament. The difference can be traced back to the fact that the word can be used more than once in a verse.

צַדִּיק *ṣaddîq* - **righteous** *ṣaddîq* is used in about 198 verses in the OT.⁷⁸ Even Shoshan⁷⁹ counts 206 occurrences in the Old Testament. The difference goes back to the fact that the word is used more than once in Gn 18:24,25; Ps 7:9; Eccl 8:14; Is 57:1; Ez 3:21; 33:12.

The different verb forms of the root צִדַּק *ṣdq*. Verb Forms of the Root **צִדַּק** *ṣdq* are used in about 40 Verses in the OT.⁸⁰ Even Shoshan⁸¹ counts 41 occurrences in the Old Testament. The different verb forms with the root *ṣdq* are found almost exclusively in cases of conflict or court cases where God or man evaluate the behavior of God or man. The main context is a legal one.

צִדַּק *ṣādaq* be just, be righteous⁸² (Gn 38:26; Job 4:17; 9:2,15,20;

76. The Hebrew text was searched according to OpenScriptures.org, *Westminster Leningrad Codex*. There is a mistake in Strong's numbers in Prv 8:16. There the list according to OSMHB gives only 111 verses.

77. Even-Shoshan, *A New Concordance of the Bible*, p. 977.

78. The Hebrew text was searched according to OpenScriptures.org, *Westminster Leningrad Codex*.

79. Even-Shoshan, *A New Concordance of the Bible*, p. 975.

80. The Hebrew text was searched according to OpenScriptures.org, *Westminster Leningrad Codex*.

81. Even-Shoshan, *A New Concordance of the Bible*, p. 976.

82. If not otherwise noted the meanings here are given according to Brown, Driver, and Briggs, *Hebrew and English Lexicon of the Old Testament*. For this root see p. 842.

10:15; 11:2; 13:18; 15:14; 22:3; 25:4; 33:12; 34:5; 35:7; 40:8; Ps 19:10; 51:4; 143:2; Is 43:9.26; 45:25; Ez 16:52).

נִשְׁתַּדָּק ništaddāq Hithpa‘ēl "how shall we justify ourselves, clear ourselves from suspicion?" (p. 843; emphasis there) Gn 44:16.

נִשְׁדָּק nišdaq Niph‘al "the holy place shall be put right, in a right condition" (p. 842; Dn 8:14).

הִשְׁדָּקְהוּ etc. šiddəqāh Pi‘ēl justify, make to appear righteous (p. 842; Job 32:2; 33:32; Jer 3:11; Ez 16:51.52).

הִשְׁדִּיק hišdīq 1. do justice, in administering the law; 2. declare righteous, justify, 3. justify, vindicate the cause of, save, 4. make righteous, turn to righteousness (p. 842-843; Ex 23:7; Dt 25:1; 2 Sm 15:4; 1 Kgs 8:32; 2 Chr 6:23; Job 27:5; Ps 82:3; Prv 17:15; Is 5:23; 50:8; 53:11; Dn 12:3).

God and the concept of righteousness.

The Lord is righteous. The sentence, "The Lord is righteous." presents righteousness as a quality of God. It can especially mean that God is right or righteous in a certain context. Again the main context is legal.

שִׁדְדִּיק יְהוָה צְדִיק יְהוָה šaddīq YHWH, šaddīq ’ēl (2 Chr 12:6; Ezr 9:15; Neh 9:8.33; Ps 7:10-13; 11:5-7; 119:137; 129:4; 147:17; Is 45:21; Jer 12:1; Lam 1:18; Dn 9:14; Zep 3:5).

When the princes of Israel and the king humble themselves and say, "The Lord is righteous." (2 Chr 12:6), they mean what is just written before "Thus says the Lord, 'You abandoned me, so I have abandoned you to the hand of Shishak.'" (2 Chr 12:5). They acknowledge both, that God's retributive justice is correct and that he has spoken right through his prophet. The same idea that God is just in fulfilling the threats in case of breaking the covenant is also discernible in Dn 9:14. The same context of acknowledging God's

being just and at the same time the sins of the people is also found in Ezra 9:15; Neh 9:33; Lam 1:18 in the context of intercession.

"The Lord is righteous in all his ways" (Ps 145:17), speaks of God's being righteous in such a way that he can not be unjust. All his dealings, all his doings are in agreement with his view of what is right and just. God is just in fighting the evildoers (Zep 3:5). Is 45:21 presents God's being just together with his being the savior. God is a righteous judge in saving the upright in heart and punishing the evil (Ps 7:10-13; 11:5-7; 129:4. In Jer 12:1 Jeremiah confesses that God is righteous and therefore he comes to God with his court case against the wicked who want to kill him (cf. Jer 11:18-20). God is just in fulfilling his word (Neh 9:8).

God is also righteous in giving righteous commandments, legal decisions, righteous testimonies and a truthful revelation (Ps 119:137-138)..

The righteous deeds of the Lord. The righteous deeds of the Lord occur four times in the OT. In all these sections the phrases can be understood within a legal context: As a righteous judge God saves the oppressed people from their oppressors. In these cases Israel is saved from the oppression of other nations. Therefore the righteous deeds of the Lord mean salvation, but still the phrase is a legal one. Similar is true for the phrase in the singular where God's righteousness often implies salvation also of individuals from enemies or troubles.

יְהוָה צַדִּיקוֹת יְהוָה šidqôṭ YHWH "righteous acts" of God (p. 842); Jgs 5:11; 1 Sm 12:7; Dn 9:16; Mi 6:5.

In these four places the ESV translates "*the righteous triumphs of the Lord*" (Jgs 5:11), "*concerning all the righteous deeds of the Lord that he performed for you and for your fathers*" (1 Sm 12:7), "O

Lord, *according to all your righteous acts*, let your anger and your wrath turn away from your city Jerusalem" (Dn 9:16). "O my people, remember what Balak king of Moab devised, and what Balaam the son of Beor answered him, and what happened from Shittim to Gilgal, that you may know *the saving acts of the Lord*" (Mi 6:5). In all these four sections the "righteous deeds of the Lord" speak of God's saving deeds which are positive for Israel. In Mic 6:5 God saved Israel from the plan of Balak king of Moab who had planned to curse Israel through Balaam. The righteous deeds of the Lord in 1 Sm 12 include the liberation from the slavery in Egypt and their coming into the promised land (1 Sm 12:8), and their deliverance out of the hand of their enemies on every side through Gideon, Barak, Jephthah and Samuel (1 Sm 12:9-11). The key idea in these sections is that God is faithful to his covenant and his people and when they cry out to him from their oppressors, he saves them from the enemies. This context is also true for Jgs 5:11 and Dn 9:16 where Daniel continues to pray in intercession to God for his people Israel in 9:17-19.

יְדִקְתָּ יְהוָה צְדִקְתִּי ṣidqaṭô, ṣidqaṭ YHWH (Ps 22:31; 71:15.24; 98:2; 111:3; 119:142; 143:1; Is 46:13; 51:6).

God's righteous rule. God as King is righteous and his rule is based on righteousness (Ps 48:10; 89:14; 96:13; 97:2.6; 98:9). God's commandments implement righteousness (Gn 30:33: Do not steal!; Dt 24:13; 1 Sm 26:23; Jer 22:3; Ez 45:9; Lv 19:15.36; Dt 25:15; Is 1:21; Jer 22:13; Gn 38:26; 44:16; 20:4; Ez 23:45). The general commandments for judges to declare the righteous to be righteous and to declare the wicked to be wicked are part of God's system of justice (Ex 23:7; Prv 17:15; Is 5:23).

The "right sacrifices"⁸³ are not "sacrifices that give you righteousness", but "sacrifices which are right before God, acceptable to God" (Dt 33:19; Ps 4:5; 51:19). God's justice can be retributive (Is 10:22; 28:17; 59:17; 11:4; Neh 9:33; Lam 1:18; Dn 9:14). He spares righteous people in his judgments (Gn 6:9; 7:1; 18:23.24.25.26.28; 20:4). He judges the nations, the earth and the world with righteousness (Ps 9:8; 96:13; 98:9; Is 26:9; Gn 18:25).

Man and the concept of righteousness.

No man is totally righteous before God. There are passages in the Old Testament that teach the sinfulness of man from his birth (Gn 8:21; Ps 51:5). The question is: Can man be righteous and to what extent?

One important book in which the righteousness of man is made a subject, is the book of Job. In his time Job was an exceptionally pious man, praised by God towards Satan (Job 1:8):

Have you considered my servant Job, that there is none like him on the earth, a blameless and upright man, who fears God and turns away from evil?

When Satan gets the permission from God to attack Job, his family, his wealth and health, it looks as if God has forsaken Job and punished him, because he had fallen into sin. So tremendous were the catastrophes falling on him.

In his calamity Job clings to the idea that he is righteous (Job 27:6). He acknowledges in Job 9:2 that no man can be totally righteous before God (cf. Job 1:5.22), but he is convinced that his present miserable state does not originate from some great sin he

83. זִבְחֵי שְׁדֵּעַ zibhê šēdeq "right peace-offerings" (p. 841).

had committed. He believes that he is innocent. His three friends always assume that he must have committed some great sin which has let to his calamity.

Elihu kept silent while the three friends of Job tried to correct him. But when they gave it up, Elihu felt himself compelled to enter the argument (Job 32:1-3):

1 So these three men ceased to answer Job, because he was righteous in his own eyes. 2 Then Elihu the son of Barachel the Buzite, of the family of Ram, burned with anger. He burned with anger at Job because he justified himself rather than God. 3 He burned with anger also at Job's three friends because they had found no answer, although they had declared Job to be in the wrong.

Elihu does not accept that Job views himself as righteous and God as in the wrong (Job 33:9-12). Elihu thinks that Job's righteousness or sinfulness concerns himself, that his being righteous does not give God anything (35:7). It is noteworthy that the three friends of Job were rebuked by God (Job 42:7-8, but not this younger man Elihu. Job had to pray for the three friends so that God would heal them (Job 42:8-9). That was one way God vindicated him towards the three friends. But in his encounter with the majesty of God Job himself repents about what he had said (Job 42:2-6):

2 I know that you can do all things,
and that no purpose of yours can be thwarted.
3 'Who is this that hides counsel without knowledge?'
Therefore I have uttered what I did not understand,
things too wonderful for me, which I did not know.
4 'Hear, and I will speak;

I will question you, and you make it known to me.'
 5 I had heard of you by the hearing of the ear,
 but now my eye sees you;
 6 therefore I despise myself,
 and repent 1 in dust and ashes.

As Job was more righteous than his three friends, so Jer 51:9-10 celebrate the judgment of Babylon as the vindication of the Jews. The idea is perhaps that in the judgment of Babylon God is vindicated as greater than the gods of Babylon. At the same time the fall of Babylon is a fulfillment of God's prophecies through such prophets as Isaiah (Is 13:1-14:27; 40:1-48:22) and Jeremiah. Therefore the pious Jews who clung to God in the midst of the catastrophe were vindicated that their faith was right and righteous.

Daniel intercedes for his people and says, "For we do not present our pleas before you because of our righteousness, but because of your great mercy." (Dn 9:18). He sees the righteousness of the Jews and Israelites as non-existent and their many sins as self-evident (Dn 9:5-16).

Eccl 7:20 states that there is no absolute righteous man without sin. In Is 46:12 God speaks to those who are "stubborn of heart ... who are far from righteousness."

There are people who are called righteous before God. We have seen that there are righteous people who are spared in God's judgments (Gn 6:9; 7:1; 18:23.24.25.26.28; 20:4). This righteousness is not an absolute righteousness, but a relative righteousness within the respective context. Abimelech for example in Gn 20:4 was not righteous in an absolute sense, but innocent with regard to Sarah. Abraham had given her out as his sister, not as his wife. And Abimelech had not yet approached Sarah. And this is acknowl-

edged in God's answer (Gn 20:6).

Gn 6:8-9 (cf. 7:1) give a favorable description of Noah in contrast to the rest of mankind:

But Noah found favor in the eyes of the Lord. 9
... Noah was a righteous man, blameless in his generation. Noah walked with God.

After the flood though Noah and his descendants are still described in the words of Gn 8:21 which teach the sinfulness and universal corruption of human nature. So what makes people like Noah who are sinful in themselves capable of living as righteous people before God? How can a man "walk with God"?

The key to righteousness is God's grace and human faith. It is a pointer to God's grace when we read in Gn 6:8: "Noah found favor in the eyes of the Lord". God revealed his word and plan to Noah and ordered him to build an ark. Noah did it. That is faith (Gn 6:13-22; 7:1; Heb 11:7).

Starting with the sinning of Adam and Eve in Gn 3:1-24 there is clearly an escalation of sin and accompanying curses in Gn 3:1 to 11:9 (Gn 3:14,17; 3:17; 4:11; 5:29; 9:25). In answer to Noah's sacrifice after the flood God stops the escalation of punishments through his everlasting rainbow covenant of grace between himself "and all flesh that is on the earth" (Gn 8:21 to 9:17). After slowing down the development of all nations by dispersing them all over the earth because of the language confusion at the city of Babel, God starts a new phase of salvation history through the calling of Abram and the promises given to him (Gn 12:1-3.7).

1 Now the Lord said to Abram, "Go from your country and your kindred and your father's house to

the land that I will show you. 2 And I will make of you a great nation, and I will bless you and make your name great, so that you will be a blessing. 3 I will bless those who bless you, and him who dishonors you I will curse, and in you all the families of the earth shall be blessed." ... 7 Then the Lord appeared to Abram and said, "To your offspring I will give this land." So he built there an altar to the Lord, who had appeared to him.

God commands Abram to leave his country, trust God's word and receive a whole country of his own. A fourfold promise invites Abram's faith: 1. The promise of becoming a great nation, 2. of having a great name, 3. of being a blessing for all the families of the earth, 4. of receiving the country of Canaan. Abram answers God's invitation with a life of faith, trusting God. God's revelation to Abram and Abram's faith made Abram to Abraham, a father of many nations (Gn 17:5) which is interpreted by the apostle Paul as a hint that Abraham would not only be the father of the nation of Israel, but of all believers in Israel and in all other nations (Rom 4:11-13).

Abram believed God that he would have an innumerable offspring in spite of the fact that his wife was barren and he had no child: "And he believed the Lord, and he counted it to him as righteousness" (Gn 15:6; cf. Rom 4:3.9). As father of all believers which would be born after him, Abraham's life is a pattern. A framework for salvation history is set which connects God's blessings with honoring Abraham and his seed and his kind of trust in God (Gn 12:2-3; cf. Gn 27:29). This is the background of the saying of Jesus Christ that "salvation is from the Jews" (John 4:22). The ultimate reason is that he himself, the Savior of the world (Jn

4:42), is from the tribe of Judah (see Gn 49:10) and a son of Abraham. Or as Paul puts it in Gal 3:16-21: The ultimate seed of Abraham in whom all nations receive God's blessing and eternal life, is Jesus the Christ.

David is a good example for the justification of a repenting sinner by faith within the Old Testament. When God forgives David and saves him from blood-guiltiness, his tongue can praise the God of his salvation and the righteousness of God given to him as a gift (Ps 51:14; cf. 32:1-2; Rom 4:6-8).

The section in Heb 10:37-11:40 shows us the way of faith as the way of righteousness and salvation throughout the Old Testament. At the beginning of this (Heb 10:37-38) the writer points to Hb 2:4 summarizing the principle.

... but my righteous one shall live by faith.

This is also the verse with which the apostle Paul sums up his gospel in Rom 1:16-17 (cf. Gal 3:11). I would not be surprised if we would learn in the coming world that he was also the writer of the letter to the Hebrews.

When God promised that the nations of the world would be blessed in the seed of Abraham (Gn 22:18; cf. 12:3; 26:4; 28:14), he implied that this was a promise of a future blessing. In the further development of Genesis this becomes eschatological (Gn 49:1). There were partial fulfillments from the time of the life of the patriarchs until Moses and Joshua and later, but the ultimate fulfillment was reserved to the coming of Christ.

God's justification of sinners through the coming Christ. The personal servant of the Lord in Isaiah 52:13-53:12 is presented as the one who makes those sinners righteous who accept his teaching and recognize him (53:11):

11 Out of the anguish of his soul he shall see and be satisfied; by his knowledge shall the righteous one, my servant, make many to be accounted righteous, and he shall bear their iniquities.⁸⁴

In many sections of the the New Testament this personal servant of the Lord in Isaiah is identified as Jesus Christ (e.g. Lk 22:37; Acts 8:32-35). Now two things are mentioned here through which the coming Christ makes many righteous: First "he shall bear their iniquities" and second he will make them righteous "by his knowledge". The Hebrew for this last phrase can be understood in the sense of "by knowing him" or "by his own knowledge, by his teaching". There are elements of his teaching activity in the four famous servant sections. The coastlands wait for his law or his teaching (42:4). He is teaching those coastlands about himself in 49:1-6 and he is a teacher of God's word in 50:4-5.10.⁸⁵ I think, we have to combine both elements "knowing Christ" and "Christ's knowledge". Those who know Christ have eternal life (Jn 17:3) and they also obey his words and have thus eternal life (Is 50:10; Jn 5:24).

The foundation of Christ's justifying the sinners in Isaiah 53:11 is his suffering with the shedding of his blood for Israel (53:8) and all nations (the many in Is 52:15 and 53:11-12). This is stated in 53:11 with the words "he shall bear their iniquities". That is the same combination of justification of the sinners with their faith in Christ and the atonement through Christ's blood we have in Rom 3:21-26. This is just another instance where Isaiah 53 is a core

84. מַעֲמֵל נַפְשׁוֹ יִרְאֶה יִשְׁכָּע בְּרַעְיוֹתָיו וְיַדְרִיק צְדִיק עַבְדִּי לְרַבִּים וְעוֹנֵתָם הוּא יִקְבֹּל:

85. Cf. Dn 12:3 which seems to imply that people are made righteous by being taught the truth.

section for the soteriology of the Old Testament preparing the way for the gospel of the New Testament.

One part of the naming of the coming Christ in Is 9:6 (cf. 10:21) is "Mighty God". And in Is 53 the revelation of the identity of the suffering servant is the revelation of "the arm of the Lord" (53:1; cf. 51:9; 52:10). God puts the sin of the world onto this one lamb of God (53:6-7). Salvation here is a divine work, a cooperation between God and his servant. Therefore it is not surprising that another text in Isaiah presents worldwide salvation as to be found in the recognition and confession that righteousness is only to be found in the one and only true God (Is 45:22-25):

22 Turn to me and be saved, all the ends of the earth!

For I am God, and there is no other.

23 By myself I have sworn; from my mouth has gone out in righteousness a word that shall not return:

‘To me every knee shall bow,
every tongue shall swear allegiance.’

24 Only in the Lord, it shall be said of me,
are righteousness and strength;
to him shall come and be ashamed
all who were incensed against him.

25 In the Lord all the offspring of Israel
shall be justified and shall glory.⁸⁶

He the one and only true God calls the nations of the world to turn to God and find salvation. God's decree is that every human being has

86. The outcome of this justification of all of the offspring of Israel in the Lord will be: "Your people shall all be righteous; they shall possess the land forever, the branch of my planting, the work of my hands, that I might be glorified" (Is 60:21).

to acknowledge him as the true God and the source of righteousness and strength. If we combine this with the arm of the Lord in Isaiah 53 we have another hint to the divinity of Christ. Therefore the apostle Paul had no scruples to write Philippians 2:9-11 on the background of Isaiah 45:22-25: Every man and every angel will bow down to the divinity of Jesus Christ and confess that Jesus is the Lord, the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, the source of righteousness and strength by becoming weak and condemned to a criminal's death at the cross (Phil 2:5-8) and by being raised on the third day from death to receive the highest name there is, the name of Lord God.

In one of the passages about the coming Christ in Jeremiah (23:5-6) his name is "The Lord is our righteousness".⁸⁷

5 Behold, the days are coming, declares the Lord, when I will raise up for David a righteous Branch, and he shall reign as king and deal wisely, and shall execute justice and righteousness in the land. 6 In his days Judah will be saved, and Israel will dwell securely. And this is the name by which he will be called: 'The Lord is our righteousness.'

After the exile the prophet Zechariah takes up this prophecy about the Christ as the righteous Branch and combines it with forgiveness of sins:

8 Hear now, O Joshua the high priest, you and your friends who sit before you, for they are men who are a sign: behold, I will bring my servant the Branch.

⁸⁷. In the parallel of Jer 33:15-16 this is also the name of the New Jerusalem of the times of the coming Christ.

9 For behold, on the stone that I have set before Joshua, on a single stone with seven eyes, I will engrave its inscription, declares the Lord of hosts, and I will remove the iniquity of this land in a single day.

The coming Christ as the Branch will bring righteousness on a day of salvation when God "will remove the iniquity of this land" (cf. Jer 31:31-34). Within Zechariah Israel will realize this salvation on the day when they recognize the Lord whom they have pierced as their coming Savior (Zec 12:9-13:1).

5.5.2 In the New Testament

The family of words related to righteousness.

There are quite a few words in the New Testament which are related to the semantic domain of righteousness.⁸⁸ People who do not repent are "storing up wrath for" themselves "on the day of wrath when God's *righteous judgment* will be revealed" (Rom 2:5).⁸⁹ A just divine judgment can be called ἡ δίκη dikē (Acts 28:4; 2 Thes 1:9; Jude 1:7). The adverb "right, justly, truly" is δικαίως dikaiōs.⁹⁰ The judge enforcing justice is δικαστής dikastēs and Moses was at first not accepted as such by his fellow Israelites (Acts 7:27.35).

In the New Testament τὸ δικαίωμα dikaiōma is used for God's statutes or commandments (Lk 1:6; Rom 2:26) or the "righteous requirement" of God's law (Rom 8:4), for the regulations of the Old Testament worship (Heb 9:1.10), for God's righteous decision in

88. The list given here is not complete. For this other composite words would have to be included like ἀδικέω, ἀδικημα, ἀδικία, ἄδικος, ἀδίκως, ἀντίδικος, ἐκδικέω, ἐκδίκησις, ἐκδικος.

89. ἐν ἡμέρᾳ ὀργῆς καὶ ἀποκαλύψεως δικαιοκρισίας τοῦ θεοῦ

90. See Lk 23:41; 1 Cor 15:34; 1 Thes 2:10; Tit 2:12; 1 Pt 2:23.

judgment of sins (Rom 1:32; Rv 15:4), for the righteous deeds of the saints (Rv 19:8) and for our subject of the greatest importance: The righteousness of Christ (Rom 5:18) bringing about our justification (Rom 5:16). In the two places where δικαίωσις *dikaiōsis* is used, it is the justification of those who believe in Jesus Christ, based on his sacrificial death and the life giving power of his resurrection (Rom 4:25; 5:18).

There are three more words in this family related to righteousness at which we want to look in more detail because they can help us to a better understanding of God's righteousness and of the justification of the sinner.

The use of δικαιοσύνη "righteousness" in this context.

The most important word for righteousness in the NT is *dikaiōsynē* δικαιοσύνη. And the most important apostle to explain it, is Paul.

God and righteousness. The gospel is so important for Paul for "in it the righteousness of God is revealed from faith for faith" (Rom 1:17). If we asked him what the righteousness of God is, he would say, that God himself is just and that he is the justifier of the one who has faith in Jesus (Rom 3:26). Both aspects of God's righteousness are of enormous importance. God himself is just. This is his own righteousness (cf. Rom 3:5).

But at the same time God's righteousness is also a gracious present which God gives to those who believe in Jesus Christ, especially in his atoning death (Rom 3:21.22.25). Being himself just, God was looking forward to Golgotha in former times when he did not immediately punish the sins of mankind (Rom 3:25). So the death of Christ, the shedding of his blood, became the atoning center of human salvation history. The Old Testament was looking

forward to it and the New Testament is based on it (Mt 26:28).

The apostle John sees a strong relationship between God's own righteousness and the practiced righteousness of the believers. God is righteous and the practiced righteousness of the believers shows them to be born again of God, to be children of God (1 Jn 2:29; 3:7.10).

Christ and righteousness. Christ fulfills all righteousness (Mt 3:15) and loves it (Heb 1:9). He is going to judge the whole world in righteousness (Acts 17:31; Rv 19:11). He died as a sin offering for our sins "so that in him we might become the righteousness of God" (2 Cor 5:21). "He himself bore our sins in his body on the tree, that we might die to sin and live to righteousness" (1 Pt 2:24). Peter addresses the Gentile Christians he is writing to as those "who have obtained a faith of equal standing with ours by the righteousness of our God and Savior Jesus Christ" (2 Pt 1:1). Jesus says that after his going to the Father the Holy Spirit will come and "8 ... will convict the world concerning ... righteousness... 10 concerning righteousness, because I go to the Father, and you will see me no longer..." (Jn 16:8.10). This means that the way Christ went to the Father, by dying at the cross, rising on the third day and ascending to heaven, is the key to understand "righteousness" and that this is one of the main lessons the Holy Spirit teaches people who are not born again yet ("the world").

Believers and righteousness. John the Baptist came "in the way of righteousness" (Mt 21:32). Abraham's trust in God "was counted to him as righteousness" (Rom 4:3; cf. Gn 15:6), and that happened already when he was still uncircumcised (Rom 4:9-10). Paul explains the significance of his circumcision happening later (Rom

4:11-13):

11 He received the sign of circumcision as a seal of the righteousness that he had by faith while he was still uncircumcised. The purpose was to make him the father of all who believe without being circumcised, so that righteousness would be counted to them as well, 12 and to make him the father of the circumcised who are not merely circumcised but who also walk in the footsteps of the faith that our father Abraham had before he was circumcised. 13 For the promise to Abraham and his offspring that he would be heir of the world did not come through the law but through the righteousness of faith.

This faith of Abraham as the way to gain righteousness is also the way for Christian believers from all nations to gain it (Rom 4:22-25; cf. Acts 10:35). "And to the one who does not work but trusts him who justifies the ungodly, his faith is counted as righteousness" (Rom 4:5). To acknowledge one's own inability to be righteous and accept God's gift of righteousness in Christ, is to submit to God's righteousness. The problem of Israel was that they tried to establish their own righteousness and thus did not submit to God's righteousness (Rom 9:31; 10:3).

The meaning of the name Melchizedek, the type of Christ, is "king of righteousness (Heb 7:2), that is "righteous king". True disciples "hunger and thirst for righteousness" (Mt 5:6). Their being persecuted for righteousness' sake is a sign of their belonging to the kingdom of heaven (5:10). The righteousness needed to enter the kingdom of heaven has to be better than that of the scribes and Pharisees (Mt 5:20). Disciples should do deeds of righteousness (giving to the needy, praying, fasting) for God, not for the eyes of

the people (Mt 6:1). Disciples must have God's kingdom and his righteousness as their top priority (Mt 6:33). God's plan of salvation is to deliver his people from the hand of their enemies, that they might serve him without fear "in holiness and righteousness before him" all their days (Lk 1:74-75).

Unbelievers and righteousness. The problem of hypocrites is that their righteousness is not good enough to enter the kingdom of heaven (Mt 5:20; cf. 23:13-15). The servants of Satan love to "disguise themselves as servants of righteousness" (2 Cor 11:15). The Jewish false prophet named Bar-Jesus is addressed by Paul in this way: "You son of the devil, you enemy of all righteousness, full of all deceit and villainy, will you not stop making crooked the straight paths of the Lord?" (Acts 13:10).

How man is made or declared righteous before God. Christ Jesus is in his person our righteousness from God (1 Cor 1:30). God uses his preached word to bring his righteousness to people (2 Cor 3:9; Heb 5:13; 2 Pt 2:5).

People who gain righteousness from God receive it by faith in him (Rom 4:13; 9:30; 10:6.10; Gal 3:6; 5:5; Phil 3:9; Heb 11:7).

Works of the law or the law are not the way to gain righteousness before God (Rom 4:6; Tit 3:5; Rom 10:4.5; Gal 2:21; Gal 3:21; Phil 3:6.9). James 2:18-26 does not teach that righteousness is gained by the works of the law, but by works of faith. James does not really contradict Paul, but a misunderstood and misused Paul. The works of Abraham and of Rahab which James mentions are not the works to fulfill the law, but works which show their faith in God in action. Paul teaches the same active faith in Gal 5:6 and other places: "For in Christ Jesus neither circumcision nor un-

circumcision counts for anything, but only faith working through love."

The Justification of the sinner happens when he receives the gift of righteousness freely from God through Christ. As Adam is the father of the old mankind and gave death to all, so Jesus Christ is the founder of a new mankind and gives his righteousness as a gift to all his people (Rom 5:17; 8:10; 2 Cor 5:21; Eph 6:14). In faith we have already received this righteousness, but there is also a future aspect to it: "For through the Spirit, by faith, we ourselves eagerly wait for the hope of righteousness" (Gal 5:5; cf. also 2 Tm 4:8). As so often in the New Testament there is the aspect of what we already have in Christ, and the other aspect of the future realization of the same thing in the coming new world (cf. 2 Pt 3:13).

The justification of the sinner is rooted in God's grace given to him freely (Rom 3:24; 5:21; Gal 2:21) according to God's mercy on him (Tit 3:5).

Justified Sinners are challenged to practice righteousness. It is Paul's custom to admonish justified believers to commit themselves to live a righteous life (Rom 6:13.16; 6:18.19.20; 14:17; 2 Cor 6:14; 2 Cor 9:9.10; Eph 4:24; 5:9; Phil 1:11; 1 Tm 6:11; 2 Tm 2:22; 2 Tm 3:16; Heb 11:33; 12:11). He also recommends his own example in living a righteous life (2 Cor 6:7). Paul would also teach the standard of righteousness to people outside the church (Acts 24:25).

The letter of James is like the Sermon on the Mount in the shape of an epistle. It is not surprising that he emphasizes the necessity of righteousness in the life of a disciple (Jas 1:20; 3:18). Peter presents the death of Christ for us as a reason to live a righteous

life (1 Pt 2:24). Even if we have to suffer for righteousness' sake, we are blessed (1 Pt 3:14). Knowing Jesus Christ is to know the way of righteousness (2 Pt 2:20-21). John urges the believers not to be deceived, but to stick to the unity of faith and life: "Whoever practices righteousness is righteous, as he is righteous" (1 Jn 3:7). On the last page of the Bible we find these strange orders or permissions (Rv 22:11-12):

11 Let the evildoer still do evil, and the filthy still be filthy, and the righteous still do right, and the holy still be holy. 12 Behold, I am coming soon, bringing my recompense with me, to repay everyone for what he has done.

The idea behind these permissions to do as one wishes to do, to do evil or to do good, is the truth of 22:12 that all deeds will be repaid when Christ will come back. Then all practiced righteousness gets its right reward. Then all wickedness will be punished (Rv 22:15; 21:8). Blessed and wise are those who act accordingly and wash the robe of their life in the blood of Christ (Rv 22:14; 7:14).

The use of δίκαιος "righteous" in this context.

The adjective righteous is δίκαιος dikaiōs .

God's being just or righteous. God is just (John 17:25; Rom 3:26). He is also the origin of righteousness in the believers because they are born of him: "If you know that he is righteous, you may be sure that everyone who practices righteousness has been born of him (1 Jn 2:29). Whoever practices righteousness is righteous, as he is righteous (1 Jn 3:7). God is just in his judgment (2 Thes 1:5-6; 2 Tm 4:8; Rv 16:5.7; 19:2). God's ways are just (Rv 15:3).

Christ's being just or righteous. Jesus Christ is "righteous" (Mt 27:4.19; Luke 23:47) or "the righteous" (Acts 3:14; 7:52; 22:14). His judgment is just (Jn 5:30). He died for sinners to justify them through his blood Rom 5:8-9, he suffered once for sins, the righteous for the unrighteous (1 Pt 3:18). "If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness" (1 Jn 1:9). "But if anyone does sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous" (1 Jn 2:1). Paul compares Adam and Christ and states in this context how great the effect of Christ's obedience is for his people (Rom 5:19):

For as by the one man's disobedience the many were made sinners, so by the one man's obedience the many will be made righteous.⁹¹

Christ's obedience and righteousness is imputed to us and we are presented as righteous before God.

Believers and being righteous. Joseph was righteous (Mt 1:19), so was John the Baptist (Mk 6:20) and his parents (Lk 1:6). John would turn the disobedient to the wisdom of the just (1:17). Simeon was righteous (2:25) and Joseph, from the Jewish town of Arimathea (23:50), and Cornelius (Acts 10:22). Paul thinks that "one will scarcely die for a righteous person" (Rom 5:7). Abel is called righteous (Heb 11:4), as are his deeds (1 Jn 3:12). Lot was righteous (2 Pt 2:7-8). The spirits of the righteous made perfect gather in the heavenly Jerusalem (Heb 12:23)).

Jesus has not come to call righteous, but sinners to repentance (Mt 9:13; Mk 2:17; Lk 5:32). "There will be more joy in heaven

91. οὕτως καὶ διὰ τῆς ὑπακοῆς τοῦ ἑνὸς δίκαιοι κατασταθήσονται οἱ πολλοί.

over one sinner who repents than over ninety-nine righteous persons who need no repentance" (Lk 15:7). "The law is not laid down for the just but for the lawless and disobedient" (1 Tm 1:9). Overseers should be righteous (Tit 1:8). The rich who have murdered the righteous will be punished for it (Jas 5:6). The prayer of a righteous person has great power (Jas 5:16) and the Lord's eyes and ears are attentive towards them (1 Pt 3:12). The righteous is saved only with difficulties (1 Pt 4:18). The righteous who will continue to do right will be rewarded by the coming Christ (Rv 22:11-12).

Self righteous and hypocrites. Lk 18:9-14 targets especially self righteous people (Lk 18:9). Hypocrites tried to present themselves as righteous trying to trap Jesus (Lk 20:20).

Judgment and being righteous. Judgment should be just and righteous (Jn 7:24). When it comes to the day of judgment, the difference between righteous and wicked will become eternal. The righteous shine like the sun (Mt 13:43) and the wicked are removed from the midst of the righteous (13:49). The righteous will be surprised that they have served Jesus and will go into eternal life (Mt 25:37,46). The shedding of the blood of all righteous will be punished (Mt 23:35). Good deeds will be repaid at the resurrection of the just (Lk 14:14). There will be a resurrection of both the just and the unjust (Acts 24:15).

Ethics and what is right. The adjective "righteous" is also used in an ethical context to speak of what is right and fitting (Phil 4:8; Col 4:1; 2 Pt 1:13). God's commandments are just (Rom 7:12; Eph 6:1). It is not right to obey man more than God (Acts 4:19).

Justification and being right. The most important use of the adjective "righteous" for our subject is found in Rom 1:17, Gal 3:10-11 and Heb 10:38. It is the quotation from Hb 2:4 with which Paul summarizes his gospel (Rom 1:17): "The righteous shall live by faith."⁹² What Paul means by this, seems to be: "The one, who is righteous by faith, he shall live!"

Except Jesus, it seems impossible that someone may be righteous by the law or by works of the law. Not the hearers of the law are righteous, but the doers of the law will be justified (Rom 2:13). "None is righteous, no, not one" (3:10). "No one is justified before God by the law" (Gal 3:11).

The use of δικαίωω "to declare righteous" in this context.

The verb δικαίωω *dikaiōō* means to declare someone right or righteous who is really right or righteous or to make someone righteous who was a sinner before.

God and "to declare righteous". God will be justified in his words (Rom 3:4). God's righteousness has two aspects, that he himself is just and that he is "the justifier of the one who has faith in Jesus" (3:26). God will "justify the circumcised by faith and the uncircumcised through faith (3:30). God has already justified and glorified his foreknown, predestined and called (8:29-30). "Who shall bring any charge against God's elect? It is God who justifies" (8:33).

Christ and "to declare righteous". We are justified through Jesus Christ (Gal 2:17). Christ himself was "manifested in the flesh,

92. Ὁ δὲ δίκαιος ἐκ πίστεως ζήσεται.

vindicated by the Spirit" or "proven righteous by the Spirit" (1 Tm 3:16).

Believers and "to declare righteous". "For one who has died has been set free from sin"⁹³ (Rom 6:7). If Paul is not aware of any wrongdoing, he still is not acquitted by this fact (1 Cor 4:4). Paul presents a list of different kinds of sinners to the church in Corinth and then goes on saying: "And such were some of you. But you were washed, you were sanctified, you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and by the Spirit of our God" (1 Cor 6:11). This shows that the unity of the believers with Christ and their share in the Spirit of God has really changed them before God. They are now holy and righteous. The pouring out of the Spirit of God is also important for this change in Tit 3:6-7:

... 6 whom he poured out on us richly through
Jesus Christ our Savior, 7 so that being justified by his
grace we might become heirs according to the hope of
eternal life.

Paul teaches that the Scripture was "foreseeing that God would justify the Gentiles by faith" (Gal 3:8). Because believers have now already been justified by the blood of Christ, that is by his death, they can be very confident that they will be saved from the wrath of God by his life (Rom 5:9-10).

Justification and "to declare righteous". Justification of the sinner happens through faith in Jesus Christ (Acts 13:38-39; Rom 3:24-26; 3:28.30; 4:5-6; 5:1; Gal 2:16-17). It does not happen by

93. ὁ γὰρ ἀποθανὼν δεδικαίωται ἀπὸ τῆς ἁμαρτίας.

works of the law (Rom 2:13; 3:20.28; 4:2; Gal 2:16; 3:11; 5:4). One purpose of the law is that it produces knowledge of sin (Rom 3:20) another is that "the law was our guardian until Christ came, in order that we might be justified by faith" (Gal 3:24). We have seen already that James teaches that a faith without deeds of faith in one's life is dead and ineffective (James 2:21.24.25). He does not teach that we have to do the works of the law to get justified.

The root cause of the justification of a sinner is the grace of God given to him (Rom 3:24; Gal 5:4). Justification or condemnation of the people judged on judgment day will be done by their own words: "... for by your words you will be justified, and by your words you will be condemned" (Mt 12:37). Justification is an act of being exalted by God after someone has humbled himself before God (Lk 18:14).

5.6 Adoption as Sons and Heirs

5.6.1 Word used

The word that is used for the adoption of somebody as one's own child is ἡ υἱοθεσία *hyiothësia*.⁹⁴ This was a technical legal term for adoption. Looking at the five occurrences in the New Testament, I think, it could also be translated there as "status of a son", "status of a child".

5.6.2 God chooses to adopt someone as his child.

Within the Bible we find this word "*hyiothësia*" only in the New Testament and there in Paul's letters. The parent accepting some-

94. Bauer, Wörterbuch zum Neuen Testament, p. 1649.

body as his child is God. According to Rom 9:4 the status of children of God belongs to the Israelites (cf. Ex 4:22-23).

In the other four instances Paul speaks about Christian believers out of Israel or the Gentiles. On the list of "all spiritual blessings" which the Father has bestowed upon us in Christ in the heavenly places Paul speaks of the fact that in his love God "predestined us for the status of children through Jesus Christ"⁹⁵ right after mentioning that "he chose us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and blameless before him" (Eph 1:3-5).

In Gal 4:1-7 Paul speaks of the status of the heir in his childhood to be comparable to the status of a slave. The time when he comes of age is the time when he can start to enjoy his status of a son with full legal rights to act as the owner of all his inheritance:

4:1 I mean that the heir, as long as he is a child, is no different from a slave, though he is the owner of everything, 2 but he is under guardians and managers until the date set by his father. 3 In the same way we also, when we were children, were enslaved to the elementary principles of the world. 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!" 7 So you are no longer a slave, but a son, and if a son, then an heir through God.

Paul here seems to understand the phrase translated by the ESV with "so that we might receive adoption as sons" in the sense of

95. Translation mine.

the formerly non-grown up children reaching full legal adulthood: "so that we might receive the status of sons" with real legal ownership. Or Paul might mix the figures of speech, talking both of real children and of slaves being adopted. I personally prefer the first. Paul speaks of real children of God, being put under the law or under the elementary principles of the world and resembling slaves because they are not free to act according to their own will being under guardianship. The time set by the father is the time of the coming of Christ. His death at the cross redeemed us from being under the law (cf. Gal 3:13-14). The coming of the Spirit of God's son into our hearts sealed the fact that we are children and heirs.

The receiving of the Spirit of Christ and God (Rom 8:9) is in Rom 8:15 equal to the receiving of the Spirit of sonship in contrast to the spirit of slave-hood. The results of receiving the Spirit are the same in Gal 4:6 and in Rom 8:15: The children cry out, "Abba! Father!" and they are heirs of vast fortunes (Rom 8:17; Gal 4:7; 3:29).

Therefore believers are already children and heirs of God in a spiritual way and acting as such, having received the firstfruits of the Spirit. But when it comes to the question of their body, they have not yet received the redemption of their bodies (Rom 8:23):

And not only the creation, but we ourselves, who have the firstfruits of the Spirit, groan inwardly as we wait eagerly for adoption as sons, the redemption of our bodies.⁹⁶

The future redemption of our bodies will happen, when we shall receive the glorified, Christlike body of our resurrection or transfor-

96. οὐ μόνον δέ, ἀλλὰ καὶ αὐτοὶ τὴν ἀπαρχὴν τοῦ πνεύματος ἔχοντες ἡμεῖς καὶ αὐτοὶ ἐν ἑαυτοῖς στενάζομεν, υἱοθεσίαν ἀπεκδεχόμενοι τὴν ἀπολύτρωσιν τοῦ σώματος ἡμῶν.

mation (Rom 8:29-30; 1 Cor 15:42-53; 1 Thes 4:16-17; Phil 3:20-21). The resurrection or transformation of the believers at the second coming of Christ is also the public revelation of their sonship as we read in Rom 8:19 (cf. also Col 3:1-4):

For the creation waits with eager longing for the revealing of the sons of God.⁹⁷

5.7 Regeneration

5.7.1 In the Old Testament

The word regeneration or being born again does not appear as such in the Old Testament, but the subject is visible. In his great psalm of repentance David puts it in these words (Ps 51:10-12):

10 Create in me a clean heart, O God,
and renew a right spirit within me.⁹⁸
11 Cast me not away from your presence,
and take not your Holy Spirit from me.
12 Restore to me the joy of your salvation,
and uphold me with a willing spirit.

Especially verse 10 speaks of the new creation of a clean heart the renewal of a right spirit. Isaiah portrays the personal servant of the Lord after his atoning death and his resurrection as having numerous spiritual children (Is 53:10-11):

97. ἡ γὰρ ἀποκαταδοκία τῆς κτίσεως τὴν ἀποκάλυψιν τῶν υἱῶν τοῦ θεοῦ ἀπεκδέχεται•

98.

לִב טָהוֹר בְּרָא־לִי אֱלֹהִים וְרוּחַ נָכוֹן חַדָּשׁ בְּקִרְבִּי:

10 Yet it was the will of the Lord to crush him;
he has put him to grief;
when his soul makes an offering for sin,
he shall see his offspring; he shall prolong his days;
the will of the Lord shall prosper in his hand.
11 Out of the anguish of his soul he shall see and be
satisfied;
by his knowledge shall the righteous one, my servant,
make many to be accounted righteous,
and he shall bear their iniquities.

It is clear that the children are spiritual because the servant had died and had been buried. Coming alive again he has a threefold success of first seeing his offspring, second living very long (eternally) and third fulfilling the will of the Lord worldwide (cf. Is 42:1-7; 49:6-7). He makes many righteous and they are his spiritual children. The servant of the Lord in the singular is found the last time within Isaiah in 53:11. The next time the series of plurals start in 54:17, in the chapter 54 that starts with this focus that the barren Zion will have an enormous multitude of children who are all taught by the Lord (54:1-4.13, we can add with 53:11: taught by the servant, by Christ. The means of having all these spiritual children is their being born again of the Holy Spirit (cf. Is 43:19; 44:3-5; 48:21; 55:1 with John 7:37-39).

Jeremiah speaks of the same renewal under the wording of "the new covenant" where God writes his will not on tablets on stone, but on the hearts changing them (Jer 31:31-34; cf. 24:7):

31 Behold, the days are coming, declares the Lord,
when I will make a new covenant with the house of
Israel and the house of Judah, 32 not like the covenant
that I made with their fathers on the day when I took

them by the hand to bring them out of the land of Egypt, my covenant that they broke, though I was their husband, declares the Lord. 33 But this is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days, declares the Lord: I will put my law within them, and I will write it on their hearts. And I will be their God, and they shall be my people. 34 And no longer shall each one teach his neighbor and each his brother, saying, 'Know the Lord,' for they shall all know me, from the least of them to the greatest, declares the Lord. For I will forgive their iniquity, and I will remember their sin no more.

According to Jer 33:22 there will be an innumerable number of the seed of David and of the Levite priests. Paul says that every person receiving Christ in his heart is seen by God neither as Jew nor Greek but as one in Christ Jesus. And if they are Christ's, then they are Abraham's offspring, heirs according to promise (Gal 3:27-29). In the same way Paul sees God the Holy Spirit writing on the tablets of the heart of those Christians, fulfilling Jer 31:31-34 (2 Cor 3:3-6.14-18).

Ezekiel has a very similar passage about God changing the heart of the Israelites after the judgment of the exile (36:25-27):

25 I will sprinkle clean water on you, and you shall be clean from all your uncleannesses, and from all your idols I will cleanse you. 26 And I will give you a new heart, and a new spirit I will put within you. And I will remove the heart of stone from your flesh and give you a heart of flesh. 27 And I will put my Spirit within you, and cause you to walk in my statutes and be careful to obey my rules.

This passage is the closest parallel to the words of Jesus to Nicodemus in John 3:3.5 where Jesus clearly thinks that Nicodemus as "the teacher of Israel" should have known about the new birth from the Old Testament. We find the Spirit, we find the "water" and we find the deep impact of God's changing the heart from the inside. What a wonderful picture, the heart of stone is taken away and a truly human heart of flesh is implanted again. The result is that the people have the Spirit of God in them and obey his guidance and follow its rules (cf. John 3:8). They are the people of God (Ez 36:28) and consequently belong to the kingdom of God (John 3:3.5).

5.7.2 In the New Testament

Words Used

γεννάω *gĕnnaō*, verb, means in the active voice "to generate, beget, give birth to" (Mt 1:2; Gal 4:24) and in the passive voice "to be born" (Jn 1:13).⁹⁹ This is the verb which is used most often in the New Testament for the idea of being born again.

ἀναγεννάω *anagĕnnaō*, verb, means in the active voice "to beget again, to cause somebody to be born again" (1 Pt 1:3) and in the passive voice "to be born again" (in 1 Pt 1:23; used only these two times in the NT).¹⁰⁰

ἀποκυέω *apōkyĕō*, verb, means "to beget, to give birth to" (Jas 1:15.18; used only twice in the NT).¹⁰¹

ἡ παλιγγενεσία *palingĕnĕsia*, noun f., means "the being born again, the regeneration" 1. of the world (Mt 19:28), 2. of individual re-

99. Bauer, Wörterbuch zum Neuen Testament, p. 307-9.

100. *ibid.*, p. 102.

101. *ibid.*, p. 186.

deemed man (Titus 3:5; used only these two times in the NT).¹⁰²
ἡ ἀνακαίνωσις anakainōsis, noun f., means "renewal" (Tit 3:5;
Rom 12:2; used only twice in the NT).¹⁰³

Jesus Christ born of God the Father

Paul seems to interpret his quotation of Ps 2:7 in Acts 13:33-34 in the light of the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead:

32 And we bring you the good news that what God
promised to the fathers, 33 this he has fulfilled to us
their children by raising Jesus, as also it is written in
the second Psalm, 'You are my Son, today I have be-
gotten you.'

Such an understanding would agree with Rom 1:3-4 where Paul says that the gospel of God is "concerning his Son, who was descended from David according to the flesh and was declared to be the Son of God in power according to the Spirit of holiness by his resurrection from the dead, Jesus Christ our Lord". Ps 2:7 is also quoted in Heb 1:5 and Heb 5:5 and interpreted as a prophecy about Jesus the Son of God. It is noteworthy that Heb 5:5-6 combine Ps 2:7 and 110:4 as related to Jesus being appointed as high priest:

5 So also Christ did not exalt himself to be made
a high priest, but was appointed by him who said to
him, "You are my Son, today I have begotten you";
6 as he says also in another place, "You are a priest
forever, after the order of Melchizedek."

102. *ibid.*, p. 1201-2.

103. *ibid.*, p. 110.

In Ps 110:1-4 the person who is the Lord of David and is invited to sit at the right hand of God, is both king and priest. The New Testament fulfillment of the sitting of Jesus at the right hand of God is related to his ascension after his death and resurrection (Acts 2:32-36). This again would fit our impression that Ps 2:7 is viewed in the New Testament as the proclamation of Jesus as the Son of God and the Ruler of all nations through the power of his resurrection (cf. Acts 4:24-28).

Luke has written both his gospel and Acts. In the gospel the sonship of Jesus is related to his miraculous conception of the Holy Spirit in his mothers womb and his consequent birth from her as a virgin (Lk 1:35). If Paul in Acts 13:33-34 understands Ps 2:7 as fulfilled in the resurrection of Christ, then the resurrection of Christ is like his being born again of the Father.

In quite this sense Peter speaks of our being born again as something which is accomplished by the Father through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead (1 Pt 1:3):

Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ! According to his great mercy, he has caused us to be born again to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead.

Paul has the same conviction that the resurrection of Jesus Christ, the last Adam, has made him a life giving spirit (1 Cor 15:45; cf. Jn 20:22):

Thus it is written, "The first man Adam became a living being"; the last Adam became a life-giving spirit.

Because the risen Christ is a life-giving spirit, Paul often thinks of the transformed believers as people who have been made alive

with Christ and raised spiritually from the dead (Rom 6:4; Eph 2:4-6; Col 3:1-4). He also admonishes them to put on the new mankind which is Christ like someone puts on new clothes (Eph 4:20-24; Col 3:8-11; Rom 13:11-14; cf. Gal 3:27-28).

The regeneration of individuals

Being born of God. The apostle John loves the phrase that people are "born of God". Whoever receives Jesus Christ and believes in his name, is given the right to become a child of God who is born of God (Jn 1:13; cf. Jn 8:41). God is righteous. If anybody now practices righteousness, he only can do so because he has been born of God (1 Jn 2:29). Such a person does not make "a practice of sinning, for God's seed abides in him, and he cannot keep on sinning because he has been born of God" (1 Jn 3:9). Someone who truly "loves has been born of God and knows God" (1 Jn 4:7). "Everyone who believes that Jesus is the Christ has been born of God, and everyone who loves the Father loves whoever has been born of him" (1 Jn 5:1). He "overcomes the world" (1 Jn 5:4). He "does not keep on sinning, but he who was born of God protects him, and the evil one does not touch him" (1 Jn 5:18).

According to James 1:18 God of his own will "brought us forth by the word of truth, that we should be a kind of firstfruits of his creatures." Peter praises "the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ" who "according to his great mercy ... has caused us to be born again to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead" (1 Pt 1:3).

Being born "from above" or "again". Speaking to Nicodemus Jesus says in Jn 3:3:

Truly, truly, I say to you, unless one is born again
he cannot see the kingdom of God.¹⁰⁴

The Greek word for "again" could also be translated as "above". In 3:4 Nicodemus seems to understand Jesus as having meant "again". Other Bible texts clearly speak of being born "again". Therefore this is preferable. But John also sometimes seems to love ambiguity, that means that one phrase can be understood in two ways in the same context¹⁰⁵ If we remember that Paul calls the heavenly Jerusalem "our mother" (Gal 4:26) and that "the river of the water of life" is "flowing from the throne of God and of the Lamb" in that city (Rv 22:1) and is offered now to the thirsty (Rv 22:17; cf. 7:17; 21:6) and that this water of life in John's gospel is the Holy Spirit (Jn 7:37-39; 4:10-14), then "from above" is also a correct understanding for this spiritual birth (cf. Ps 87:4-6). Jn 3:7 uses the same ambiguous word.

Titus 3:5 speaks of being born again and being renewed (cf. Rom 12:2) through the Holy Spirit.

Being born of the Spirit. In Jn 3:5 Jesus teaches Nicodemus that people have to be "born of water and the Spirit" to enter the kingdom of God. In Jn 3:6 and 3:8 he just repeats the "being born of the Spirit" which seems to be the more important phrase. In the immediate context the pair "water and Spirit" was used already in John 1:26 for John's baptizing with water and in John 1:33 for Jesus "who baptizes with the Holy Spirit". Immediately after our text we again see John baptizing with water (Jn 3:23) and giving his

104. Ἀμὴν ἀμὴν λέγω σοι, ἐὰν μὴ τις γεννηθῇ ἄνωθεν, οὐ δύναται ἰδεῖν τὴν βασιλείαν τοῦ θεοῦ.

105. See e.g. the statement in John 13:30: "And it was night." Compare Jn 9:4-5; 11:9-10 and 12:35-36).

testimony for Jesus Christ as vastly superior having received the Spirit without measure (Jn 3:34). Jesus used his disciples to baptize people with water and his movement of repentance and baptism got even greater than the movement around John the Baptist (Jn 3:22; 4:1-3). The phrase "being born of water and the Spirit" could point to the necessity that the Jews of that time had to repent and get baptized with water to show that they prepare themselves for the coming kingdom of God with the coming of the Christ who then would baptize them with the Holy Spirit. This would mean for Nicodemus that he should also publicly repent, humble himself and get baptized with water so that he would be prepared for the baptism with the Spirit when the time would be there (Jn 7:39).

Another possibility to understand the being "born of water and the Spirit" is to combine this text in John 3 with Ez 36:25-27 and to understand the "water" as meaning the Spirit (as in Jn 4:10-14 and 7:37-39): "being born of water, that is of the Spirit".

Being born according to the Spirit. In Gal 4:28-29 Paul's use of "being born according to the Spirit" (like Isaac) stands in contrast to "being born according to the flesh" (like Ishmael):

28 Now you, brothers, like Isaac, are children of promise. 29 But just as at that time he who was born according to the flesh persecuted him who was born according to the Spirit, so also it is now.

Being born through the gospel, God's word, his promise. In the aforementioned example of Isaac Paul says that he was born by God's promise of the free woman while "the son of the slave was born according to the flesh", meaning the normal way of producing children without a special promise of God and without a miracle

(Gal 4:23). He understands the two pairs of mothers (Sarah and Isaac, Hagar and Ishmael) with their children allegorically:

... these women are two covenants. One is from Mount Sinai, bearing children for slavery; she is Hagar. 25 Now Hagar is Mount Sinai in Arabia; she corresponds to the present Jerusalem, for she is in slavery with her children. 26 But the Jerusalem above is free, and she is our mother.

The difference between the two mothers and covenants (see 2 Cor 3:1-17; Jer 31:31-34) is also the reason why the law-oriented religion of Pharisaic Judaism was persecuting the grace-oriented movement of the disciples of Jesus Christ (Gal 4:29).

The word of God is key for being born again, because if it is accepted by faith, a change of heart follows. Therefore Paul can speak of himself as the spiritual father of the believers in Corinth, "for I became your father in Christ Jesus through the gospel" (1 Cor 4:15; cf. Phlm 1:10 where Paul is "father" of Onesimus). According to Peter true Christians "have been born again, not of perishable seed but of imperishable, through the living and abiding word of God" (1 Pt 1:23).

The regeneration of the world.

The word "new birth" or "being born again", "regeneration" is used in a different sense in Mt 19:28:

Jesus said to them, "Truly, I say to you, in the new world¹⁰⁶, when the Son of Man will sit on his glorious

106. ἐν τῇ παλινγενεσίᾳ

throne, you who have followed me will also sit on twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel."

The phrase here translated with "in the new world" is literally in the Greek "in the new birth" or "in the being born again". It is clear that it is not an individual new birth or being born again, but it is something of worldwide dimensions. Therefore it was translated by the ESV with "in the new world". There are parallels to this. Compare Mt 24:8:

All these are but the beginning of the birth pains.¹⁰⁷

The catastrophes mentioned before (wars, famines, earthquakes) are great pains for the nations and the world, but at the same time word implies the coming birth of a new world ushered in by the birth pains. Paul seems to take this parable up in Rom 8:18-22:

18 For I consider that the sufferings of this present time are not worth comparing with the glory that is to be revealed to us. 19 For the creation waits with eager longing for the revealing of the sons of God. 20 For the creation was subjected to futility, not willingly, but because of him who subjected it, in hope 21 that the creation itself will be set free from its bondage to decay and obtain the freedom of the glory of the children of God. 22 For we know that the whole creation has been groaning together in the pains of childbirth until now.¹⁰⁸

107. πάντα δὲ ταῦτα ἀρχὴ ὠδίνων.

108. οἶδαμεν γὰρ ὅτι πᾶσα ἡ κτίσις συστενάζει καὶ συνωδίνει ἅχρι τοῦ νῦν•

Here Paul speaks of "the sufferings of this present time" for the Christians and the world. The turning point for both is the "coming era", the time starting with "the revealing of the sons of God" which coincide with their "adoption as sons" and the "redemption" of their "bodies" (Rom 8:23) at the coming of Christ (Col 3:4).

5.8 Eternal Life

5.8.1 In the Old Testament

God and life, including eternal life.

God as the giver or source of life. "The fountain of life" is with God (Ps 36:9)¹⁰⁹ God is "the fountain of living waters" (Jer 2:13; 17:13).¹¹⁰ As the giver of my life he is "the God of my life" (Ps 42:8). "The fear of the Lord is a fountain of life" (Prv 14:27).¹¹¹ God's blessings include the gift of eternal life (Ps 133:3).¹¹²

God is king forever and living forever. King Darius issued a decree (Dn 6:26):

I make a decree, that in all my royal dominion
people are to tremble and fear before the God of Daniel,
for he is the living God, enduring forever;
his kingdom shall never be destroyed,
and his dominion shall be to the end.

109. כִּי־עֲמֻדָּה מְקוֹר חַיִּים בְּאֵרֶךְ נִרְאָה־אֵזֶר:

110. מְקוֹר מַיִם חַיִּים

111. יִרְאֵת יְהוָה מְקוֹר חַיִּים לְסוֹר מִמֶּקְשֵׁי מוֹת:

112. כָּשָׁל־חַרְמוֹן שִׁירָד עַל־הַרְבֵּי צִיּוֹן כִּי שָׁם | צִוְּהָ יְהוָה אֶת־הַבְּרִכָּה חַיִּים. עַד־הָעוֹלָם:

This implies God's existence forever as does Dn 4:3 and Is 9:6-7. Accordingly one of the most popular confessions in the Old Testament is the phrase that the Lord lives (2 Sm 22:47; Ps 18:46)¹¹³ or that God is a living God (Jer 10:10; 23:36)¹¹⁴ which is also understood in contrast to the dead idols. Hezekiah asks God to "hear the words of Sennacherib, which he has sent to mock the living God" and he prays for the rescue of Jerusalem from the Assyrians so that all the world may understand the difference between the living God and the idols (2 Kgs 19:4,16,19; Is 37:4,17,20). The living God is a source of joy for believers (Ps 84:3).

God's covenant name presents him as the one who is (forever).

The very name of God revealed to Moses in Ex 3:14-15 speaks of his eternal existence according to the further understanding and explanation of this name in the Bible:

13 Then Moses said to God, "If I come to the people of Israel and say to them, 'The God of your fathers has sent me to you,' and they ask me, 'What is his name?' what shall I say to them?" 14 God said to Moses, "I am who I am."¹¹⁵ And he said, "Say this to the people of Israel, 'I am has sent me to you.'" 15 God also said to Moses, "Say this to the people of Israel, 'The Lord, the God of your fathers, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob, has sent me to you.'¹¹⁶ This is my name forever, and thus I am

113.

חַי־יְהוָה

114.

הוּא־אֱלֹהִים חַיִּים

115.

אֶהְיֶה אֲשֶׁר אֶהְיֶה

116. יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵי אֲבוֹתֵיכֶם אֱלֹהֵי אַבְרָהָם אֱלֹהֵי יִצְחָק וְאֱלֹהֵי יַעֲקֹב שְׁלַחְנִי אֵלֵיכֶם

to be remembered throughout all generations."

The phrase which is here translated with "I am who I am" has the imperfect verb form in Hebrew. The time reference of this verb form has to be understood from the context. Depending on the context it can be translated: "I was who I was."

"I am who I am."

"I shall be who I shall be."

In Exodus 3:14 the present tense fits best. But the potential of the verb form is bigger than that. When Moses said, "Who am I that I should go to Pharaoh and bring the children of Israel out of Egypt?", God answers in 3:12 with the same verb form used as a promise: "I will be with you." This should quieten Moses. He alone could do nothing. But he and the Lord with him can even overpower the superpower of that time, Egypt.

The LXX translates the "I am who I am" of 3:14 with the Greek Ἐγώ εἰμι ὁ ὢν· ἔγὼ ἔimi ὁ ὢν. "I am the being one." The time reference of the Greek participle used here has also to be understood from the context. It is a clever way to say that God is the eternal one. This becomes even clearer when we look at the interpretation of this name given by the Holy Spirit through the apostle John in Revelation 1:8:

"I am the Alpha and the Omega," says the Lord
God, "who is and who was and who is to come, the
Almighty." ¹¹⁷

In the Greek the first two words of 1:8 ("I am ") combined with the "who is..." from the phrase "who is and who was and who is to

117. Ἐγώ εἰμι τὸ Ἀλφα καὶ τὸ Ὠ, λέγει κύριος, ὁ θεός, ὁ ὢν καὶ ὁ ἦν καὶ ὁ ἐρχόμενος, ὁ παντοκράτωρ.

come" are an exact quote of Ex 3:14. Every Greek speaking Jew familiar with his LXX-Bible would have recognized this at once because the passage was so famous. But the adding of the words "and who was and who is to come" is different. The full phrase "who is and who was and who is to come" speaks of God as past, present and future and brings the full force of the Hebrew verb form of Ex 3:14 to the foreground. The context of Rv 1:8 underlines that this means that God is eternal, he is "the Alpha and the Omega", which are the first and the last letter of the Greek alphabet, meaning "the First and the Last" (cf. Rv 1:17; 22:13; Is 41:4; 44:6; 48:12).

"God is alive" used in oath formulas.

The fact that the true God is alive, is seen as a fundamental truth and this is quite often used in oath formulas to affirm another statement one wants to be believed.

"As I live" used by God himself in an oath. The Bible teaches that God never lies (Nm 23:19; Heb 6:16-18). If God uses an oath he puts double weight on his statement to make sure that man knows to accept it as trustworthy. Therefore he proclaims the punishment of the faithless generation of Israel in the first climax of the book of numbers with an oath that they will not see the promised land but die in the desert (Nm 14:21.28). With the same oath formula God proclaims his judgment of Coniah the son of Jehoiakim, king of Judah (Jer 22:24), of Egypt (Jer 46:18), and of Moab and the Ammonites (Zep 2:9).

When devastated Zion feels hopeless saying: "The Lord has forsaken me; my Lord has forgotten me", God assures her with this oath formula of a wonderful future in his presence with an astounding number of children (Is 49:18).

"As the Lord lives" used by different men. The fact that the true God is alive, is quite often used by different men in oath formulas to affirm another statement they want to show to be absolutely trustworthy (Jgs 8:19; Ruth 3:13; 1 Sm 14:39.45; 19:6; 20:3.21; 25:26.34; 26:10.16; 28:10; 29:6; 2 Sm 4:9; 12:5; 14:11; 15:21; 1 Kgs 1:29; 2:24; 17:1.12; 18:10.15; 22:14; 2 Chr 18:13; 2 Kgs 2:2.4.6.; 3:14; 4:30; 5:16.20; Jer 4:2; 5:2; 12:16; 16:14.15; 23:7.8; 38:16; 44:26; Hos 4:15).

If we combine the assurance that the true God is alive for ever with the fact that he is the source of life, then we have a strong foundation for the gift of eternal life rooted in God's own being and his loving kindness enduring for ever (Ps 136:1-26).

Man and eternal life.

After Adam and Eve sinned, God condemned them to die at some point in the future (Gn 3:19) and he made sure that they had to leave the garden lest they should eat from the tree of life and live forever (Gn 3:22-24). If they had eaten in their sinful state, alienated from God, they would have stayed like this forever, they would have "lived forever".¹¹⁸ God ordained their corporal death, so that he would open a door for their future salvation (Gn 3:15).

In contrast to all the other verses in the genealogy of Gn 5 which end with "and he died"¹¹⁹ (Gn 5:5.7.11.14.17.20.27.31), the fate of

118. The phrase "to live forever" does not appear often in the Old Testament. It is used especially in a wish like "May the king live forever!" while someone is in the presence of the king and addresses him (Bathsheba in the presence of king David 1 Kgs 1:31; Nehemiah to King Artaxerxes of Persia Neh 2:3; the Chaldeans to King Nebuchadnezzar of Babylon Dn 2:4). Job suffers so much that he rejects the idea to live on forever like this (Job 7:16). About Zec 1:5 see below).

119. וַיָּמָוֶת

Enoch stands out (Gn 5:24):

Enoch walked with God, and he was not, for God took him.

Adam and Eve enjoyed the fellowship with God in the garden of Eden in Gn 3. Now only two chapters later, we see a man living with God and then God took him to himself. Elijah's being taken up to heaven is another proof of the hope of man to be with God again and that forever (2 Kgs 2:11; cf. Mt 17:3).

A highly significant passage is found in Ex 32:32-33:

32 "But now, if you will forgive their sin - but if not, please blot me out of your book that you have written." 33 But the Lord said to Moses, "Whoever has sinned against me, I will blot out of my book."

Moses intercedes for the nation of Israel who had sinned. He wants God to forgive them and not to destroy them (see Ex 32:9-10). What does Moses offer thinking that God perhaps is not willing to forgive just like that. He says God may blot the name of Moses out of a certain book. But God answers that only people who sin against God are blotted out of that book. This book can not relate to the little bit of life that was left of Moses life according to his own reckoning in Ps 90:10. Moses was already 80! What Moses offers is that his name might be erased out of the book which relates to eternal life in God's presence being a citizen of God's city. Some other texts of the Old Testament would agree with such an understanding of this book.

David wishes that certain sinners "be blotted out of the book of the living; let them not be enrolled among the righteous" (Ps

69:28). Is 4:3 is placed in an eschatological context and speaks of the holy remnant in Jerusalem explaining that this includes "everyone who has been recorded for life in Jerusalem". Mal 3:16 which is also part of an eschatological context, knows of "a book of remembrance" that was written before God "of those who feared the Lord and esteemed his name". Dn 12:1-3 speak of a book while predicting the resurrection of the dead:

... But at that time your people shall be delivered, everyone whose name shall be found written in the book. 2 And many of those who sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake, some to everlasting life, and some to shame and everlasting contempt. 3 And those who are wise shall shine like the brightness of the sky above; and those who turn many to righteousness, like the stars forever and ever.

The idea of resurrection implies the idea of eternal life and is found in other places of the Old Testament as well. In the song of Moses God can make alive from death (Dt 32:39). Hannah confesses that God can kill and bring to life again, bring down to Sheol and raise up again (1 Sm 2:6). At the end of Ps 22 all nations come and worship the true God. Even those who had died, come and eat and worship God (Ps 22:29). According to Is 25:6-8 God shall overcome death on the mountain of Zion, swallowing up death forever. The dead whom God wishes to get alive, will live (Is 26:19; cf. Hos 6:1-2; 13:14; Ez 37:1-14). The expected answer to the question in Zec 1:5: "And the prophets, do they live forever?", is often understood to be "No! Of course not." But I think, if the answer is "Yes, sure they do!", that the introduction of Zechariah gains much. The fathers who were disobedient perished. The prophets

who faithfully proclaimed the word of God are rewarded with living forever. That Zechariah has the idea of eternal life in his book is clear from Zec 12:10: The pierced one who got killed is alive again and coming to save Israel.

5.8.2 In the New Testament

The use of ἡ αἰώνιος ζωὴ for "the eternal life".

In the New Testament the word ἡ ζωὴ *zōē* means 1. life in the physical sense (e.g. Lk 16:25), 2. the supernatural life that God and Christ have and believers receive in future, but also enjoy in the present (e.g. Jn 5:24).¹²⁰ In the New Testament the adjective αἰώνιος, *on aiōniōs*, ὄν means "eternal" in the sense of 1. without beginning (Rom 16:25), 2. without beginning and without end (Rom 16:26), 3. without end (Lk 16:9).¹²¹ We shall look at *zōē* in the New Testament as far as it denotes eternal life with or without the adjective *aiōniōs* .

God and eternal life.

Jesus gives a definition of eternal life in Jn 17:3:

And this is eternal life, that they know you the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom you have sent.¹²²

To know God and Jesus Christ is to have eternal life.

120. Bauer, Wörterbuch zum Neuen Testament, p. 672-3.

121. *ibid.*, p. 55-56.

122. αὕτη δέ ἐστιν ἡ αἰώνιος ζωὴ ἵνα γινώσκωσι σὲ τὸν μόνον ἀληθινὸν θεὸν καὶ ὃν ἀπέστειλας Ἰησοῦν Χριστόν.

God's or Christ's words or commandments and eternal life.

The words that Jesus Christ has spoken to the disciples "are spirit and life" (Jn 6:63). Peter acknowledges that Jesus has "words of eternal life" (Jn 6:68). Jesus says that the Father has given him "a commandment - what to say and what to speak" and that the Father's "commandment is eternal life" (Jn 12:49-50).

The gospel according to John was written to lead people to faith in Jesus Christ and by doing so to eternal life (Jn 20:31). The apostles preached "the words of this life" (Acts 5:20). To reject the word of God is to reject eternal life. Those who have been appointed to eternal life by God, accept and believe the word of God (Acts 13:46.48). Speaking about the commandments of God's law Paul says according to the KJV in Rom 7:10: "And the commandment, which was ordained to life, I found to be unto death." If the Philipians are holding fast to the gospel as "the word of life", Paul did not labor in vain (Phil 2:16).

Christ and eternal life.

Through his own eternal life Christ is a priest for ever who can save for ever (Heb 7:3.15-17.25):

3 He is without father or mother or genealogy, having neither beginning of days nor end of life, but resembling the Son of God he continues a priest forever... 15 This becomes even more evident when another priest arises in the likeness of Melchizedek, 16 who has become a priest, not on the basis of a legal requirement concerning bodily descent, but by the power of an indestructible life. 17 For it is witnessed of him, "You are a priest forever, after the order of

Melchizedek."... 25 Consequently, he is able to save to the uttermost those who draw near to God through him, since he always lives to make intercession for them.

In almost all of the verses given below eternal life is somehow related to Jesus Christ. To believe in him is to have eternal life. In Acts 3:15 he is the Author of life. 2 Tm 1:1 speaks of "the promise of the life that is in Christ Jesus". In the following sections he himself is the life in person: Col 3:3.4; 1 Jn 1:1.2; 1 Jn 5:12.13.20; the resurrection and the life (Jn 11:25); the way, and the truth, and the life (Jn 14:6).

The word "life" with the adjective "eternal". The phrase "eternal life" is used quite often in the New Testament (Mt 19:16; Mk 10:17; Lk 18:18; Mt 19:29; Mk 10:30; Lk 18:30; Mt 25:46; Lk 10:25; Jn 3:15.16; Jn 3:36; Jn 4:14; Jn 4:36; Jn 5:24-26; Jn 5:39-40; Jn 6:27; Jn 6:40.47.53; Jn 6:54; Jn 10:28; Jn 12:25; Jn 17:2; Rom 2:7; Rom 5:21; Rom 6:22.23; 1 Tm 1:16; 1 Tm 6:12; Tit 1:2; Tit 3:7; 1 Jn 2:25; 1 Jn 3:15; 1 Jn 5:11; Jude 1:21). It is a life that does never end.

Life in the sense of eternal life even without the adjective "eternal". The phrase "to enter life" means according to the context "to enter eternal life" (Mt 18:8.9; 19:17; Mk 9:43.45). In the following texts "life" seems also to be used in the sense of eternal life (Mt 7:14; Acts 11:18; 1 Tm 4:8; 1 Jn 5:16; Jn 10:10 abundant life; Ephesians 4:18 alienated from the life of God; 1 Tm 6:19 that which is truly life; 2 Tm 1:10 life and immortality; passing out of death into life (1 Jn 3:14; Jn 5:24).

Genitive constructions with life understood as eternal.

1. Resurrection of life (Jn 5:29),
2. bread of God, bread of life (Jn 6:33.35),
3. bread of life, living bread (Jn 6:48.51),
4. words of eternal life (Jn 6:68),
5. light of life (Jn 8:12),
6. the paths of life (Acts 2:28),
7. justification of life, meaning life giving justification (Rom 5:18),
8. newness of life (Rom 6:4),
9. the crown of life (Jas 1:12; Rv 2:10),
10. the grace of life (1 Pt 3:7),
11. tree of life (Rv 2:7; 22:2.14.19),
12. water of life (Rv 7:17; 21:6; 22:1.17).

Eternal life in contrast to eternal punishment. The following different phrases of punishment are used as the opposite of eternal life.

1. To be thrown into the eternal fire (Mt 18:8),
2. to be thrown into the hell of fire (Mt 18:9),
3. to be thrown into hell (Mk 9:45),

4. to be thrown into the lake of fire which is the second death (Rv 20:14-15),
5. to go to hell, to the unquenchable fire (Mk 9:43),
6. to go away into eternal punishment (Mt 25:46),
7. the wrath of God remains on him (Jn 3:36),
8. to come into judgment (Jn 5:24),
9. to come out of the grave to the resurrection of judgment (Jn 5:29).

The Book of life. The book of life belongs to Jesus Christ and contains the names of all who will inherit eternal life. It was written before the foundation of the world. The names of Paul's fellow workers in Philippi "are in the book of life" (Phil 4:3). The name of the one who conquers Jesus will never blot out of the book of life (Rv 3:5). All who dwell on earth will worship the beast of Revelation 13, "everyone whose name has not been written before the foundation of the world in the book of life of the Lamb that was slain" (Rv 13:8; similar in 17:8).

The book of life will be opened at the time of the judgment of the dead (Rv 20:12-15):

12 And I saw the dead, great and small, standing before the throne, and books were opened. Then another book was opened, which is the book of life. And the dead were judged by what was written in the books, according to what they had done. 13 And the sea gave up the dead who were in it, Death and Hades gave up the dead who were in them, and they were

judged, each one of them, according to what they had done. 14 Then Death and Hades were thrown into the lake of fire. This is the second death, the lake of fire. 15 And if anyone's name was not found written in the book of life, he was thrown into the lake of fire.

Permission to enter the New Jerusalem is given only to "those who are written in the Lamb's book of life" (Rv 21:27).

God's servants and eternal life. Christ uses the sacrificial lives of his servants to bring life to others (2 Cor 2:16; 2 Cor 4:10-12).

The Holy Spirit and eternal life.

Jesus honors the Spirit as the one "who gives life". The words of Jesus are spirit and life (Jn 6:63). The law of the Spirit of life sets believers free in Christ Jesus from the law of sin and death (Rom 8:2). "To set the mind on the flesh is death, but to set the mind on the Spirit is life and peace" (Rom 8:6). "But if Christ is in you, although the body is dead because of sin, the Spirit is life because of righteousness" (Rom 8:10). "The one who sows to the Spirit will from the Spirit reap eternal life" (Gal 6:8).

Resurrection and transformation.

Jesus himself is "the resurrection and the life" (Jn 11:25). Paul prefers to be transformed while still alive "so that what is mortal may be swallowed up by life" (2 Cor 5:4). The two witnesses of God in Revelation 11 are made alive again when "a breath of life from God entered them" (Rv 11:11). Paul says about the Israelites in Rom 11:15:

For if their rejection means the reconciliation of the world, what will their acceptance mean but life from the dead?

When Jesus was rejected by Israel and crucified, the world was reconciled. Israel was set aside for the time when the gospel would be preached to all nations. But Paul predicts a time when Israel will be accepted again, not only single Israelites having faith, but the whole nation turning to God. When this happens, this will be "life from the dead". This could point to the day of resurrection. Then there would be a time relationship between Israel's acceptance and the second coming of Christ with the resurrection of the dead.

5.9 By Faith alone

So far we have seen that all the blessings of soteriology are somehow related to faith and obtained by faith. Those who believe in Jesus Christ receive these blessings, the believers of Israel or of the Gentile nations.

5.9.1 The blessings of salvation are obtained by faith and for faith.

1. Salvation, Lk 7:50, see section 5.1.2,
2. atonement, Rom 3:25, see section 5.2.2,
3. redemption and ransom; the believers have been redeemed to live a holy life by faith, 1 Pt 1:18-21, see section 5.3.2,
4. reconciliation, Rom 5:1.9-11, see subsection 5.4.2,
5. justification, Rom 3:21-28 see section 5.5.2,

6. adoption or sonship, Gal 3:23-4:7, see subsection 5.6.2,
7. regeneration, John 1:12-13, see section 5.7.2,
8. eternal life, John 3:16, see section 5.8.2.

Especially when it comes to the subject of justification the apostle Paul heavily emphasizes that we are justified only by God's grace and by faith alone, not by any works of righteousness we might have done (Rom 3:23-28; Tit 3:5-7. Salvation is gained by faith alone. The works can only follow, but they also should follow (Tit 2:14; Gal 5:6; Jas 2:18-26).

5.9.2 The will of man in coming to faith.

Is there a free will in fallen man?

What is the role of the will of man in coming to faith or to conversion? Is there a free will in fallen man? When God created Adam and Eve, they had the freedom of choice to remain obedient to God or to disobey him (Gn 2:17). According to the Holy Scriptures it seems that man has lost this freedom, because his nature became so sinful and corrupt that God "saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every intention of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually" (Gn 6:5). In response God sent the flood at the time of Noah as his first universal judgment on mankind. But even after the flood and after God had saved Noah and his family, he stated in Gn 8:21:

And when the Lord smelled the pleasing aroma,
the Lord said in his heart, "I will never again curse
the ground because of man, for the intention of man's

heart is evil from his youth. Neither will I ever again strike down every living creature as I have done."

To be sure man has a will, but this will is dominated by his sinful nature (Rom 3:9-12):

9 What then? Are we Jews any better off? 2 No, not at all. For we have already charged that all, both Jews and Greeks, are under sin, 10 as it is written: "None is righteous, no, not one; 11 no one understands; no one seeks for God. 12 All have turned aside; together they have become worthless; no one does good, not even one."

Because man is fallen under sin with all his capacities as a person, his will, his emotions and his thinking ability, he has become a slave to sin (Jn 8:34), led astray by the devil (Eph 2:1-2; Rv 12:9) and controlled by his own evil desires (James 1:14-15).

How then does somebody become willing to come to faith in Christ?

In John 6:37-40.44-45 Jesus says what is necessary to come to him and stay with him to get eternal life:

37 All that the Father gives me will come to me, and whoever comes to me I will never cast out. 38 For I have come down from heaven, not to do my own will but the will of him who sent me. 39 And this is the will of him who sent me, that I should lose nothing of all that he has given me, but raise it up on the last day. 40 For this is the will of my Father, that everyone who looks on the Son and believes in him should have

eternal life, and I will raise him up on the last day...

44 No one can come to me unless the Father who sent me draws him. And I will raise him up on the last day.

45 It is written in the Prophets, 'And they will all be taught by God.' Everyone who has heard and learned from the Father comes to me.

Accordingly we can produce this list to show what is necessary to come to Jesus and have life:

1. The Father gives a certain number of people to the Son.
2. All of them come to Jesus.
 - (a) People can only come to Jesus if the Father draws them to Jesus.
 - (b) People can only learn about Jesus, if they learn it from the Father.
3. Jesus accepts all of them and casts no-one out, for he has accepted the Father's will to lose nothing of all that the Father has given him.
4. Jesus raises all of them up on the last day.

In the context the coming to Jesus is the expression of faith in him (Jn 6:35). The coming to Jesus is brought about by the Father in 1. giving people to the Son, 2. drawing them to the Son, 3. teaching them about the Son. There is no correspondent action of the people involved when the Father gives them to Jesus. But when the Father draws them to Jesus, their corresponding work is to be drawn to Jesus resulting in their coming to Jesus. And when the Father teaches them, their corresponding work is to hear it and learn

it from the Father, meaning that they accept the truth and recognize Jesus. Again the result is that they come to Jesus. The giving of the Father to the Son could already have happened before the foundation of the world as some other texts seem to imply (Rv 17:8; Eph 1:3-4; 2 Tm 1:9). But the Father's drawing and the teaching them seems to happen while they are alive and answer with the coming and learning.

We can answer now our question from the beginning of this section: How then does somebody become willing to come to faith in Christ? He becomes willing, because the Father has given him to Christ, draws him to Christ and teaches him about Christ. He follows the drawing and comes, he accepts the teaching and learns it. The result is, he comes to Christ and receives eternal life, being raised from the dead on the last day.

Apart from Christ nobody can do anything of any spiritual value (John 15:5). This is also true for his willing to come to Christ and abide in him.

Very similar ideas could be shown from the letters of Paul. We shall see this when we look at Rom 9-11. For the time being a quote from Phil 2:12-13 might be enough:

12 Therefore, my beloved, as you have always obeyed, so now, not only as in my presence but much more in my absence, work out your own salvation with fear and trembling, 13 for it is God who works in you, both to will and to work for his good pleasure.

5.9.3 Our Response - Confession and Repentance

When God the Father works in someone that he comes to Christ and recognizes the Son, then this person needs to respond and will respond in confession and repentance.

Confession

Words used. The noun *f. ἡ ὁμολογία* *hōmōlōgia* denotes the action of "confession" (2 Cor 9:13) and "confession" in the sense of what is confessed (Heb 3:1).¹²³

The verb *ὁμολογέω* *hōmōlōgēō* means "to confess."¹²⁴

The adverb *ὁμολογουμένως* *hōmōlōgōumē-nōs* is used in the sense of "acknowledged" in 1 Tm 3:16.

Jesus Christ and confession. In his testimony Jesus Christ made the good confession before Pontius Pilate and thus gave an example to all of his disciples (1 Tm 6:13). He is "the apostle and high priest of our confession" (Heb 3:1).

Since we have such a great high priest in him, "who has passed through the heavens" we should "hold fast our confession" (Heb 4:14) and that "without wavering, for he who promised is faithful" (Heb 10:23; cf. 2 Cor 9:13). Timothy was called to eternal life and has made about it "the good confession in the presence of many witnesses" (1 Tm 6:12). A good example for such an early confession of Jesus Christ could be 1 Tm 3:16:

16 Great indeed, we confess, is the mystery of godli-
ness:

He was manifested in the flesh,
vindicated by the Spirit,
3 seen by angels,
proclaimed among the nations,
believed on in the world,

123. Bauer, *Wörterbuch zum Neuen Testament*, p. 1126.

124. *ibid.*, p. 1126.

taken up in glory.

Necessity of confessing Jesus Christ for salvation. It is necessary to confess or acknowledge Jesus as Christ and Lord before men to get saved (Mt 10:32; Lk 12:8; 1 Jn 2:23; 4:15).

Often people who confess Jesus as the Christ or the Son of God have to suffer for it (Jn 9:22). That is the reason why many may believe in Jesus with their heart but will not confess him with their mouth (Jn 12:42). But both is necessary to get saved (Rom 10:9-10):

9 ... if you confess with your mouth that Jesus is Lord and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved. 10 For with the heart one believes and is justified, and with the mouth one confesses and is saved.

It is necessary to "test the spirits to see whether they are from God". The best way is to check their "Christology", their teaching about Jesus Christ (1 Jn 4:2-3):

2 By this you know the Spirit of God: every spirit that confesses that Jesus Christ has come in the flesh is from God, 3 and every spirit that does not confess Jesus is not from God. This is the spirit of the antichrist, which you heard was coming and now is in the world already.

The core truth is the incarnation of God in Jesus Christ. That relates to Christology and the Trinity. Wherever the incarnation, the coming of Jesus as God in the flesh, is denied, the spirit of the antichrist is at work (2 Jn 1:7).

It is necessary that the way of life agrees with one's confession (Tit 1:16). Therefore everyone who confesses Christ as Lord should also confess his own sins and leave them to get cleansed by the blood of Christ (1 Jn 1:7.9).

Several more uses of confession. Certain Old Testament believers confessed with their lifestyle that they were guests in this world on their way to their true home (Heb 11:13-16). Paul confesses that he as a Christians has full faith in all what is written in the Old Testament (Acts 24:14).

The New Testament way of offering up a sacrifice of praise to God, is "the fruit of lips that acknowledge his name" (Heb 13:15). Our salvation is rooted in the fact that Jesus Christ will confess our name as written in his book of life before the Father and his angels (Rv 3:5).

Repentance

Words used. The noun *f. ἡ μετάνοια* *mētanōia* means "change of mind", "repentance", "conversion".¹²⁵ The verb *μετανοέω* *mētanōēō* means "to change one's mind", "to repent", "to convert".¹²⁶

Message of John the Baptist about repentance. The summary of John the Baptist's message is found in Mt 3:2

Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand.¹²⁷

125. Bauer, Wörterbuch zum Neuen Testament, p. 1013-14.

126. *ibid.*, p. 1012-13.

127. Μετανοείτε, ἥγγικεν γὰρ ἡ βασιλεία τῶν οὐρανῶν.

The kingdom of God is a great chance and a great gift for Israel and mankind. But it is dangerous for those who are not prepared and who do not repent from their sins and their life far from God. If they do not bear fruit in keeping with repentance, they are cut down like bad trees and thrown into the fire of hell (Mt 3:8-12). John's baptism with water is a baptism for repentance (Mt 3:11)¹²⁸ or "a baptism of repentance for the forgiveness of sins" (Mk 1:4; cf. Lk 3:3)¹²⁹. Those who get baptized show their willingness to repent from their sins and their life far from God and to become ready for the coming of Christ who is the king of the kingdom of God and mightier than John, not baptizing only with water but with the Spirit of God himself (Mt 3:11; Acts 19:4).

Message of Jesus Christ about repentance in the gospels. The summary of the message of Jesus is found in Mt 4:17 and is identical with John's message: "Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand." The Greek imperative used here for the commandment of repentance has the durative aspect of the present tense stem which here either means 1. an ongoing or continuous action or 2. a repeated action.¹³⁰ To repent is either ongoing or something which has to be done again and again. Perhaps the latter is preferable here: Whenever somebody sins, he needs to repent from his wrongdoing and be changed. That this is also necessary for already converted Christians is clear from many passages in the New Testament (2 Cor 7:9-10; Rv 2:5,16,21,22; 3:3,19).

128. Ἐγὼ μὲν ὑμᾶς βαπτίζω ἐν ὕδατι εἰς μετάνοιαν•

129. ἐγένετο Ἰωάννης ὁ βαπτίζων ἐν τῇ ἐρήμῳ κηρύσσων βάπτισμα μετάνοιας εἰς ἅφεσιν ἁμαρτιῶν.

130. Μετανοεῖτε *mētanōēitē* See Eddy Lanz, *Basic New Testament Greek* (Rawalpindi: Eved Adonai - Is 53:11, 2013), <http://www.lanz.li/grnt/basic-nt-greek/Basic-NT-Greek.pdf>, 2.3.1 Durative Stem Usage.

Jesus has not come "to call the righteous but sinners to repentance" (Lk 5:32) teaching that "there will be more joy in heaven over one sinner who repents than over ninety-nine righteous persons who need no repentance" (Lk 15:7). The teaching of Jesus and his miracles were a divine invitation commanding for repentance. It is dangerous for people not to repent when being visited by such a wonderful word of God (Mt 11:20-22):

20 Then he began to denounce the cities where most of his mighty works had been done, because they did not repent. 21 "Woe to you, Chorazin! Woe to you, Bethsaida! For if the mighty works done in you had been done in Tyre and Sidon, they would have repented long ago in sackcloth and ashes. 22 But I tell you, it will be more bearable on the day of judgment for Tyre and Sidon than for you."

This will happen according to Lk 12:48, "Everyone to whom much was given, of him much will be required, and from him to whom they entrusted much, they will demand the more." The Risen One told the astonished disciples (Lk 24:46-47):

Thus it is written, that the Christ should suffer and on the third day rise from the dead, 47 and that repentance and forgiveness of sins should be proclaimed in his name to all nations, beginning from Jerusalem.

According to this the Great Commission to evangelize all nations of the world is already found in the Old Testament and it is a proclamation of a movement of repentance promising the forgiveness of sins to the repentant sinners. This is for Israel (Acts 5:31) and the Gentiles (Acts 11:18; 17:30; 26:20).

Repentance in the remainder of the New Testament. The ability to repent is a gift of God (2 Tm 2:25) whose "kindness is meant to lead ... to repentance" (Rom 2:4). God may also cause grief to lead people to repentance (2 Cor 7:9-10). According to Acts 2:38 repentance is necessary to receive the Holy Spirit.

In the last days people may think about the coming of the day of the Lord that it comes late or never, but the apostle Peter assures his readers (2 Pt 3:8-9):

8 But do not overlook this one fact, beloved, that with the Lord one day is as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day. 9 The Lord is not slow to fulfill his promise as some count slowness, but is patient toward you, not wishing that any should perish, but that all should reach repentance.

God waits patiently with the coming of his day so that people may reach repentance. It is God's will for salvation of all (1 Tm 2:4; 4:10) that lets him wait. This also implies that after the day of the Lord there is no chance of repentance. It has to happen before. It is possible to be too late (Heb 12:17). There is also the possibility of a kind of apostasy which blocks any way to repentance (Heb 6:6). During the last part of the last days the vast majority of mankind will not repent even under the severe blows of enormous judgments of God (Rv 9:20.21; 16:9.11). This will make any more patient waiting of God for their repentance superfluous and his day will come like a thief in the night (Rv 16:15; 2 Pt 3:9-10).

5.10 Through Grace alone

5.10.1 Word used.

The noun f. ἡ χάρις charis means 1. grace, charm, loveliness (Lk 4:22; Col 4:6) 2. grace, favor (Lk 2:40; Rom 3:24).¹³¹

5.10.2 The Holy Trinity and grace.

The grace of God the Father.

As the source of all grace God is called "the God of all grace" (1 Pt 5:10). When Barnabas came to Antioch and "saw the grace of God, he was glad, and he exhorted them all to remain faithful to the Lord with steadfast purpose" (Acts 11:23). The grace of God which he saw was the revival amongst the Gentiles there who had come in great numbers to faith in Jesus Christ as their Savior. In Antioch Pisidia Paul and Barnabas urged the converts to Christ "to continue in the grace of God" (Acts 13:43).

The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ.

The fact that God became man in Jesus Christ is "the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that though he was rich, yet for your sake he became poor, so that you by his poverty might become rich" (2 Cor 8:9). In Tit 2:11 the coming of Christ is put in these words:

For the grace of God has appeared, bringing salvation for all people.

131. Bauer, Wörterbuch zum Neuen Testament, p. 1734-7.

The grace of God in Christ is for everyone because "by the grace of God" Jesus tasted "death for everyone" (Heb 2:9). John writes that God became man in Jesus as the Son of God "full of grace and truth" (Jn 1:14). "And from his fullness we have all received, grace upon grace. For the law was given through Moses; grace and truth came through Jesus Christ" (Jn 1:16-17). In the great discussion about how the believers of the Gentiles can get saved, Peter says in Acts 15:11 that "we believe that we will be saved through the grace of the Lord Jesus, just as they will". xxxx

The Spirit and grace.

In Heb 10:29 the Holy Spirit is called "the Spirit of grace" which presents him as grace-giving Spirit. This overview shows that God's grace reaches us through every person of the Holy Trinity.

5.10.3 Election of grace.

Paul presents the seven thousand men of the time of Elijah as an example for God's choosing by grace (Rom 11:4-6):

"I have kept for myself seven thousand men who have not bowed the knee to Baal." 5 So too at the present time there is a remnant, chosen by grace. 6 But if it is by grace, it is no longer on the basis of works; otherwise grace would no longer be grace.¹³²

Elijah did not know about the seven thousand. He deemed himself as the only one left and was depressed even to death. God's answer

132. 5 οὕτως οὖν καὶ ἐν τῷ νῦν καιρῷ λείμμα κατ' ἐκλογὴν χάριτος γέγονεν• 6 εἰ δὲ χάριτι, οὐκέτι ἐξ ἔργων, ἐπεὶ ἡ χάρις οὐκέτι γίνεται χάρις.

showed him that God's work with Israel was not at an end. Paul takes this as a principle of election by grace and says about his own time in the middle of the first century, "So too at the present time there is a remnant, chosen by grace." God's grace stands here in contrast to works and merits on the side of us human beings. Paul's idea is that they did not bow their knee to Baal not because they were better than all the rest, but because of God's grace saying: "I have kept for myself seven thousand men..." Paul thinks that God's grace worked in them with the result that they did not bow to Baal. First is God's grace and then comes the life showing forth the fruit of this grace. It is important to note that in Paul's writings God's grace stands often in contrast to the works of man, but it does not stand in contrast to the faith of man. Election is not on the basis of the works of the law, because no-one could have fulfilled all the demands of God's law (see Gal 3:10-14). But election implies that those who are elected will practice faith.

Jude speaks of people "who pervert the grace of our God into sensuality and deny our only Master and Lord, Jesus Christ". They were "long ago ... designated for this condemnation, ungodly people"¹³³ (Jude 1:4). As we have a positive "book of life" of Jesus Christ (Rv 13:8; 17:8) where the names of God's elect are written, Jude here seems to think that the names of these ungodly people were also noted but for condemnation. This gives the picture that those who are chosen by God's grace get saved and those who "pervert the grace of ... God" get lost.

133. οἱ πάλαι προγεγραμμένοι εἰς τοῦτο τὸ κρίμα, ἄσεβεῖς

5.10.4 Salvation is through Grace alone.

This was a strong emphasis during the time of the Reformation. The reformers got this emphasis mainly from the letters of Paul in the New Testament, especially Romans and Galatians.

Salvation through grace.

Because all have sinned they can not be saved through works, but only by God's grace, God's personal favor bestowed upon them (Rom 3:23-24). By God's grace we are his children (Eph 1:3-6), "according to the riches of his grace" we have forgiveness of our sins through the blood of Christ (Eph 1:7). We were dead in our sins and were "following the course of this world, following the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that is now at work in the sons of disobedience" (Eph 2:1-2), but then God took action (Eph 2:4-10):

4 But God, being rich in mercy, because of the great love with which he loved us, 5 even when we were dead in our trespasses, made us alive together with Christ - by grace you have been saved - 6 and raised us up with him and seated us with him in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus, 7 so that in the coming ages he might show the immeasurable riches of his grace in kindness toward us in Christ Jesus. 8 For by grace you have been saved through faith. And this is not your own doing; it is the gift of God, 9 not a result of works, so that no one may boast. 10 For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand, that we should walk in them.

According to this salvation is by grace and even a holy life of good works is prepared by God's grace beforehand.

Salvation not by works of the law.

Paul argues starting from Gn 15:6 that Abraham is an example of someone who was saved by God's grace and not by his own works of righteousness, because "to the one who works, his wages are not counted as a gift but as his due" (Rom 4:4). It was important that God's promise for Abraham was not based on the law, but on grace and on faith so that it surely would be fulfilled (Rom 4:13-16):

13 For the promise to Abraham and his offspring that he would be heir of the world did not come through the law but through the righteousness of faith. 14 For if it is the adherents of the law who are to be the heirs, faith is null and the promise is void. 15 For the law brings wrath, but where there is no law there is no transgression. 16 That is why it depends on faith, in order that the promise may rest on grace and be guaranteed to all his offspring - not only to the adherent of the law but also to the one who shares the faith of Abraham, who is the father of us all.

Paul more than once explains that the two ways of righteousness by grace and faith on the one hand and by righteousness through the works of the law on the other are mutually exclusive. You can not walk both ways. Either Christ or the law (Gal 5:2-4):

2 Look: I, Paul, say to you that if you accept circumcision, Christ will be of no advantage to you. 3 I testify again to every man who accepts circumcision

that he is obligated to keep the whole law. 4 You are severed from Christ, you who would be justified by the law; you have fallen away from grace.

Paul likes to put an emphasis on this fact that we can not get saved by the works of the law or by our own works (Gal 2:21; Tit 3:5-7). In 2 Tm 1:9 he even says that God "saved us and called us to a holy calling, not because of our works but because of his own purpose and grace, which he gave us in Christ Jesus before the ages began".

5.10.5 **The stand of grace.**

Through Christ "we have ... obtained access by faith into this grace in which we stand" (Rom 5:2). The rule of grace in Christ is stronger than the enslaving rule of sin and leads to eternal life (Rom 5:15,17,20,21). Do be under grace does not mean that we could or should continue to sin (Rom 6:1), but we should live a righteous life for God based on the fact that we have died with Christ and so are dead to sin and under God's grace (Rom 6:14-15; cf. Gal 1:6).

5.10.6 **Effects of grace.**

We can be strong through grace in Christ (2 Tm 2:1) and our heart can be "strengthened by grace" (Heb 13:9). A good example for different effects of grace is the life of Paul.

God's grace in Paul's life. It was God's pleasure to call Paul through his grace and let him be an apostle of Christ among the Gentiles (Gal 1:15-16). This calling and grace of God in Paul's life was recognized by other great leaders of the first century church, by James and Cephas and John (Gal 2:9). By God's grace Paul became a very effective and successful apostle (1 Cor 15:10). But he never

forgot what kind of enemy of Christ he had been before and how guilty he had become by persecuting the church of God. "For I am the least of the apostles, unworthy to be called an apostle, because I persecuted the church of God" (1 Cor 15:9). "To me, though I am the very least of all the saints, this grace was given, to preach to the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ" (Eph 3:8). In 1 Tm 1:12-16 he calls himself even the "foremost" or the "worst" of sinners:

12 I thank him who has given me strength, Christ Jesus our Lord, because he judged me faithful, appointing me to his service, 13 though formerly I was a blasphemer, persecutor, and insolent opponent. But I received mercy because I had acted ignorantly in unbelief, 14 and the grace of our Lord overflowed for me with the faith and love that are in Christ Jesus. 15 The saying is trustworthy and deserving of full acceptance, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners, of whom I am the foremost. 16 But I received mercy for this reason, that in me, as the foremost, Jesus Christ might display his perfect patience as an example to those who were to believe in him for eternal life.

Paul's life is an astonishing example of the grace of God. It is no wonder that he uses this word more than any other in his letters. Paul's greetings very often include the wish of God's grace for the recipients (Rom 1:7; Rom 16:20; 1 Cor 1:3; 2 Cor 13:14; Gal 6:18 etc.).

His willingness to serve God even in suffering meant that God's grace extended to more and more people and increased thanksgiving, to the glory of God (2 Cor 4:15). Often he had great pain in his

body, but he accepted his weakness together with Christ's promise: "My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness" (2 Cor 12:9).

5.10.7 **How to receive grace.**

It is good to draw again and again "near to the throne of grace, that we may receive mercy and find grace to help in time of need" (Heb 4:16). To be humble is a good attitude to receive God's grace (Jas 4:6; 1 Pt 5:5). We should set our "hope fully on the grace that will be brought to" us "at the revelation of Jesus Christ", that is his second coming (1 Pt 1:13). We should not receive God's grace in vain (2 Cor 6:1) but in order to bring "holiness to completion in the fear of God" (2 Cor 7:1).

5.11 **Election and Predestination by God**

5.11.1 **Words Used in the Old Testament**

God and בָּחַר *bāḥar*.

The verb בָּחַר *bāḥar* means "to choose".¹³⁴ It is used with humans as subject and with God as well. We concentrate here on the passages where God chooses.

God elects one nation as his chosen people. God elected Abraham (Neh 9:7) or the seed of Abraham, Israel (Is 41:8-9) or the fathers and their seed (Dt 4:37). He has chosen Israel to be his people from all nations, out of love to keep the oath to the fathers (Dt

134. Brown, Driver, and Briggs, *Hebrew and English Lexicon of the Old Testament*, p. 103.

7:6-8; Dt 10:15; 14:2; 1 Kgs 3:8; Ps 33:12; 47:5; 135:4). One time of the election of Israel was the time of the exodus from Egypt (Ez 20:5). But this election of Israel is lasting even after the judgment of the exile (Is 14:1; 44:1-2).

God elects the priest, his family and his tribe. He does not elect Korah, Dathan and Abiram (Nm 16:5.7) but Aaron from the tribe of Levi to be the high priest (17:5; 18:5; 1 Sm 2:28; 1 Chr 15:2; 2 Chr 29:5.11; Ps 105:26). The priests from Levi also function as judges (Dt 21:5). God's judgments at the time of Jeremiah do not mean that the election of David's house and of the house of Levi has ceased (Jer 33:21-24).

God elects the king. Moses prophecies this as a future thing and gives the rule that he should be no foreigner (Dt 17:15). God grants the wish of Israel for a king and chooses the tall Saul to the joy of Israel (1 Sm 10:24). After the rejection of Saul Samuel is ordered to anoint one of the sons of Jesse, not the elder brothers of David (1 Sm 16:8.9.10), but David the youngest of them (2 Sm 6:21). Hushai speaks to Absalom deceiving him to save David. He says that he is serving the king chosen by the people and by God (2 Sm 16:18). The election of David still has an influence on history for generations to come (1 Kgs 11:34; Ps 89:19-20). God has chosen Judah and especially David (1 Chr 28:4; 2 Chr 6:5.6). Psalms 78:67-71 mention the election of David, Judah and of Zion, not of Joseph or Ephraim. Solomon was chosen to be king and build the temple (1 Chr 28:5.6.10; 29:1). God's judgments at the time of Jeremiah do not mean that the election of David's house and of the house of Levi has ceased (Jer 33:21-24).

God also chooses individual persons for certain purposes. He can choose people to dwell in his courts (Ps 65:4). This statement in this psalm of David may point to priests. Isaiah 43:10 talks either of Israel as the servant or of the personal servant (cf. Isaiah 49:7 a prophecy about Jesus). Haggai 2:23 speaks of Zerubbabel as God's servant being chosen. This may relate to the fact that he was a son of David and the especially chosen one in his own time out of all the other sons of David. Jer 49:19 and 50:44 talk of of a chosen one with regard to the judgment over Edom or over Babylon respectively who is chosen and set over them by God.

God chooses the unique place of worship. This is prophesied in Dt 12:5.11.14; 12:18.21.26; 14:23.24.25; 15:20; 16:2; 16:6.7; 16:11.15.16; 17:8.10; 18:6; 26:2; 31:11. The same is true for Jo 9:27. From the exodus to David God did not choose a city for a temple to be built, but under Solomon he has fulfilled his promise to David that a son of his will build a temple in the city God has chosen, Jerusalem (1 Kgs 8:16.44.48; 2 Chr 6:5.6.; 2 Chr 6:34.38). God has accepted Solomon's prayer and chosen this house as his temple (2 Chr 7:12.16).

Even after the sins of Solomon the election of Jerusalem still had an ongoing influence in salvation history (1 Kgs 11:13; 11:32.36; 14:21; 2 Kgs 21:7; 2 Chr 12:13; 33:7; Ps 132:13). But 2 Kgs 23:27 pronounces God's judgment that the chosen Jerusalem will be cast off. Nehemiah reminds God of his promise to gather the exiles back to the chosen city (Neh 1:9). Psalms 78:67-71 speak of the election of David, Judah and of Zion, not of Joseph or Ephraim. The prophet Zechariah knows of the renewal of Jerusalem's election after the exile (1:17; 2:12; 3:2).

Certain things are choice goods for God or are chosen by him:

justice and righteousness (Prv 21:3 and the right fast (Isaiah 58:5-6). It can also happen that God chooses harsh treatment for sinners (Is 66:4).

God and יָדָע yāda'.

The verb יָדָע yāda' means "to know".¹³⁵ In some places it is used for God's election of people, to know somebody and single him out. Amos 3:2:

You only have I known of all the families of the earth;¹³⁶ therefore I will punish you for all your iniquities.

God has a unique relationship with Israel. He has made himself known to Israel as to no other nation. And he knows and loves them in a special way. But this does not mean that they will go unpunished. They have received more than any other nation and therefore their responsibility is greater in God's judgment (cf. Lk 12:47-48). When God calls Jeremiah, he reveals a stunning fact to him (Jer 1:5):

Before I formed you in the womb I knew you,
and before you were born I consecrated you;
I appointed you a prophet to the nations.¹³⁷

135. Brown, Driver, and Briggs, Hebrew and English Lexicon of the Old Testament, p. 393-4.

136.

רַק אֶתְכֶם יָדַעְתִּי מִכָּל מְשֻׁפְחוֹת הָאָדָמָה

137. בְּטֶרֶם אֶצְוֶרְךָ * | אֶצְרֶךָ | בְּבֶטֶן יִרְעֵתִיךָ וּבְטֶרֶם תֵּצֵא מִרֶחֶם הַקֶּדְשִׁיתִיךָ נָבִיא לְגוֹיִם נִתְּתִיךָ :

God knew Jeremiah already before he even was in the smallest possible form in existence, being conceived in his mothers womb. This is about God's election before we are in existence. And God consecrated him, made him holy before he was born. God ordained him to be a prophet long before his time of coming into knowledge and learning about God. We know that the prophet Jeremiah struggled with his calling, but he became the prophet God wanted him to be (Jer 20:7-18; 15:16). God's election and predestination clearly is a mystery, but it is also a reality.

5.11.2 Words Used in the New Testament

The use of ἐκλέγομαι "to choose".

The verb ἐκλέγομαι *ēklēgōmai* means "to choose, to elect".¹³⁸

God elects. God had chosen the forefathers of Israel and liberated the nation from the slavery in Egypt (Acts 13:17). Jesus Christ as the Son of God is especially chosen and should therefore be heard and obeyed (Lk 9:35). This voice of God the Father corrected Peter's mistake to put Jesus on an equal footing with Moses and Elijah.

God chooses those who are his own and shortens the days of the great tribulation because of them (Mk 13:20). In the discussion about the question what the Gentile believers need to get saved Peter points out "that in the early days God made a choice among you, that by my mouth the Gentiles should hear the word of the gospel and believe" (Acts 15:7). What Peter wants to affirm is that he has a special say in this matter, because God had chosen him to open the door of repentance for Gentile believers through his sermon in the house of Cornelius (Acts 11:15-18).

138. Bauer, Wörterbuch zum Neuen Testament, p. 480.

Looking at the church in Corinth Paul declares God's way of choosing people (1 Cor 1:26-28):

26 For consider your calling, brothers: not many of you were wise according to worldly standards, not many were powerful, not many were of noble birth. 27 But God chose what is foolish in the world to shame the wise; God chose what is weak in the world to shame the strong; 28 God chose what is low and despised in the world, even things that are not, to bring to nothing things that are, 29 so that no human being might boast in the presence of God.

James agrees totally with this (James 2:5). With regard to the time of our election Paul praises God the Father that he chose us in Christ "before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and blameless before him" (Eph 1:4).

Christ elects. Christ chooses the twelve apostles (Lk 6:13), knowing that one of them was a devil (Jn 6:70) who loved money more than the Lord and would become his traitor selling him to the enemy (Jn 13:18.26-27; 12:6), becoming the son of destruction or lostness (17:12). This shows that the word election or being elected does not always include eternal salvation. All twelve had been chosen to be apostles, but only eleven would inherit eternal life, one would get lost because of his lack of faith and his openness to the works of the devil. Jesus later completed the number twelve again by adding Matthias to the apostles (Acts 1:2.24) after Judas had lost his office and his life (Acts 1:18-20).

The context must be looked at to determine for what people have been chosen. In this way Jesus says in Jn 15:16.19:

You did not choose me, but I chose you and appointed you that you should go and bear fruit and that your fruit should abide, so that whatever you ask the Father in my name, he may give it to you... 19 If you were of the world, the world would love you as its own; but because you are not of the world, but I chose you out of the world, therefore the world hates you.

Jesus has chosen his disciples not vice versa. His electing love comes first, then their willingness to follow him, to "abide in him" the true vine and bring forth abiding fruit. His election also makes them strangers in the world. He has taken them out of the world and united with him triggering the hatred of the world.

Some people choose worldly things. Jesus was teaching not to choose places of honor but to prefer humility (Lk 14:7).

Believers choose. Mary, sister of Martha, sat at the Lord's feet and listened to his teaching choosing the good portion, which was not taken away from her (Lk 10:42). The church in Jerusalem chose seven men to help supporting the widows on a daily basis (Acts 6:5). The people of the council in Jerusalem chose Judas and Silas to go to Antioch with Paul and Barnabas (Acts 15:22,25).

The use of ἐκλεκτός "chosen".

The adjective ἐκλεκτός, ἡ, όν *ēklēktōs* means "chosen, elect".¹³⁹

139. Bauer, Wörterbuch zum Neuen Testament, p. 481.

Used absolute without saying who has chosen. Often God is implied as the person who chooses. In the famous word of Jesus "For many are called, but few are chosen" (Mt 22:14), the called are all who hear the invitation of the gospel, but the chosen ones are those who really accept the gospel and live it out. They are those who God has chosen (Mk 13:20; cf. Mt 24:22). "False christs and false prophets will arise and perform great signs and wonders, so as to lead astray, if possible, even the elect" (Mt 24:24; Mk 13:22), but Christ warns his people that they do not fall into this trap (Mt 24:23-27).

One great motivation for the apostle Paul to keep on going in his sufferings was to "endure everything for the sake of the elect, that they also may obtain the salvation that is in Christ Jesus with eternal glory" (2 Tm 2:10). Peter encourages the Gentile believers in their sufferings by applying the words of Ex 19:5-6 and Is 43:21 and adding the idea of their election to it (1 Pt 2:9). John honors and encourages believers in a similar way (2 Jn 1:1.13). The ten kings of Rv Jn 17:12-14 will fight with Jesus, but he will win the battle "for he is he is Lord of lords and King of kings, and those with him are called and chosen and faithful." In this case the group of the called and the group of the chosen and faithful is identical. This is a different use than we have seen in Mt 22:14 where the two groups are not identical. This again shows how important it is to look into the context of the used words to determine their content.

God chooses or the Lord. The following verses speak clearly of God or the Lord choosing or having chosen people (Mk 13:20; Lk 18:7; Rom 8:33; Col 3:12; Titus 1:1). From Rom 16:13 we can learn that knowledge about somebody who is chosen can relate not only to a group, but to a single individual person like Rufus who is

"chosen in the Lord".

Peter writes his first letter (1 Pt 1:1-2)

... To those who are elect exiles of the dispersion
in Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia, and Bithynia,
2 according to the foreknowledge of God the Father,
in the sanctification of the Spirit,
for obedience to Jesus Christ and
for sprinkling with his blood...

Note that they are "elect ... according to the foreknowledge of God the Father".¹⁴⁰ The biblical teaching of election and predestination is beyond comprehension for our temporary human minds because we do not have the ability of God to foresee everything from the beginning and to be not subjected to time. God is the Creator of and Master of time, not the slave of it (2 Pt 3:8; Ps 90:1-4; Gn 1:1.5; Rv 1:8.17-18).

Christ chooses or the Son of Man. In these sections Christ or the Son of Man has chosen his people from all directions of the world and gathers them through the angels at the time of his second coming (Mt 24:31; Mk 13:27).

Christ is said to be the chosen one. Using the picture of the chosen and living corner stone for Christ Peter very nicely shows that the election of Christ is the foundation of all other elections. All other living stones have to come to Christ and enter the building through Christ (1 Pt 2:4.6). Paul presents a very similar idea when he says that God the Father has chosen us "in Christ" before the foundation of the world (Eph 1:3-4).

140. ἐκλεκτοῖς ... κατὰ πρόγνωσιν θεοῦ πατρός

The builders who rejected Christ mocked him in his state of rejection that he should save himself "if he is the Christ of God, his Chosen One!" (Lk 23:35). Little did they know that this rejected stone would become through his rejection, crucifixion and rising from the dead the cornerstone of a new building of God lasting in all eternity (1 Pt 2:7-10).

Angels who have been chosen. The Bible does not only speak of chosen men but also of chosen angels (1 Tm 5:21):

In the presence of God and of Christ Jesus and of the elect angels I charge you to keep these rules without prejudging, doing nothing from partiality.

The use of ἡ ἐκλογή "election".

The noun f. ἡ ἐκλογή *ēklōgē* means 1. active "the election" (Rom 11:5) and 2. passive "what is chosen, the elect" Rom 11:7).¹⁴¹

Used absolute without saying who has chosen. God is implied as the person who chooses. In these verses *ēklōgē* denotes the action of choosing. The grace is the grace of God who chooses his elect (Rom 11:5). The apostle Paul says about the Jews who do not believe in Jesus as the Christ (Rom 11:28):

As regards the gospel, they are enemies of God for your sake. But as regards election, they are beloved for the sake of their forefathers.¹⁴²

141. Bauer, Wörterbuch zum Neuen Testament, p. 481.

142. κατὰ μὲν τὸ εὐαγγέλιον ἐχθροὶ δι' ὑμᾶς, κατὰ δὲ τὴν ἐκλογὴν ἀγαπητοὶ διὰ τοὺς πατέρας•

Because God has chosen Abraham, Isaak, Jacob and David and gave them certain promises, "they are beloved for the sake of their forefathers". This is one reason why Paul believes in the final conversion of the whole remnant of Israel at the time of the second coming of Jesus Christ (Rom 11:29).

Paul assures the Thessalonian Christians that God has chosen them "because our gospel came to you not only in word, but also in power and in the Holy Spirit and with full conviction" (1 Thes 1:4-5).

In Rom 11:7 *ēklōgē* denotes the group of people which is chosen: "The elect obtained it, but the rest were hardened."

God is the one who chooses. God had chosen Jacob not Esau. He had proclaimed it before their birth and before their good or bad works happened, "in order that God's purpose of election might continue, not because of works but because of his call" (Rom 9:11).

Jesus Christ the one who chooses. Paul is chosen by Christ, the purpose for which he is chosen is given (Acts 9:15-16):

Go, for he is a chosen instrument of mine to carry my name before the Gentiles and kings and the children of Israel. 16 For I will show him how much he must suffer for the sake of my name.

Believers should make their calling and election sure. Often when election is taught, teachers put a great emphasis on the fact that this is God's doing alone. And that is a true and good emphasis. But often they have the tendency to minimize human responsibility in the action of salvation. Peter gives us a statement which puts the whole perspective more in balance (2 Pt 1:10):

Therefore, brothers, be all the more diligent to make your calling and election sure, for if you practice these qualities you will never fall.¹⁴³

The use of προτίθεμαι "to set forth".

The middle verb προτίθεμαι *prōtithēmai* means 1. to put forward, to place publicly (Rom 3:25), 2. to plan, to intend, to set forth, to decide (Eph 1:9; Rom 1:13).¹⁴⁴

Used related to election or predestination. This verb is used in a section which is quite famous when it comes to the discussion of election and predestination (Eph 1:9-12

... 9 making known to us the mystery of his will, according to his purpose, which he set forth in Christ¹⁴⁵
10 as a plan for the fullness of time, to unite all things in him, things in heaven and things on earth. 11 In him we have obtained an inheritance, having been predestined according to the purpose of him who works all things according to the counsel of his will, 12 so that we who were the first to hope in Christ might be to the praise of his glory.

According to "his purpose" or "his plan" God wants "to unite all things" in Christ. This plan God set forth in Christ. According to God's plan we have "been predestined according to the purpose of

143. διὸ μᾶλλον, ἀδελφοί, σπουδάσατε βεβαίαν ὑμῶν τὴν κλήσιν καὶ ἐκλογὴν ποιεῖσθαι• ταῦτα γὰρ ποιῶντες οὐ μὴ πταίσητέ ποτε•

144. Bauer, Wörterbuch zum Neuen Testament, p. 1432.

145. γνωρίσας ἡμῖν τὸ μυστήριον τοῦ θελήματος αὐτοῦ, κατὰ τὴν εὐδοκίαν αὐτοῦ ἣν προέθετο ἐν αὐτῷ

him who works all things according to the counsel of his will". So whatever God does, he does with a purpose and according to his own plan. It remains to be seen what elements God includes in his plan or what rules or principles he incorporates in it. One thing which he seems to include is the foreseen faith of the believers.

Used in other ways not related to our subject. The same verb is used for Paul's plan of coming to Rome (Rom 1:13). It is also used for God's work with Christ "whom God put forward as a propitiation by his blood, to be received by faith" (Rom 3:25).

The use of ἡ πρόθεσις "exposition, purpose".

The noun f. ἡ πρόθεσις *prōthēsis* means 1. exposition (Mt 12:4) and 2. purpose, plan, intension, decision, will (Rom 8:28).¹⁴⁶

Used related to divine election or predestination. According to Rom 8:28 "... all things work together for good, for those who are called according to" God's "purpose". His purpose also determined that Jacob was elected and not Esau (Rom 9:11). We have already seen that we have been predestined according to God's purpose (Eph 1:11) which is also called "the eternal purpose that he has realized in Christ Jesus¹⁴⁷ our Lord" (Eph 3:11). Paul can speak of "God, who saved us and called us to a holy calling, not because of our works but because of his own purpose and grace, which he gave us in Christ Jesus before the ages began" (2 Tm 1:9).

146. *ibid.*, p. 1400.

147. κατὰ πρόθεσιν τῶν αἰώνων ἦν ἐποίησεν ἐν τῷ Χριστῷ Ἰησοῦ

Used in other ways not related to our subject. *prōthēsis* is also used in the sense of exposition for "the bread of the Presence" (Mt 12:4; Mk 2:26; Lk 6:4; Heb 9:2). In Acts 11:23 it denotes a "steadfast purpose". "When the south wind blew gently" the sailors supposed "that they had obtained their purpose" and weighed anchor and sailed towards the catastrophe (Acts 27:13). The phrase of the ESV in 2 Tm 3:10 "my aim in life" could also be translated with "my purpose".

The use of προγινώσκω "to foreknow".

The verb προγινώσκω *prōginōskō* means "to know before", "to foreknow", "to choose before"(Rom 8:29).¹⁴⁸

Used related to divine election or predestination. Those whom God "foreknew he also predestined to be conformed to the image of his Son" (Rom 8:29). Seeing that so many Israelites have rejected Jesus, Paul asks whether God has "rejected his people? By no means! For I myself am an Israelite, a descendant of Abraham, a member of the tribe of Benjamin. God has not rejected his people whom he foreknew" (Rom 11:1-2). What God has done according to Paul is that he has divided Israel in two portions, one elected and one hardened. Paul himself as a Benjaminite is proof that this elected portion exists which resembles the 7000 of the time of Elijah which God has kept for himself "who have not bowed the knee to Baal" (11:2-6).

Peter speaks of Christ as the lamb whose blood became our ransom and who "was foreknown before the foundation of the world but was made manifest in the last times" for our sake (1 Pt 1:20).

148. Bauer, Wörterbuch zum Neuen Testament, p. 1395-6.

Used in other ways not related to our subject. In Acts 26:5 Paul speaks of people who knew him before his conversion a long time ago. Peter warns his readers that they, knowing beforehand about coming false prophets and false teachers, should take care "that you are not carried away with the error of lawless people and lose your own stability" (2 Pt 3:17).

The use of ἡ πρόγνωσις "foreknowledge".

The noun f. ἡ πρόγνωσις *prōgnōsis* means "foreknowledge" and is used twice in the New Testament.¹⁴⁹

Acts 2:23 speaks of Jesus who was "delivered up according to the definite plan and foreknowledge of God" and whom "you crucified and killed by the hands of lawless men".¹⁵⁰ The phrase here translated with "the definite plan and foreknowledge" can be understood as a hendiadys: The foreknowledge is not just something foreseen, but something fore-willed and fore-planned. At the same time the murderers of Jesus are responsible for their crimes related to his crucifixion. God's plan and the responsibility of human beings do not exclude each other, but God's planning foresees and includes the behavior of the human actors in salvation history.

The same is true for Peter's readers in 1 Pt 1:2 who are "elect exiles ... according to the foreknowledge of God the Father, in the sanctification of the Spirit, for obedience to Jesus Christ and for sprinkling with his blood". Their election is according to God's foreknowledge, is realized through the sanctification carried out by God's Spirit and happens with the expressed purpose that their re-

149. *ibid.*, p. 1396.

150. τοῦτον τῇ ὀρισμένῃ βουλῇ καὶ προγνώσει τοῦ θεοῦ ἔκδοτον διὰ χειρὸς ἀνόμων προσπῆξαντες ἀνείλατε

lationship with Jesus Christ is such that they obey him and are continuously cleansed by the power of his blood.

The use of προορίζω "to predestine".

The verb προορίζω *prōōrizō* means "to predestine" (Acts 4:28).¹⁵¹ In all six verses the words are used related to divine election or predestination. "Both Herod and Pontius Pilate, along with the Gentiles and the peoples of Israel" could only do to Jesus whatever God's hand and his plan "had predestined to take place" (Acts 4:28). In one of his central sections about divine predestination the apostle Paul teaches how all things and the whole world have to work together for the good of God's special chosen people (Rom 8:28-30):

28 And we know that for those who love God all things work together for good, for those who are called according to his purpose. 29 For those whom he foreknew he also predestined to be conformed to the image of his Son, in order that he might be the firstborn among many brothers. 30 And those whom he predestined he also called, and those whom he called he also justified, and those whom he justified he also glorified.

God's work in his salvation program for his people includes his 1. purpose, 2. foreknowledge, 3. predestination, 4. calling, 5. justification, 6. glorification.

As the predestination in Rom 8:29 is related to being children of God and brothers and sisters of Christ, so it is related in Eph

151. Bauer, Wörterbuch zum Neuen Testament, p. 1406.

1:5 to be God's children. A few verses onwards (Eph 1:11) our predestination is related to the fact that in Christ "we have obtained an inheritance". We remember that being a child and being an heir belongs together. According to 1 Cor 2:7 God has decreed his own secret and hidden wisdom "before the ages for our glory."

The use of ὁρίζω "to determine".

The verb ὁρίζω *hōrizō* means 1. "to determine" (Lk 22:22), 2. "to appoint" (Acts 17:31), 3. "to define".¹⁵²

Used related to divine determination. Christ's sufferings were predestined (Lk 22:22; Acts 2:23). Jesus Christ "is the one appointed by God to be judge of the living and the dead" (Acts 10:42; very similar: 17:31). Jesus Christ "was declared to be the Son of God in power according to the Spirit of holiness by his resurrection from the dead" (Rom 1:4).

The areas of the nations were determined by God (Acts 17:26). God determines a time and a day to hear God's voice and orders not to harden one's heart (Heb 4:7).

Used in other ways not related to our subject. After the prophecy of Agabus about a coming famine "the disciples determined, everyone according to his ability, to send relief to the brothers living in Judea" (Acts 11:29).

5.11.3 Rom 9-11: God's Ways with Israel

The longest context in the Bible related to election and predestination is found in Rom 9 to 11. Many would agree that it is also the

152. *ibid.*, p. 1151.

most important. I have therefore made an attempt to present and summarize its main ideas in the following statements.

1. The apostle Paul begins with sharing his enormous burden of intercession for his unbelieving fellow Israelites (9:1-2), continues in this attitude of prayer (10:1) and concludes his discourse with praising God (11:33-36). This context of prayer and adoration has to be kept in mind while looking at Rom 9-11.
2. The fact that not all Israelites acknowledge Jesus as the Christ (9:5) does not mean that the word of God has failed (9:6). For from the beginning not all carnal descendants of Israel or Abraham were also children of God, but only the children of the promise (9:7-8).
3. The decision who is and who is not a child of promise is based on God's election (9:11).
4. God elects not according to the works of men but according to his own grace. Human works stand in opposition to God's grace. Human faith is not in opposition to God's grace (9:12; 9:30-10:21; 11:5-6).
5. In giving his grace God can prefer one man (e.g. Jacob) and reject the other (e.g. Esau; 9:13).
6. Sinful man has no claim to receive grace. By not giving his grace to somebody God is not unjust (9:14-21).
7. If God favors somebody with his grace, he expresses his own mercy and love (9:15-16).

8. While the grace of God has no cause in man, but only in God's will to show grace, the wrath of God is caused by the sins of man.
9. When God hardens man, he does not make a sinless man a sinner, but he hands an already sinful man in such a way over to his sinfulness that he will not be able to repent (9:17-18; 11:7-10).
10. God's hardening of the sinner is related to the will of God to show his wrath and make known his power (9:17-18.22).
11. It is to be kept in mind with regard to the hardening of the sinner that Rom 9-11 is about Israel and that in this context the hardening has a purpose and a time limitation:
 - (a) Through the hardening of a great part of Israel (11:1-10) salvation has come to the Gentiles. After this has now happened the individual Israelites can be made jealous instigating them to gain salvation too (11:11-14).
 - (b) When the fullness of the Gentiles has come in, the partial hardening of Israel will stop and the whole remnant of the Israel of that time will be saved (11:25-27.30-32).
12. In showing wrath God remains just. His judgments are holy.
13. God calls Jews and Gentiles to the same salvation and the same glory (9:23-26).
14. God saves only a small remnant in comparison to the whole number of the descendants of Israel. This does not put God's

power and capability into question. Quite on the contrary his power is especially shown through his judgment of the vessels of wrath. His ability to save is wonderfully presented in the fact that he gives his people a remnant at all and does not destroy them like Sodom and Gomorrah (9:22.27-29).

15. Rom 9:6-29 present God's greatness and sovereignty and prove that God's word has not become invalid because of the lack of faith of many Israelites. The problem that many Israelites do not believe in Jesus as the Christ is here looked at more from the perspective of God's work.

In Rom 9:30-10:21 the same problem of the lack of faith of many Israelites is now looked at more from the perspective of Israel's doing, that means more from the human side of things.

Both perspectives present the same reality, neither can be neglected: The work of God on the one hand and the responsibility of man on the other.

16. The decisive mistake of the (unbelieving) Israelites is that they seek a righteousness according to the works of the law and not by faith in Jesus Christ. By "seeking to establish their own, they did not submit to God's righteousness" (10:3; see 9:30-10:3).
17. The final target of the law is the coming Christ. Everybody who misses Christ, misses the purpose of the law (10:4).
18. Only those gain righteousness and salvation who believe in their heart that God raised Jesus from the dead and confess with their mouth that Jesus is Lord (10:5-11).

19. The way of salvation by faith is open for Jews and Greeks (and so for all men). The same Lord is Lord of all, bestowing his riches on all who call on him in a prayer of faith (10:12-13).
20. Rom 10:14-15 argue that only those who have heard the gospel can be saved by faith in Jesus Christ. God's way of salvation for all of mankind includes the following steps:
 - (a) Christ has accomplished redemption (Rom 3:21-31).
 - (b) God sends preachers of this good news.
 - (c) The preacher brings the good news.
 - (d) People hear the good news.
 - (e) They believe the good news.
 - (f) They call on the Lord with faith who is rich enough for all men to save them.
 - (g) The Lord saves those who believe.
21. But not all Israelites have believed the gospel, even though the whole nation has been reached in their own country and in the Diaspora. The reason is that Israel did not understand the gospel (10:2-3.16-19) and did therefore not accept God's hands held out to them (10:21).
22. God's hands were really held out to them, that means that God really wanted them to return to him. God's offer of his grace and salvation was real, but Israel did not seek the offered righteousness of grace, because she was busy establishing her own righteousness (10:21.2-3).

23. Because Israel rejected the primary offer (cf. 1:16) of the gospel, God wants to make the Israelites jealous by evangelizing and saving Gentiles to instigate the Israelites to gain salvation by coming to Christ (10:19-20; 11:11.13-14).
24. God has not rejected his people, the Israelites because there is still a remnant of Israel according to God's gracious election which is to be distinguished from the other part which has been hardened in "retribution" for its sins (11:1-10).
25. The Israelites who stumbled, did not stumble in order that they might fall and remain destroyed on the ground, but for the purpose that salvation may "come to the Gentiles, so as to make Israel jealous" (11:11). There is still hope for them that they may return to God (11:13-14.23-24).
26. The Gentiles profited from the temporary hardening of a part of Israel because in consequence God granted them a world-wide time of salvation through the proclamation of the gospel. If this sad cause with regard to Israel brought so much salvation to the world, what great blessings should we expect when God will finally accept the whole remnant of Israel? If "their rejection means the reconciliation of the world, what will their acceptance mean but life from the dead?" This means probably that the time of rapture and resurrection happen after the re-acceptance of Israel or coincide with it, according to 11:25-26 perhaps the latter (11:12.15-16.25-27).
27. Gentiles who have come to faith in Jesus Christ have been grafted in the cultivated olive tree. Jews who did not believe in Jesus as the Christ, have been broken off. This means that Jews and Gentiles who believe in Jesus Christ are part

of one body of salvation and united by their faith in Christ. Faith brings into the body of salvation, disbelief breaks off (11:17-24).

28. Gentile believers are warned not to be arrogant towards Israel, but to fear God and to contemplate the kindness and severity of God. Paul presents both possibilities: That the Jews may come to faith in Christ and be grafted in again and that the Gentile who does not continue in God's kindness will be cut off (11:20-24).
29. The Jews who do not believe in Jesus Christ, are enemies (of God) for the sake of the believing Gentiles as regards the gospel. "But as regards election, they are beloved for the sake of their forefathers" (11:28). Therefore they have a future under the love of God "for the gifts and the calling of God are irrevocable" (11:29).
30. Just as at one time the Gentiles were disobedient to God but now they have received mercy because of the disobedience of the Israelites, so the Israelites are now disobedient to God because of God's mercy shown to the Gentiles so that they also may now receive mercy (9:30-31).
31. The final word and climax of the argument in Rom 9-11 is 11:32, after this there is only praise and adoration of God: "For God has consigned all to disobedience, that he may have mercy on all."¹⁵³ This relates to Gentiles and Jews. The first part of 11:32 presents literally the idea that God

153. 32 συνέκλεισεν γὰρ ὁ θεὸς τοὺς πάντας εἰς ἀπειθειαν ἵνα τοὺς πάντας ἐλεήσει.

has closed the door of a room with a key where all had entered, perhaps by their own sinful choice, but then God shut the door and locked it. The room is the room of disobedience. God let them suffer the consequences of their sin for some time, only to open the door again and have mercy on all of them, meaning Jews and Gentiles alike. Cf. the explanations to the temporary hardening of the Jews above (9:18ff and 11:1-11).

32. God's ways with Israel, as discussed by the apostle Paul, surpass all human understanding. At the end of this discourse is not a rationalizing Philosopher on his chair, but a worshipping apostle on his knees praising God (11:33-36).
33. All of the universe - Israel and the Gentiles are only a part of it - has its origin in God's creative power, is sustained by him and has to serve him. Therefore this discourse about God's ways with Israel (Rom 9-11) concludes with a statement of God's eternal adoration: "To him be glory forever. Amen" (11:36).

5.12 Perseverance

The idea of the perseverance of the saints is closely related to the teaching of election and predestination by God. If salvation depends on God's mercy and not on human will or exertion (Rom 9:16), then a person gets saved, if and when God has mercy on him. If salvation is based on God's foreknowing, predestining, calling, justifying and glorifying somebody (Rom 8:29-30), then God is able to do all of this without getting him lost (see Rom 8:31-39; John 10:25-30). We remember John 6:39:

And this is the will of him who sent me, that I should lose nothing of all that he has given me, but raise it up on the last day.

Faith in the perseverance of the saints implies that it is not only the will of the Father that Jesus should lose nothing of all that he has given him, but that Jesus is indeed able to preserve every single believer to the end and does it. The apostle John seems to have believed in the perseverance of the saints (1 Jn 2:18-19):

18 Children, it is the last hour, and as you have heard that antichrist is coming, so now many antichrists have come. Therefore we know that it is the last hour.
19 They went out from us, but they were not of us; for if they had been of us, they would have continued with us. But they went out, that it might become plain that they all are not of us.

One of the greatest challenges of the last days are the Antichristian movements. But even in this context John believes that the true Christians continue with Christ and the church of Christ. "They went out from us, but they were not of us; for if they had been of us, they would have continued with us." This clearly implies that somebody who has really been born again, carries on living with Christ. There are Antichrists and they have come out of the area of the Christian church. But they did not really belong to "us". Our experience is that people come to the church and to the gospel, stay for a while and then leave again. Some even develop into false teachers and false prophets. Some even might claim to be the "Christ". But John is convinced that the real ones stay.

What profit comes from the teaching of the perseverance of the saints? It honors God by honoring his grace and his protecting power.

5.13 Sanctification

5.13.1 Words used.

The noun f. ἡ ἁγιότης *hagiōtēs* means "holiness" (2 Cor 1:12; Heb 12:10).¹⁵⁴

The noun f. ἡ ἁγιωσύνη *hagiōsynē* means "holiness" (Rom 1:4; 2 Cor 7:1; 1 Thes 3:13).¹⁵⁵

The noun m. ὁ ἁγιασμός *hagiasmōs* means "sanctification" (Rom 6:19).¹⁵⁶

The verb ἁγιάζω *hagiazō* means "to sanctify, to make holy, to consecrate" (Mt 6:9).¹⁵⁷

The adjective ἅγιος, ἴα, ον *hagios* means "holy, saint" (Mt 6:9).¹⁵⁸

5.13.2 The Holy Trinity sanctifies.

Every person of the Trinity takes part in the sanctification of God's people. God the Father sanctifies God's people (Jn 17:17; 1 Thes 5:23). Jesus Christ sanctifies them, especially through his sacrifice and the shedding of his blood (Jn 17:19; Eph 5:26.27; Col 1:22; Heb 2:11; 9:13-14; 10:10.14.29; 10:19; 13:12). The Holy Spirit sanctifies God's people (2 Thes 2:13; 1 Pt 1:2).

154. Bauer, *Wörterbuch zum Neuen Testament*, p. 19.

155. *ibid.*, p. 19-20.

156. *ibid.*, p. 17.

157. *ibid.*, p. 16-17.

158. *ibid.*, p. 17-19.

5.13.3 **Holiness as a starting gift, an ongoing progress and the final target.**

The different blessings of soteriology or salvation often have three aspects. In the beginning of conversion and the new birth there is already the gift of justification or holiness, for example. Then there should be a progress in the life of the Christian to become more holy or live more righteous. The ultimate target is to be like Christ in holiness or in righteousness, which means, of course, total perfection. All three stages are brought about by God's grace (Eph 2:5-10).

All who are born again are saints in Christ from the start.

In the New Testament being a saint is not a higher level in comparison to being a disciple or a Christian or a believer. To receive the Holy Spirit is to receive a sanctifying power (2 Thes 2:13; 1 Pt 1:2) and to become a saint. So Paul can write in 1 Cor 6:9-11 about the great change in the life of Christians there:

9 Do you not know that the unrighteous will not inherit the kingdom of God? Do not be deceived: neither the sexually immoral, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor men who practice homosexuality, 10 nor thieves, nor the greedy, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor swindlers will inherit the kingdom of God. 11 And such were some of you. But you were washed, you were sanctified, you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and by the Spirit of our God.

Believers are already sanctified "in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and by the Spirit of our God", that is from the start of their

Christian life when the name of Jesus is called out upon them and when they receive the Spirit. Therefore, when Christians are addressed in a letter or talked about in a book, they all are called saints (Acts 9:32.41; 26:10; Rom 1:7; 16:15; 1 Cor 1:2; 6:1-2; 14:33; 2 Cor 1:1; 13:13; Eph 1:1; 4:12; 5:3; 6:18; Phil 1:1; 4:21.22; Col 1:2.4.12; 1:26; 3:12; 2 Thes 1:10; Phlm 1:5.7; Heb 3:1; 6:10; 13:24; 1 Pt 3:5; Jude 1:3).

Believers are the holy temple of God (1 Cor 3:17). Gentile believers "are no longer strangers and aliens, but ... are fellow citizens with the saints and members of the household of God" (Eph 2:19). They have become part of "a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation" (1 Pt 2:9). The prayers of the saints are collected like frankincense in bowls (Rv 5:8) and are pleasing to God. They have a great influence on earth when they are accepted and answered (8:3.4).

The beast of Rv 13 seems to overcome the saints and kills them and throws them into prison, but by their endurance and faith they will conquer the beast at last (Rv 13:7.10; 14:12; 15:2). God avenges the blood of his saints and servants (Rv 16:6; 17:6; 18:20.24; 19:2).

The saints will get their reward from God when the time has come (Rv 11:18). They share "in the first resurrection! Over such the second death has no power, but they will be priests of God and of Christ, and they will reign with him for a thousand years" (Rv 20:6). After the thousand years they have the victory over Satan and his armies (Rv 20:9).

All believers should strive to live a holy life reflecting God's holiness.

In spite of the fact that all true believers are already holy in Christ, they are challenged to live a life of increasing holiness or commitment to God: "... as he who called you is holy, you also be holy in all your conduct" (1 Pt 1:15-16). The apostle Paul admonishes us in 2 Cor 7:1:

Since we have these promises, beloved, let us cleanse ourselves from every defilement of body and spirit, bringing holiness to completion in the fear of God.¹⁵⁹

The foundation for a holy life is to have Jesus Christ who is our sanctification (1 Cor 1:30). Or as it is put in Rom 6:11: "So you also must consider yourselves dead to sin and alive to God in Christ Jesus." Having been crucified with Christ, died with him, buried with him, and raised from death in his resurrection, now believers should live for him alone: "But now that you have been set free from sin and have become slaves of God, the fruit you get leads to sanctification and its end, eternal life" (Rom 6:22).

The life "of holiness and godliness" (2 Pt 3:11) which we should lead implies presenting our "bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God" (Rom 12:1). It also means to abstain from sexual immorality (1 Thes 4:3.4.7).

The ultimate target is to be holy as God is holy (1 Pt 1:15-16; Lv 19:2) in the sense of a perfect holiness where nothing unclean or

159. καθαρίσωμεν ἑαυτοὺς ἀπὸ παντὸς μολυσμοῦ σαρκὸς καὶ πνεύματος, ἐπιτελοῦντες ἁγιωσύνην ἐν φόβῳ θεοῦ.

sinful is to be seen (1 Thes 3:13. In this life and in this body of old mankind this seems to be impossible according to the Holy Scriptures. There was only one exception, Jesus Christ who always stayed without sin (Heb 4:15).

God "disciplines us for our good, that we may share his holiness" (Heb 12:10; 2 Pt 1:3-11). We have to strive "for the holiness without which no one will see the Lord" (Heb 12:14). "Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God" (Mt 5:8). If we had to do this on our own, we would surely despair. But in the heavenly Jerusalem of Heb 12:22-23 we see "the spirits of the righteous made perfect". The passive voice in the phrase "made perfect" points to God's having done it (see also Acts 20:32; 26:18; Mt 27:52; Eph 1:4.18). The fine linen, bright and pure of the Bride of the Lamb, the holy city, the New Jerusalem, "is the righteous deeds of the saints" (Rv 19:8; 21:2.9-10; 22:19).

5.14 Perfection

5.14.1 Words used.

The noun m. ὁ τελειωτής *tēlēiōtēs* means "perfecter", "consum-mater" (Heb 12:2).¹⁶⁰

The noun f. ἡ τελειότης *tēlēiōtēs* means "completeness, perfection" (Col 3:14; Heb 6:1).¹⁶¹

The verb τελειόω *tēlēiōō* means "to complete, to fulfill, to finish, to make perfect" (Jn 19:28; 17:23).¹⁶²

adjective τέλειος, α, ον *tēlēiōs* means "complete, perfect" (Mt

160. Bauer, Wörterbuch zum Neuen Testament, p. 1603.

161. *ibid.*, p. 1602.

162. *ibid.*, p. 1602-03.

5:48; 19:21).¹⁶³

5.14.2 **Perfection through Jesus Christ.**

When it comes to the subject of our faith, then Jesus is "the founder and perfecter of our faith" (Heb 12:2). So we should lead our life and run our course with the eyes set on him to cross the finish line. When it comes to the subject of the unity of believers, then their perfect unity is based on a work of Christ: He has given them the glory he himself has received from the Father making all perfectly one:

22 The glory that you have given me I have given
to them, that they may be one even as we are one,
23 I in them and you in me, that they may become
perfectly one, so that the world may know that you
sent me and loved them even as you loved me.

The perfection of all ethical virtues and living is love (Col 3:14) creating a perfect harmony of all other Christian virtues. Believers are encouraged to put all these virtues on like pieces of clothes being part of the new mankind which is essentially Christ himself (Col 3:10-13).

5.14.3 **The standard is God's own being perfect.**

The key quote when it comes to perfection is from the sermon of the mount (Mt 5:44-45.48):

¹⁶³. *ibid.*, p. 1601-02.

44 But I say to you, Love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you, 45 so that you may be sons of your Father who is in heaven. For he makes his sun rise on the evil and on the good, and sends rain on the just and on the unjust... 48 You therefore must be perfect, as your heavenly Father is perfect.¹⁶⁴

Again love can be seen as the ultimate virtue of perfection, love even for the enemies. To love as God loves is the fulfillment of being perfect as God is perfect.

5.14.4 **Spiritual growth towards perfection.**

If somebody wants to start on a journey to perfection, he needs to follow Christ in a personal relationship of a disciple towards his master. If he loves anything more than Jesus Christ, he has to let it go (Mt 19:21). With the passing of time there should be a normal spiritual growth of believers towards maturity which is a growth towards perfection (Heb 5:12-6:1). According to God's plan with the church this is growth towards the maturity standard of Jesus Christ himself (Eph 4:11-16):

11 And he gave the apostles, the prophets, the evangelists, the pastors and teachers, 12 to equip the saints for the work of ministry, for building up the body of Christ, 13 until we all attain to the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to mature manhood, to the measure of the stature of the fullness

164. Ὑποτάγητε οὖν ὑμεῖς τέλειοι ὡς ὁ πατήρ ὑμῶν ὁ οὐράνιος τέλειός ἐστιν.

of Christ,¹⁶⁵ 14 so that we may no longer be children, tossed to and fro by the waves and carried about by every wind of doctrine, by human cunning, by craftiness in deceitful schemes. 15 Rather, speaking the truth in love, we are to grow up in every way into him who is the head, into Christ, 16 from whom the whole body, joined and held together by every joint with which it is equipped, when each part is working properly, makes the body grow so that it builds itself up in love.

This plan of God that "we all" (!) should grow to the maturity of Christ himself is wonderful beyond anything. To attain this is not in any human power. The people with special gifts given to the church (Eph 4:11) and all saints have to work together to lead the body of Christ to this maturity and fullness of Christ. Having this great divine plan in mind Paul as an apostle was proclaiming Christ "warning everyone and teaching everyone with all wisdom, that we may present everyone mature in Christ" (Col 1:28). The Colossian Epaphras had a great burden of prayer for the other Colossian believers that they might "stand mature and fully assured in all the will of God" (Col 4:12). In order that we may be able to understand the perfect will of God more and more, we must present our bodies "as a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God" and we must "be transformed by the renewal" of our mind (Rom 12:1-2). We should not "be children" in our thinking. We should be "infants in evil", but in our thinking we should be mature or perfect (1 Cor 14:20). Mature Christians should have the attitude of Paul in Phil 3:12-16:

165. μέχρι καταστήσωμεν οἱ πάντες εἰς τὴν ἐνότητα τῆς πίστεως καὶ τῆς ἐπιγνώσεως τοῦ υἱοῦ τοῦ θεοῦ, εἰς ἄνδρα τέλειον, εἰς μέτρον ἡλικίας τοῦ πληρώματος τοῦ Χριστοῦ

12 Not that I have already obtained this or am already perfect, but I press on to make it my own, because Christ Jesus has made me his own. 13 Brothers, I do not consider that I have made it my own. But one thing I do: forgetting what lies behind and straining forward to what lies ahead, 14 I press on toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus. 15 Let those of us who are mature think this way, and if in anything you think otherwise, God will reveal that also to you. 16 Only let us hold true to what we have attained. 17 Brothers, join in imitating me, and keep your eyes on those who walk according to the example you have in us.

This means that even those who may be considered by some to be very mature or (almost) "perfect", they are pressing towards Christ, running in a race with their eyes on Christ all the time. They forget themselves and what is behind and want to be more like Christ, want to be united with him in his sufferings and his glory (Phil 3:7-11). To belong to him is an ongoing miracle of his grace, to be more like him and close to him is the desire. Trials are necessary for growing towards this kind of maturity (Jas 1:2-4):

2 Count it all joy, my brothers, when you meet trials of various kinds, 3 for you know that the testing of your faith produces steadfastness. 4 And let steadfastness have its full effect, that you may be perfect and complete, lacking in nothing.

One area to check one's growth towards being "a perfect man" is the use of one's tongue (Jas 3:2). In this time we still live in an imperfect world being ourselves like children before the time of

maturity. This has an impact even on the use of certain spiritual gifts in the church. But even in the perfect coming world there is one gift which is now and shall always be the greatest of all (1 Cor 13:8-13):

8 Love never ends. As for prophecies, they will pass away; as for tongues, they will cease; as for knowledge, it will pass away. 9 For we know in part and we prophesy in part, 10 but when the perfect comes, the partial will pass away. 11 When I was a child, I spoke like a child, I thought like a child, I reasoned like a child. When I became a man, I gave up childish ways. 12 For now we see in a mirror dimly, but then face to face. Now I know in part; then I shall know fully, even as I have been fully known. 13 So now faith, hope, and love abide, these three; but the greatest of these is love.

That is also the reason for the fact that somebody who has been made perfect with regard to love, will have no fear even on judgment day (1 Jn 4:17-18):

17 By this is love perfected with us, so that we may have confidence for the day of judgment, because as he is so also are we in this world. 18 There is no fear in love, but perfect love casts out fear. For fear has to do with punishment, and whoever fears has not been perfected in love.

There is a gathering going on in the heavenly Jerusalem, not only of myriads of angels but also of "the spirits of the righteous made perfect" (Heb 12:23). What grace of "the founder and perfecter

of our faith"! We are struggling here as imperfect people in an imperfect world. We are going through trials. Often we do not know how to handle the situations and challenges we are facing. But one day we shall join that crowd. It shall be marvelous. Either we join them up there, if we fall asleep in the Lord before he comes (Phil 1:23), or they will come down to us with the whole city (Rv 21:2.10). It will be glorious beyond anything!

5.15 Glorification

5.15.1 Words used.

The noun *f. ἡ δόξα dōxa* means 1. light, radiance of the light (1 Cor 15:40-41), 2. glory (Mt 6:29), 3. honor, fame (Rom 3:23; Jn 12:43).¹⁶⁶

The verb *δοξάζω dōxazō* means 1. to praise, to honor (Rom 15:6), 2. to glorify (Rom 8:30).¹⁶⁷

5.15.2 The glory and glorification of God.

God's glory.

Stephen "saw the glory of God, and Jesus standing at the right hand of God" (Acts 7:55). Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father (Rom 6:4).

There is a kind of glory which only belongs to God and should be given to him. He should be acknowledged as the one and true only God. If somebody is worshiped like a god and does not stop

166. Bauer, Wörterbuch zum Neuen Testament, p. 403-5.

167. *ibid.*, p. 405.

that and give the glory to God, he might even die in consequence of this sin like king Herod (Acts 12:23). The sin of idolatry is related to the same wrong attitude of giving glory to something that is not God as if it were God (Rom 1:23).

In Paul's wonderful praise of God in Eph 1:3-14 the three sections which reflect the work of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit in our lives close with the same phrase that their work in us may result in something "to the praise of his glory" (Eph 1:6.12.14). This shows us that the glory of God is also part of the glorification of believers, because God wants to share his wealth with his beloved children (Eph 1:17-18). God has called us "to his eternal glory in Christ" (1 Pt 5:10), "to his own glory and excellence" (2 Pt 1:3). He "is able to keep" us "from stumbling and to present" us "blameless before the presence of his glory with great joy" (Jude 1:24). God wants "to make known the riches of his glory for vessels of mercy, which he has prepared beforehand for glory" (Rom 9:23). That means the elect will have the whole of eternity to perceive and taste the "riches of God's glory".

One of the great losses of those who get lost will be that they "will suffer the punishment of eternal destruction, away from the presence of the Lord and from the glory of his might" (2 Thes 1:9). Because only those who are pure in heart will have the privilege to see God with their own eyes (Mt 5:8).

When John saw that God brought salvation history to completion with the last seven plagues, "the sanctuary was filled with smoke from the glory of God and from his power, and no one could enter the sanctuary until the seven plagues of the seven angels were finished" (Rv 15:8). The gospel is the gospel of the glory of the "happy" (blessed) God (1 Tm 1:11).

The glorification of God.

It is very often stated in the New Testament that the glory belongs and should be given to God for ever (e.g. Rom 11:36; 16:27). It is the highest privilege of believers to honor and glorify God by their life, their service and by their death (1 Cor 6:20; 10:31; 2 Cor 3:10; Jn 21:19).

Amongst the creatures man "is the image and glory of God" (1 Cor 11:7). Abraham is praised for the fact that he honored God's word with his faith giving glory to God (Rom 4:20). "According to the riches of his glory" God the Father can grant us "to be strengthened with power through his Spirit" in our inner being, so that Christ may dwell in our hearts through faith so that we may recognize him and give him praise in the church forever (Eph 3:16.21).

5.15.3 The glory and glorification of Christ.

The glory of Christ.

The glory of Jesus Christ is the divine glory of the only Son (Jn 1:14), full of grace and truth. Through his miraculous signs Jesus revealed his divine glory to his disciples (Jn 2:11). He is "a light for revelation to the Gentiles, and for glory to ... Israel" (Luke 2:32).

When his public ministry in Israel came to a closure and he was about to be taken captive and to die at the cross, Jesus prayed (Jn 17:5.22-24):

5 And now, Father, glorify me in your own presence with the glory that I had with you before the world existed¹⁶⁸... 22 The glory that you have given

168. καὶ νῦν δόξασόν με σύ, πάτερ, παρὰ σεαυτῷ τῇ δόξῃ ἣ εἶχον πρὸ τοῦ τὸν κόσμον εἶναι παρὰ σοί.

me I have given to them, that they may be one even as we are one, 23 I in them and you in me, that they may become perfectly one, so that the world may know that you sent me and loved them even as you loved me. 24 Father, I desire that they also, whom you have given me, may be with me where I am, to see my glory that you have given me because you loved me before the foundation of the world.¹⁶⁹

A part of the glory of Christ which he had before the world existed, is the fact that the Father loved him before the foundation of the world. There were no heavens and no earth, no angels, no men, no animals, only the Holy Trinity and the inner-trinitarian love. Now the Son prays here before his suffering that we through his suffering may be enabled to see his glory. Again one person of the Trinity wants to share his glory with his beloved ones.

In his experience before Damascus Paul saw Jesus the Lord's divine glory and became blind (Acts 22:11) and had to be healed from this later. From that time onward Paul preached that Jesus is the Lord meaning that he is God and that all will have to acknowledge this to the glory of God the Father (Phil 2:11; 1 Tm 3:16; Titus 2:13; cf. also Heb 1:3).

Peter, the eyewitness of the transfiguration of Jesus on the mountain, speaks of God the Father who out of his great glory was giving glory to his Son (2 Pt 1:17). The second coming of Christ will be a coming in divine glory (Mt 16:27; 24:30; 25:31).

169. πάτερ, ὃ δέδωκάς μοι, θέλω ἵνα ὅπου εἰμι ἐγὼ κάκεινοι ὦσιν μετ' ἐμοῦ, ἵνα θεωρῶσιν τὴν δόξαν τὴν ἐμὴν ἣν δέδωκάς μοι, ὅτι ἠγάπησάς με πρὸ καταβολῆς κόσμου.

The glorification of Christ.

One way of the glorification of Christ in the New Testament is his way through the suffering of the cross and his resurrection to go to his glory in heaven to sit there at the right hand of God and rule the cosmos from there. The use of the word "to glorify" (*dōxazō*) for this is especially pointed in the gospel of John (Jn 7:39; 12:16,23; 13:31,32; 17:1,5).

But the same idea of Christ's going through his sufferings into his glory is found in other places within the New Testament as well (Luke 24:26; Heb 2:7,9,10; 1 Pt 1:11,21). Christ's way of glorifying God the Father by loving the Father's commandment more than his own life and by loving his lost sheep more than himself, gives an example for his disciples also to practice the ultimate love for each other and so glorifying the Father and the Son (Jn 15:8,12-14; 17:10). We will see that the glorification of believers follows the example of the glorification of the Son. They also go through sufferings to glory.

5.15.4 The glory of man in this world.

Solomon can be seen as an example of a gloriously rich man in this world (Luke 12:27). But even for him it would be true what Peter says about the glory of man quoting Isaiah:

22 Having purified your souls by your obedience to the truth for a sincere brotherly love, love one another earnestly from a pure heart, 23 since you have been born again, not of perishable seed but of imperishable, through the living and abiding word of God; 24 for "All flesh is like grass and all its glory like the

flower of grass. The grass withers, and the flower falls, 25 but the word of the Lord remains forever."

The best way for a perishable man is to invest into that which remains forever. To accept the word of God, to be born again and to never cease loving one another from a pure heart. We should not strive to become the richest in a worldly sense, but to love and never cease loving. That is part of the glorification of the believers.

5.15.5 **The glorification of believers.**

The glory of living with Christ now.

To have Christ is to have the hope of glory (Col 1:27) and to have a "hidden wisdom of God, which God decreed before the ages for our glory" (1 Cor 2:7), it is to have "the Lord of glory" (1 Cor 2:8). According to Rom 8:30 all believers are already glorified. This is invisible. They are not yet revealed as the children of God to all (Rom 8:18). While all sinners are lacking the acknowledgement by God (Rom 3:23), justified believers can "rejoice in hope of the glory of God" (Rom 5:1-2). There is a possible glorification going on within the body of Christ (1 Cor 12:26). Believers may experience a "joy that is inexpressible and filled with glory" (1 Pt 1:8).

It is a privilege and glorious to serve Christ now with the gifts of the Spirit (2 Cor 3:7-18) because God reveals his glory in the face of Jesus Christ through the sacrificial service of his servants (2 Cor 4:4-17).

Through sufferings to glory.

When the apostles James and John asked for the best places to sit near to Jesus in his glory (Mark 10:37), Jesus gave them this advice

for their career:

43 ... But whoever would be great among you must be your servant, 44 and whoever would be first among you must be slave of all. 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.

The children of God are "heirs of God and fellow heirs with Christ, provided" they "suffer with him in order that" they "may also be glorified with him" (Rom 8:18; 1 Pt 4:13.14).

The future glorification of believers.

When Christ comes the children of God will be revealed in great glory (Rom 8:18; Col 3:4; 2 Thes 2:14; Rom 2:7.10; 1 Cor 15:43; 2 Tm 2:10; 1 Pt 1:7; 5:4). The day of their revelation will even have an impact on creation (Rom 8:21). The resurrection body will be glorious (Phil 3:21). The glory of Moses and Elijah Luke 9:31 gives us an impression of possibilities of glory for believers. The twelve apostles will sit on thrones (Mt 19:28; 1 Pt 5:1). The New Jerusalem is as the living place for believers a city of great glory (Rv 21:11.23).

Chapter 6

Pneumatology - about God's Spirit

The Holy Spirit is revealed to us as God in the Old and in the New Testament.

6.1 The Holy Spirit Is God in the Old Testament.

6.1.1 The Word Used for Spirit

The word for Spirit in Hebrew רוּחַ¹ (rûah)² also means wind, storm, compass point (as in the direction of the wind, east or west etc.), breath, and can also describe the condition of a person. When the word rûah is used together with God or the Lord, it is not always translated as "Spirit" but sometimes as "wind" or "storm". The context must help to decide. But even if we translate it as "Spirit" of God, the Hebrew native speaker might still feel the presence of the more literal meaning "wind" or "storm" (see Ex 15:8.10; compare also John 3:8³). In fact rûah is another anthropomorphism like the "hand of God" (Ex 6:1) or "the arm of the Lord" (Is 53:1). You can say that the "Spirit of God" is the "breath of God", the "wind of God" or the "storm of God". It is similar with the "Spirit of the Lord". The boundaries of meaning are fuzzy here. What unites the "wind" or "spirit" motive is that all is invisible:⁴ You can see nei-

1. The Hebrew text given in the two chapters about the Holy Spirit is taken from the Institute, Westminster Leningrad Codex.

2. The transliteration from Hebrew to English is according to Thomas O. Lambdin and Heinrich von Siebenthal, *Lehrbuch Bibel-Hebräisch*, Third (Giessen: Brunnen, 1999) p. XXIII-XXVI. See also the appendix: The Hebrew Alphabet.

3. Abbreviations of Bible books are given according to Henry Buhl Library, Abbreviations for books of the Bible - Chicago Manual of Style, [accessed May 4, 2011], <http://hb1.gcc.edu/abbreviationsCHICAGO.htm>. See Appendix E.

4. See Willem A. Vangemeren, *New International Dictionary of Old Testament Theology and Exegesis*, vol. 3 (Carlisle, UK: Paternoster, 1997) p. 1073, article רוּחַ.

ther of them, only their effects on the visible world. That may be one reason why the "Spirit" of God or the Lord is used so often: It is a way of seeing God's invisible hand reaching out from the invisible world into ours.

6.1.2 The Qualities of God's Spirit

He is God.

Is 30:1:

“Ah, stubborn children,” declares the LORD,
“who carry out a plan, but not mine,
and who make an alliance, but not of my Spirit,
that they may add sin to sin.”

Here the expression “but not mine” is used as a parallel and synonym to “but not of my Spirit”. God is speaking. To consult God or to consult his Spirit is one and the same. The Spirit of God is God himself. Is 31:3:

The Egyptians are man, and not God,
and their horses are flesh, and not spirit.
When the LORD stretches out his hand, the helper
will stumble,
and he who is helped will fall,
and they will all perish together.⁵

The Egyptians and their horses are put in contrast to God and “spirit”, hinting at God's Spirit again. The Egyptians are not God, and their

5. English quotations are taken from Publishers, English Standard Version, if not otherwise noted.

horses are not God's Spirit, but only flesh. Again God and the "Spirit" (of God) are spoken of in parallel and as synonyms. As Jesus will teach in the New Testament: God is Spirit (John 4:24). Isaiah 40:13:

Who has measured the Spirit of the LORD,
or what man shows him his counsel?

The answer to this question is of course "Nobody!". To direct the Spirit of the Lord or to inform Him is synonymous. The Spirit of the Lord is the Lord himself.

He is omnipresent.

He is everywhere at the same time. Psalm 139:7-10:

7 Where shall I go from your Spirit?
Or where shall I flee from your presence?
8 If I ascend to heaven, you are there!
If I make my bed in Sheol, you are there!
9 If I take the wings of the morning
and dwell in the uttermost parts of the sea,
10 even there your hand shall lead me,
and your right hand shall hold me.

The Spirit of God and his "presence" are used synonymously. God's Spirit and his presence are everywhere.

He is holy.

Psalm 51:11:

Cast me not away from your presence,
and take not your Holy Spirit from me.

Isaiah 63:10-13:

10 But they rebelled and grieved his Holy Spirit;
therefore he turned to be their enemy,
and himself fought against them.
11 Then he remembered the days of old,
of Moses and his people.
Where is he who brought them up out of the sea
with the shepherds of his flock?
Where is he who put in the midst of them his Holy
Spirit,
12 who caused his glorious arm
to go at the right hand of Moses,
who divided the waters before them
to make for himself an everlasting name,
13 who led them through the depths?
Like a horse in the desert, they did not stumble.

He is good.

Psalms 143:10:

Teach me to do your will, for you are my God!
Let your good Spirit lead me on level ground!

Nehemiah 9:19-21:

19 You in your great mercies did not forsake them
in the wilderness. The pillar of cloud to lead them in
the way did not depart from them by day, nor the pil-
lar of fire by night to light for them the way by which
they should go. 20 You gave your good Spirit to in-
struct them and did not withhold your manna from

their mouth and gave them water for their thirst. 21
Forty years you sustained them in the wilderness, and
they lacked nothing. Their clothes did not wear out
and their feet did not swell.

He is a person.

As a person God's Spirit has the ability to think, to will and to feel.

He is omniscient. He knows everything. This includes the ability to think. Is 40:13 read in the context of Isaiah 40:12-31 leads to the conclusion that God's Spirit knows everything and has no need to be told anything:

Who has measured the Spirit of the LORD,
or what man shows him his counsel?

See also Psalm 139:7 in the context of 139:1-7:

1 O LORD, you have searched me and known me!
2 You know when I sit down and when I rise up;
you discern my thoughts from afar.
3 You search out my path and my lying down
and are acquainted with all my ways.
4 Even before a word is on my tongue,
behold, O LORD, you know it altogether.
5 You hem me in, behind and before,
and lay your hand upon me.
6 Such knowledge is too wonderful for me;
it is high; I cannot attain it.
7 Where shall I go from your Spirit?
Or where shall I flee from your presence?

The Lord knows David's every idea and word (verses 1-6) because his spirit is everywhere (verse 7).

He has a will. He sends people for a special task and gives them the gifts they need for that task (see below in subsection 6.3.2). This implies a will, a plan and the ability to think. Isaiah 48:16:

And now the Lord GOD has sent me, and his Spirit.

He has emotions. Isaiah 63:10:

10 But they rebelled and grieved his Holy Spirit;
therefore he turned to be their enemy,
and himself fought against them.

Micah 2:7:

Should this be said, O house of Jacob?
Has the LORD grown impatient?
Are these his deeds?
Do not my words do good to him who walks uprightly?

The answer to the question: "Has the LORD grown impatient?" (literally "Has the Lord's Spirit become short?") is an emphatic "No!". This is a negative statement. We learn something about a quality God's Spirit does not have. In a close parallel (Job 21:4) Job confesses that he has become impatient (his spirit has become "short"). In Proverbs 14:29 the person with a "hasty temper" (who is "short in spirit") is the opposite of the person who is "slow to anger" (who is "long" to anger).

He is related to the presence of God.

Ezekiel sees the Glory of God coming like a stormy wind or whirlwind (rûaḥ sə'ārāh) in Ez 1:4. Four Cherubs are also part of the throne presence of God. The throne is on wheels and their spirit is in the wheels (1:20; 1:21; 10:17). We can assume that the "stormy wind" represents the Spirit of God who is guiding the spirit of the living creatures to where the throne of God has to go (1:12).

He is related to the word of God.

In Proverbs 1:23 personified wisdom invites sinners to turn and receive her spirit and words:

If you turn at my reproof,
behold, I will pour out my spirit to you;
I will make my words known to you.

The spirit and the words are used in a parallelism and are related to each other. Isaiah 34:16:

Seek and read from the book of the LORD:
Not one of these shall be missing;
none shall be without her mate.
For the mouth of the LORD has commanded,
and his Spirit has gathered them.

The mouth of the Lord and his Spirit move in the same direction:
What the Lord has decreed, the Spirit of the Lord brings to pass.

He is likened to ...

Wind or storm Psalm 147:18:

He sends out his word, and melts them;
he makes his wind [rûḥô] blow and the waters flow.

Isaiah 40:6-8:

6 A voice says, "Cry!"
And I said, "What shall I cry?"
All flesh is grass,
and all its beauty is like the flower of the field.
7 The grass withers, the flower fades
when the breath of the LORD blows on it;
surely the people are grass.
8 The grass withers, the flower fades,
but the word of our God will stand forever.

Something Fluid, often like Life Giving Water In Proverbs 1:23
personified wisdom invites the sinners to turn and receive her spirit
like something poured out:

If you turn at my reproof,
behold, I will pour out my spirit to you;
I will make my words known to you.

Isaiah 32:15:

until the Spirit is poured upon us from on high,
and the wilderness becomes a fruitful field,
and the fruitful field is deemed a forest.

Isaiah 44:3-5:

3 For I will pour water on the thirsty land,
and streams on the dry ground;

I will pour my Spirit upon your offspring,
and my blessing on your descendants.
4 They shall spring up among the grass
like willows by flowing streams.
5 This one will say, 'I am the LORD's,'
another will call on the name of Jacob,
and another will write on his hand, 'The LORD's,'
and name himself by the name of Israel."

Joel 2:28-29:

28 "And it shall come to pass afterward,
that I will pour out my Spirit on all flesh;
your sons and your daughters shall prophesy,
your old men shall dream dreams,
and your young men shall see visions.
29 Even on the male and female servants
in those days I will pour out my Spirit.

Ezekiel 39:29:

And I will not hide my face anymore from them, when
I pour out my Spirit upon the house of Israel, declares
the Lord GOD."

Zechariah 12:10:

And I will pour out on the house of David and the
inhabitants of Jerusalem a spirit of grace and pleas
for mercy, so that, when they look on me, on him whom
they have pierced, they shall mourn for him, as one
mourns for an only child, and weep bitterly over him,
as one weeps over a firstborn.

The Oil of Anointment 1 Sm 16:13:

Then Samuel took the horn of oil and anointed him in the midst of his brothers. And the Spirit of the LORD rushed upon David from that day forward. And Samuel rose up and went to Ramah.

Samuel anoints David with oil to be king of Israel. At the same time God "anoints" David with the Holy Spirit so that "the Spirit of the LORD rushed upon David from that day forward".

6.1.3 Divine Works of God's Spirit**The role of God's Spirit in creation and in sustaining creation****He had a role in the creation of the world.** Gen 1:1-3:

1 In the beginning, God created the heavens and the earth. 2 The earth was without form and void, and darkness was over the face of the deep. And the Spirit of God was hovering over the face of the waters. 3 And God said, "Let there be light," and there was light.

The hovering of God's Spirit over the face of the waters seems to have been part of the preparation for the creation of light in the next verse and of the other things to follow.

... in the creation of the heavens. Job 26:13:

By his wind [or "By his breath"; *bərûḥô*] the heavens were made fair;
his hand pierced the fleeing serpent.

Psalm 33:6:

By the word of the LORD the heavens were made,
and by the breath [ûḥərûah] of his mouth all their host.

Here we see again the relationship between the spirit or breath of God on the one hand and the word of God on the other: Every human being speaks his words through "the breath of his mouth". That is the way we speak and make sounds. This anthropomorphism is used for God: He has a mouth and he has the breath of his mouth (or spirit of his mouth). So he speaks and so he creates everything. This same idea might be the background for Job 26:13: God created through his spoken word the heavens (see Genesis 1:6).

... in the creation of the living creatures. Ps 104:27-31:

27 These all look to you,
to give them their food in due season.
28 When you give it to them, they gather it up;
when you open your hand, they are filled with good
things.
29 When you hide your face, they are dismayed;
when you take away their breath, they die
and return to their dust.
30 When you send forth your Spirit, they are created,
and you renew the face of the ground.
31 May the glory of the LORD endure forever;
may the LORD rejoice in his works.

When God sends forth his Spirit, living creatures are created. All that lives depends on the life-giving power of God's Spirit. Therefore the worshiper desires that God may enjoy the beauty of his creation.

... and especially in the creation of mankind creating men and sustaining their life. Genesis 6:3:

Then the LORD said, “My Spirit shall not abide in man forever, for he is flesh: his days shall be 120 years.”

Somehow the work of God's Spirit here is related to the lifespan of human beings. Therefore we can say that the Spirit of God sustains the life of human beings. The same is taught in other verses below. Job 27:1-4:

1 And Job again took up his discourse, and said:
 2 “As God lives, who has taken away my right,
 and the Almighty, who has made my soul bitter,
 3 as long as my breath is in me,
 and the spirit [rûah] of God is in my nostrils,
 4 my lips will not speak falsehood,
 and my tongue will not utter deceit.

To this statement of Job we can compare Genesis 2:7:

Then the LORD God formed the man of dust from the ground and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life, and the man became a living creature.

According to these passages human breath [nəšāmāh] has its origin from God's breathing life into him. Man is created by God's breathing into him and his breath and life is sustained by the work of God's breath or Spirit. Job 32:6-10:

6 And Elihu the son of Barachel the Buzite answered and said:
 “I am young in years,

and you are aged;
 therefore I was timid and afraid
 to declare my opinion to you.
 7 I said, 'Let days speak,
 and many years teach wisdom.'
 8 But it is the spirit [rûah] in man,
 the breath of the Almighty [nišmaṭ šadday], that
 makes him understand.
 9 It is not the old who are wise,
 nor the aged who understand what is right.
 10 Therefore I say, 'Listen to me;
 let me also declare my opinion.'

Elihu now dares to enter the discussion about Job's life and pain and God's righteousness in spite of Elihu's being younger than the rest, because he has received his breath [nəšāmāh] and a "rûah" [spirit] from the Almighty. The idea seems to be that he has not only his human life because God breathed it into him, but also insight and understanding. Elihu seems to say, that his own spirit has understanding and wisdom because his spirit originated from God, from God's breathing into him. A bridge is possible from God's Spirit to the human spirit, imparting not only life but also spiritual insight. So he will continue in his speech in Job 32:18:

For I am full of words;
 the spirit within me constrains me.

He feels compelled by the spirit within him to talk and share his wisdom. In Job 33:3-4 he continues this idea:

3 My words declare the uprightness of my heart,
 and what my lips know they speak sincerely.

4 The Spirit [rûah] of God has made me,
and the breath of the Almighty [nišmat šadday] gives
me life.

While Elihu speaks very personally here, he broadens his view in Job 34:12-15 to say that God's Spirit sustains the life of all mankind all the time. For him this proves God's righteous and generous character:

12 Of a truth, God will not do wickedly,
and the Almighty will not pervert justice.
13 Who gave him charge over the earth,
and who laid on him the whole world?
14 If he should set his heart to it
and gather to himself his spirit and his breath,
15 all flesh would perish together,
and man would return to dust.

Compare this to Psalm 104:30 above: it is the same basic insight. Ecclesiastes 12:7 also talks about human death:

And the dust returns to the earth as it was,
and the spirit [hā-rûah] returns to God who gave it.

Isaiah 42:5:

Thus says God, the LORD,
who created the heavens and stretched them out,
who spread out the earth and what comes from it,
who gives breath [nəšāmāh] to the people on it
and spirit [rûah] to those who walk in it.

It is clear that rûah here means the life and spirit of all individual human beings or even all creatures with a spirit on earth. But at

the same time it is clear that the individual human spirit can only exist because God has breathed into humans, by his Spirit or by his breath. The fact that God gives life to all human beings gives him the right to proclaim the kingdom of his servant (Isaiah 42:1) over all mankind, establishing God's justice everywhere (42:1.4), and being the light of the world (42:6). Jesus will be shown as the fulfillment of this prophecy in the New Testament (Matthew 12:15-21).

The role of God's Spirit in judgment and salvation.

During the first exodus At the Reed Sea Ex 15:8:

At the blast of your nostrils [ûḅə-rûaḥ 'appêkâ] the
waters piled up;
the floods stood up in a heap;
the deeps congealed in the heart of the sea.

The punishment of the Pharaoh and his elite forces was the salvation of the people of God. Often judgment and salvation are two sides of the same coin in the Holy Scriptures. The words "at the blast of your nostrils" see the "rûaḥ" of God's nose / face as the instrument of the destruction of the enemies: The word for "your nostrils" ['appêkâ, the organ of breathing] can also mean "your nose", "your face", or "your anger". Perhaps the idea is that God got so angry with the stubbornness of the Pharaoh and the Egyptians that the breath of his angry face/nose was enough to arouse a storm which saved the Israelites on the one hand and destroyed the Egyptians on the other. This is of course an anthropomorphism. The sins of the Egyptians have kindled this wrath of God. Normally God is "long suffering" or "slow to anger" ['erek 'appayim; literally 'erek means "long" to anger]: It takes a great deal to really

make God angry to the point where "his nostrils shake with anger." But the Egyptians had done exactly that. Then God's wrath in the form of "rûah 'appêkâ" took them away. Ex 15:10 repeats the idea of God's breath / wind destroying them:

You blew with your wind [bə-rûḥăkâ];
the sea covered them;
they sank like lead in the mighty waters.

Guiding Israel through the wilderness to the promised land to give them rest Isaiah 63:14:

Like livestock that go down into the valley,
the Spirit of the LORD gave them rest.
So you led your people,
to make for yourself a glorious name.

The Lord has led his people through the wilderness (Is 63:12-13) to give them rest through his spirit [rûah], meaning rest in the promised land.

... during the second and messianic exodus Isaiah 11:15:

And the LORD will utterly destroy
the tongue of the Sea of Egypt,
and will wave his hand over the River
with his scorching breath,
and strike it into seven channels,
and he will lead people across in sandals.

The phrase translated here "with his scorching breath" is in the Hebrew **בְּעִיָּם רוּחוֹ** ba'yām rūḥô. The first part of this phrase ba'yām occurs only in this one place in the Old Testament and therefore its

meaning is not clear. The second word *rûḥô* means "his spirit" or "his wind" or "his breath" etc. The whole context within Isaiah 11 speaks of a second exodus. See Is 11:11:

In that day the Lord will extend his hand yet a second time to recover the remnant that remains of his people, from Assyria, from Egypt, from Pathros, from Cush, from Elam, from Shinar, from Hamath, and from the coastlands of the sea.

Therefore the general idea seems to me to be like a repetition of the above idea of Ex 15:8 and 15:10 even though the words are slightly different.

... in saving David 2 Sam 22:16:

Then the channels of the sea were seen;
the foundations of the world were laid bare,
at the rebuke of the LORD,
at the blast of the breath of his nostrils.

And very similar Psalm 18:15:

Then the channels of the sea were seen,
and the foundations of the world were laid bare
at your rebuke, O LORD,
at the blast of the breath of your nostrils.

The expression "at the blast of the breath of his nostrils" in Samuel is in Hebrew מִנִּשְׁמַת רִיחַ אָפוֹ "min-nišmaṭ rūaḥ 'appô" that is "from the breath of the breath of his nose/his nostrils". The expression "at the blast of the breath of your nostrils" in Psalm 18 is in Hebrew מִנִּשְׁמַת רִיחַ אֶפְךָ "min-nišmaṭ rūaḥ 'appékā" that is

"from the breath of the breath of your nose/your nostrils". The idea seems to be from Exodus again: God got so angry by the stubborn sins of Saul and the other enemies of David, God's anointed one, that the breath of his nostrils became a storm by which God was saving David. It is quite interesting that David seems to have seen his own personal life experience as parallel to the exodus salvation of Israel (see 2 Sam 22:16 and Ps 18:15 together with the context 2 Sam 22:1ff and Ps 18:1ff). David could sing this song after God had rescued him from the hands of all his enemies, and especially from Saul. The language he uses reminds us very much of Exodus 15:8 and 15:10. This is not surprising because God presents himself in the beginning of the "Ten Words" of Exodus 20:1ff as the liberator and saviour God from the time of Egypt's slavery onward. The Israelites were to always remember this and know these words by heart.

... in judging the wicked Eliphaz the Temanite states about the wicked in Job 4:9:

By the breath of God they perish,
and by the blast of his anger they are consumed.

In "the breath of God" the word "nəšāmāh" is used and in "the blast of His anger" it is "rûaḥ 'appô". Literally this means the "rûaḥ of his nose", but we have seen that the nose shaking with anger depicts severe anger, so it is translated here according to the ESV "the blast of his anger". The wicked make God so angry that he destroys them in his wrath. God's anger here again is like a scorching, destructive wind going forth from his face. So the face is turned towards the wicked who, as his enemies, cannot survive this power encounter. In his second speech Eliphaz the Temanite touches this subject again. He says in Job 15:30:

He will not depart from darkness;
the flame will dry up his shoots,
and by the breath of his mouth he will depart.

The last phrase “and by the breath of his mouth he will depart” is literally “the *rûaḥ* of his mouth”; “his” supposedly pointing to God's mouth. If this be the case, then it is a very similar idea to the statement of Eliphaz in 4:9. There is no reason to change the Masoretic Hebrew text and read something else as some versions have done.

... in the judgment and salvation of God's People In Is 4:3-4 Isaiah presents the idea that God's Spirit will be part of the coming age of salvation:

3 And he who is left in Zion and remains in Jerusalem
will be called holy, everyone who has been recorded
for life in Jerusalem,
4 when the Lord shall have washed away the filth of
the daughters of Zion
and cleansed the bloodstains of Jerusalem from its
midst
by a spirit of judgment and by a spirit of burning.

God will work through his Spirit which is called here “a spirit of judgment” and “a spirit of burning” [*bə-rûaḥ mišpāṭ û-ḥə-rûaḥ bā'ēr*]. The context within the book of Isaiah helps us to identify this. We read in Isaiah 28:5-6:

5 In that day the LORD of hosts will be a crown of
glory,
and a diadem of beauty, to the remnant of his people,

6 and a spirit of justice to him who sits in judgment,
and strength to those who turn back the battle at the
gate.

Here it is expressively stated that the Lord is the "spirit of justice" [rûaḥ mišpāt] which is the same expression as in Is 4:4 and helps us to understand both passages as speaking of God's Spirit. God's Spirit is a gift for the Messiah for wise judgement in Isaiah 11:1ff and for the messianic Servant of the Lord in 42:1ff. The one who sits in judgment in 28:6 might be messianic as well; compare the messianic interpretation of the stone passage in Is 28:16-17 to that in the New Testament (1 Pt 2:6; Eph 2:20). Compare this idea of cleansing through the Spirit to John the Baptist's message about the Messiah who will baptise with the Holy Spirit and fire (Matthew 3:11; Luke 3:16). We know from John 1:23 that the Baptist understood his whole ministry in relation to the book of Isaiah. Isaiah speaks in 30:27-28 of God's Spirit as an overflowing torrent judging the nations:

27 Behold, the name of the LORD comes from afar,
burning with his anger,
and in thick rising smoke;
his lips are full of fury,
and his tongue is like a devouring fire;
28 his breath is like an overflowing stream
that reaches up to the neck;
to sift the nations with the sieve of destruction,
and to place on the jaws of the peoples
a bridle that leads astray.

Here, as in Is 4:4, we have God's Spirit and the idea of judgment and burning together. Compare the "rûaḥ bā'ēr" of Is 4:4 with

the "burning with his anger" [bō'ēr 'appô] and God's "breath" [rûḥô] as an instrument of judgement here. The mention of God's lips and his tongue in this context, helps us to perhaps understand God's "rûaḥ" as his breath while speaking some kind of judgment over the nations. The power of this judgement is so great that it is compared to "an overflowing stream" destroying the wicked amongst the nations. Isaiah 40:3-5 speaks of the coming of the Lord and the revelation of his glory so that all flesh (all mankind) will see it. But there is also a danger in the encounter of the divine and the human (Is 40:6-8):

6 A voice says, "Cry!"
 And I said, "What shall I cry?"
 All flesh is grass,
 and all its beauty is like the flower of the field.
 7 The grass withers, the flower fades
 when the breath of the LORD blows on it;
 surely the people are grass.
 8 The grass withers, the flower fades,
 but the word of our God will stand forever.

The phrase "the breath of the LORD" is in Hebrew "rûaḥ yhwḥ". The breath or spirit of God stands in contrast to all "flesh" (meaning the humans who are only flesh). And the glory of the Lord in 40:5 stands in contrast to the "loveliness" of the flesh in 40:6. The coming of the Lord brings a clash between the beauty of mankind and the beauty or glory of God. Those who are not prepared for his coming will fade away like beautiful flowers when the scorching desert wind hits them. Who can stand? Those who have the word of God in their heart will live forever (compare Is 40:8 with 51:6-8 and 42:1.4). Those who have not prepared the way for the Lord will be blown away like flowers.

Those who have prepared themselves by accepting God's word and righteousness will live forever through the same Spirit of God (59:21). John the Baptist has seen his preaching as the fulfillment of Isaiah 40:3ff (see John 1:23), as have all the Gospels (In addition to John: Mark 1:2-3; Matthew 3:3; Luke 3:4-6). The same idea of the coming of the Lord is mentioned again together with the spirit in Isaiah 59:18-21:

18 According to their deeds, so will he repay,
 wrath to his adversaries, repayment to his enemies;
 to the coastlands he will render repayment.
 19 So they shall fear the name of the LORD from
 the west,
 and his glory from the rising of the sun;
 for he will come like a rushing stream,
 which the wind of the LORD drives.
 20 "And a Redeemer will come to Zion,
 to those in Jacob who turn from transgression," de-
 clares the LORD.
 21 "And as for me, this is my covenant with them,"
 says the LORD:
 "My Spirit that is upon you,
 and my words that I have put in your mouth,
 shall not depart out of your mouth,
 or out of the mouth of your offspring,
 or out of the mouth of your children's offspring,"
 says the LORD,
 "from this time forth and forevermore."

When it is said, "He will come like a rushing stream, which the wind of the LORD drives", we again have the picture of the waters of the Exodus, driven by God's storm or spirit [rûah yhwh].

Compare also Isaiah 30:27-28 above. While Isaiah 59:19 gives the judgment aspect of the spirit, 59:21 gives the salvation aspect of the same spirit. Note again the parallelism of the spirit and the word in 59:21. The Spirit of God and the Word of God belong together. The judgment picture in Hosea 13:15-16 can be compared to Isaiah 40:6-8:

15 Though he may flourish among his brothers,
the east wind, the wind of the LORD, shall come,
rising from the wilderness,
and his fountain shall dry up;
his spring shall be parched;
it shall strip his treasury
of every precious thing.
16 Samaria shall bear her guilt,
because she has rebelled against her God;
they shall fall by the sword;
their little ones shall be dashed in pieces,
and their pregnant women ripped open.

Here the phrases "east wind" [qāḏîm] and the "wind of the Lord" [rûaḥ yhwḥ] coming and blowing with destruction seem to point to a military attack brought about by God as judgment. Zechariah's vision in chapter 4 is an encouragement to build the temple because they will succeed (4:6-7):

6 Then he said to me, "This is the word of the LORD to Zerubbabel: Not by might, nor by power, but by my Spirit, says the LORD of hosts. 7 Who are you, O great mountain? Before Zerubbabel you shall become a plain. And he shall bring forward the top stone amid shouts of 'Grace, grace to it!'"

During Zechariah's time (about 520-516 B.C.) the Israelites were back in their country but still under Persian dominion and in great poverty. While the first temple was built with the preparation of David and under the rule of the most powerful and rich king Solomon and was thus a splendid enterprise, the second temple was so poor that the older people wept as they remembered the first temple (Ezra 3:12). Therefore they greatly needed encouragement. God points out that the main work will be done by his Spirit. And so they have succeeded. This is an encouragement even today for the people of God living in poor circumstances, under the dominion of gentile nations, with no power of their own and no great resources: "Not by might, nor by power, but by my Spirit" [ḥə-rûḥî].

Zechariah 6:8:

Then he cried to me, "Behold, those who go toward the north country have set my Spirit at rest in the north country."

The phrase "have set my Spirit at rest" הִנִּיחוּ אֶת־רוּחִי [hēnîḥû 'eṭ rūḥî] is either understood to be denoting judgment or some kind of salvation. The judgment sense would be: God was very angry with the north country. Those who go to the north country bring God's judgment to it, and so "God's Spirit is set at rest". His wrath can abate because the sins of the north country have been punished. The salvation sense could be that "God's Spirit" rests on the north country for some plan of salvation, either salvation for Israel because God's Spirit works something in favour of Israel in the north country, or salvation for the people in the north country because in Zechariah the nations of the whole world will come to know the Lord (Zec 2:11; 6:15; 8:22-23; 14:16).

In Zechariah 12 Jerusalem and Judah are in eschatological danger. All nations seem to attack them. But then God comes into action.

Zechariah 12:9-10 :

9 And on that day I will seek to destroy all the nations that come against Jerusalem. 10 And I will pour out on the house of David and the inhabitants of Jerusalem a spirit of grace and pleas for mercy, so that, when they look on me, on him whom they have pierced, they shall mourn for him, as one mourns for an only child, and weep bitterly over him, as one weeps over a firstborn.

God is speaking. He will destroy the nations (12:9), but he will make preparations for the salvation of Jerusalem through an outpouring of his own Spirit. God's Spirit is here called "a spirit of grace and pleas for mercy". The words "grace and pleas for mercy" taken together, show us what the Spirit does in those who receive him: They start to pray very intensively and to ask for God's grace. The outpouring of God's Spirit upon Jerusalem will lead to a great revival and prayer movement in the hour of greatest distress and national catastrophe. God will open their eyes to see their Messiah, Jesus Christ, who is God himself, who is speaking here, says that they will look on "Me" whom they have pierced.

6.2 The Holy Spirit is God in the New Testament.

6.2.1 The Word Used for Spirit

The word used for spirit in the New Testament πνεῦμα (pněuma)⁶ means also wind, storm, breath and can speak of the condition of a person. This is very similar to the use of rūaḥ in the Old Testament. Besides being used for the human spirit it can point to angels as spiritual beings or is used for unclean spirits denoting demons. Very often it is used for God's Spirit⁷.

6.2.2 The Qualities of the Holy Spirit

He is God.

He is one person of the Holy Trinity. In the Great Commission (Matthew 28:19-20) Jesus Christ orders his disciples:

Go therefore and make disciples of all nations,
baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the
Son and of the Holy Spirit (baptizōntēs autōus ěis tō
ōnōma tōu patrōs kai tōu yiōu kai tōu hagiōu pněu-
matōs)⁸, 20 teaching them to observe all that I have

6. For the Greek alphabet see Ernst G. Hoffmann and Heinrich von Siebenthal, *Griechische Grammatik zum Neuen Testament* (Riehen / Schweiz: Immanuel-Verlag, 1985) p. 9. Our transliteration is given in the appendix "The Greek Alphabet" in the middle column.

7. See Bauer, *Wörterbuch zum Neuen Testament* p. 1338.

8. πορευθέντες οὖν μαθητεύσατε πάντα τὰ ἔθνη, βαπτίζοντες αὐτοὺς εἰς τὸ ὄνομα τοῦ πατρὸς καὶ τοῦ υἱοῦ καὶ τοῦ ἁγίου πνεύματος. The Greek Text of the New Testament here and afterwards is quoted according to Holmes, *The Greek New Testament*: SBL Edition.

commanded you. And behold, I am with you always,
to the end of the age.

The teaching of the New Testament about the "Father" is clear. He is God. There is also an emphasis on Jesus Christ as God and Man in one person. His divinity is clearly taught or implied in many statements. If Jesus Christ himself combines the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit with one "name" in which one name all believers everywhere should be baptized, he teaches that the Father is divine, the Son is divine and the Holy Spirit is divine. The name of the triune God is pronounced over everyone who is baptized signifying that he is now God's own and belongs to God's people.

God is spirit. In his talk with the Samaritan woman Jesus answers her question about worshiping God (John 4:19-24):

19 The woman said to him, "Sir, I perceive that you are a prophet. 20 Our fathers worshiped on this mountain, but you say that in Jerusalem is the place where people ought to worship." 21 Jesus said to her, "Woman, believe me, the hour is coming when neither on this mountain nor in Jerusalem will you worship the Father. 22 You worship what you do not know; we worship what we know, for salvation is from the Jews. 23 But the hour is coming, and is now here, when the true worshipers will worship the Father in spirit and truth (ἐν πνεύματι καὶ ἀληθείᾳ), for the Father is seeking such people to worship him. 24 God is spirit (πνεῦμα ὁ θεός), and those who worship him must worship in spirit and truth (ἐν πνεύματι καὶ

alēthēia).”⁹

In this talk Jesus offers her the gift of the "living water" (John 4:10) meaning the Holy Spirit (John 7:37-39) becoming "a well of water springing up to eternal life" in every believer. For the Samaritan woman and the Jews of Jesus time worshiping God was place oriented: "holy place" oriented. Therefore it was exclusive as it is also for many people in modern times who acknowledge one central holy place. According to the Samaritans this was Mount Gerizim; according to the Jews it had to be Jerusalem (see John 4:19). While Jesus emphasizes that "salvation is from the Jews", he points to a great change that is about to take place and will bring a worship more excellent than the one in Jerusalem. He points to a new era when worshipers do not worship God "place-oriented" in the body, but "God-centered," in the Holy Spirit, and in truth; in spiritual reality, having been born again (John 3:3-5) and changed and connected with God (John 1:12) by the Spirit. When we accept the teaching of Jesus that God is spirit, then it follows that God has not really a mouth or a hand or a human-like body. Scriptures which speak so about God use anthropomorphisms to point out some truth we can understand more easily because our language is used.

We have a very similar line in 2 Corinthians 3. While in John 4 there is an emphasis on the superiority of the time of the worship "in spirit and in truth", in 2 Cor 3 we have praise of the superiority of serving the Lord in the power of the Spirit with God's law being written on the tablets of the human heart (3:3-6). This is in comparison to Moses' service of God where God's law was written only

9. 23 ἀλλὰ ἔρχεται ὥρα καὶ νῦν ἐστίν, ὅτε οἱ ἀληθινοὶ προσκυνηταὶ προσκυνήσουσιν τῷ πατρὶ ἐν πνεύματι καὶ ἀληθείᾳ, καὶ γὰρ ὁ πατὴρ τοιούτους ζητεῖ τοὺς προσκυνοῦντας αὐτόν• 24 πνεῦμα ὁ θεός, καὶ τοὺς προσκυνοῦντας αὐτὸν ἐν πνεύματι καὶ ἀληθείᾳ δεῖ προσκυνεῖν.

on tablets of stone, not changing the human nature but condemning the sinner to death (3:6-11).

Paul continues his comparison in 2 Cor 3:12-18:

12 Since we have such a hope, we are very bold,
13 not like Moses, who would put a veil over his face
so that the Israelites might not gaze at the outcome
of what was being brought to an end. 14 But their
minds were hardened. For to this day, when they read
the old covenant, that same veil remains unlifted, be-
cause only through Christ is it taken away. 15 Yes,
to this day whenever Moses is read a veil lies over
their hearts. 16 But when one turns to the Lord, the
veil is removed. 17 Now the Lord is the Spirit, and
where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is freedom (hō
dē kyriōs tō pnēuma ēstin. hōu dē tō pnēuma kyriōu,
ēlēuthēria.). 18 And we all, with unveiled face, be-
holding the glory of the Lord, are being transformed
into the same image from one degree of glory to an-
other. For this comes from the Lord who is the Spirit.

2 Cor 3:16¹⁰ seems to be alluding to Exodus 34:34:

But when one turns (in the Exodus context this means
Moses) to the Lord, the veil is removed.

See the reference with the context (Ex 34:29-35):

10. Compare 2 Cor 3:16 ἡνίκα δὲ ἐὰν ἐπιστρέψῃ πρὸς κύριον, περιαιρεῖται τὸ κάλυμμα with Ex 34:34 according to the LXX ἡνικα δ' ἂν εἰσεπορευέτο μωυσης ἐναντὶ κυρίου λαλεῖν αὐτῷ περιηρέτο τὸ κάλυμμα ἕως τοῦ ἐκπορευέσθαι. The text of the LXX translation of the Old Testament is given according to Rahlfs, Septuaginta. The digital text was taken from Septuagint, Morphologically Tagged Rahlfs'.

29 When Moses came down from Mount Sinai, with the two tablets of the testimony in his hand as he came down from the mountain, Moses did not know that the skin of his face shone because he had been talking with God. 30 Aaron and all the people of Israel saw Moses, and behold, the skin of his face shone, and they were afraid to come near him. 31 But Moses called to them, and Aaron and all the leaders of the congregation returned to him, and Moses talked with them. 32 Afterward all the people of Israel came near, and he commanded them all that the LORD had spoken with him in Mount Sinai. 33 And when Moses had finished speaking with them, he put a veil over his face. 34 Whenever Moses went in before the LORD to speak with him, he would remove the veil, until he came out. And when he came out and told the people of Israel what he was commanded, 35 the people of Israel would see the face of Moses, that the skin of Moses' face was shining. And Moses would put the veil over his face again, until he went in to speak with him.

Paul dwells on the contrast between Moses' being glorified temporarily using a veil (2 Cor 3:11-13) and our being glorified forever without a veil. Moses saw the Lord's glory and we also see the Lord's glory. But the quality of the contemplation of God is different because we see the glory of God incarnate in Jesus Christ (2 Cor 4:6) through the power of the Holy Spirit, setting us free, making us alive, transforming us into Christ's likeness (2 Cor 3:17-18). This happens through Christ's sufferings (4:7-12) and faith (4:13-15) and is forever (4:16-18).

He is sent by Jesus and goes out from the Father. This is what Jesus taught the disciples on the night before his death (John 15:26-27):

26 But when the Helper comes, whom I will send to you from the Father (hõn ěgõ pẽmpsõ hymin para tõu patrõs), the Spirit of truth, who proceeds from the Father (hõ para tõu patrõs ěkpõrẽũtai), he will bear witness about me. 27 And you also will bear witness, because you have been with me from the beginning.

The teaching of Paul follows the same direction: When someone receives Christ, God sends the Spirit of His Son into his heart (Gal 4:4-7):

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!” 7 So you are no longer a slave, but a son, and if a son, then an heir through God.

The result is that the believer receives the Holy Spirit through the Father and the Son. In 1 Thessalonians 4:3-8 Paul teaches that God gives his Holy Spirit to us to make us holy:

3 For this is the will of God, your sanctification: that you abstain from sexual immorality; 4 that each one of you know how to control his own body in holiness and honor, 5 not in the passion of lust like the Gentiles who do not know God; 6 that no one transgress

and wrong his brother in this matter, because the Lord is an avenger in all these things, as we told you beforehand and solemnly warned you. 7 For God has not called us for impurity, but in holiness. 8 Therefore whoever disregards this, disregards not man but God, who gives his Holy Spirit to you.

Hebrews 2:4:

... while God also bore witness by signs and wonders and various miracles and by gifts of the Holy Spirit distributed according to his will.

The phrase translated "by gifts of the Holy Spirit" is more literally: "distributions of the Holy Spirit" (pnēumatós hagiōu mēristmōis). This could mean that God gives witness to the truth of the Gospel by letting the Holy Spirit distribute his gifts. Or it could mean that God confirms the Gospel by giving his Holy Spirit or spiritual gifts to the people who believe. But even if this phrase only denotes the receiving of the gifts of the Spirit here (which might be preferable), it surely presupposes the greatest gift of the spiritual gifts, the Holy Spirit himself. You can not have a gift of the Spirit without having the Spirit. Because the main agent in Hebrews 2:4 is God who confirms the Gospel in these various ways, it is clear that the Spirit and the gifts of the Spirit come from him.

He is also called "Christ's Spirit" (Rom 8:9), "Spirit of Jesus" (Acts 16:7) or "Spirit of God's Son" (Gal 4:6). According to Rom 8:9-11 every person truly belonging to Christ has the Spirit of Christ or God's Spirit:

You, however, are not in the flesh but in the Spirit, if in fact the Spirit of God dwells in you. Anyone who

does not have the Spirit of Christ does not belong to him.

One motif of Luke's Acts is the spreading of the word of God from Jerusalem to the ends of the earth by the power of the Spirit (Acts 1:8). In Acts 16:6-10 we see, how the "Holy Spirit" or "the Spirit of Jesus" guided Paul and his team including Luke where to go first and where not to go:

6 And they went through the region of Phrygia and Galatia, having been forbidden by the Holy Spirit to speak the word in Asia. 7 And when they had come up to Mysia, they attempted to go into Bithynia, but the Spirit of Jesus did not allow them. 8 So, passing by Mysia, they went down to Troas. 9 And a vision appeared to Paul in the night: a man of Macedonia was standing there, urging him and saying, "Come over to Macedonia and help us." 10 And when Paul had seen the vision, immediately we sought to go on into Macedonia, concluding that God had called us to preach the gospel to them.

It is clear that the "Holy Spirit" in 16:6 and the "Spirit of Jesus" in 16:7 mean the same spirit. As we have already seen, Paul talks of the "Spirit of God's Son" in Gal 4:6 because he puts an emphasis on the sonship of the believers who have received Christ:

And because you are sons, God has sent the Spirit of his Son into our hearts, crying, "Abba! Father!"

He is spirit and has no flesh and bones.

This seems to follow from Luke 24:36-43 (especially 39):

36 As they were talking about these things, Jesus himself stood among them, and said to them, "Peace to you!" 37 But they were startled and frightened and thought they saw a spirit. 38 And he said to them, "Why are you troubled, and why do doubts arise in your hearts? 39 See my hands and my feet, that it is I myself. Touch me, and see. For a spirit (pněuma) does not have flesh and bones as you see that I have." 40 And when he had said this, he showed them his hands and his feet. 41 And while they still disbelieved for joy and were marveling, he said to them, "Have you anything here to eat?" 42 They gave him a piece of broiled fish, 43 and he took it and ate before them.

While the disciples thought they were seeing a ghost, Jesus gave proof to them that he was real by eating something in front of their very eyes. A spirit (pněuma) does not have flesh and bones. This statement is not only true for the ghost the disciples feared, but also for God's Spirit: Being also "spirit" (pněuma) he has no flesh and bones.

He is omnipresent.

In Revelation 5:6 Jesus Christ is pictured as the lamb with seven horns and seven eyes:

And between the throne and the four living creatures and among the elders I saw a Lamb standing, as though it had been slain, with seven horns and with seven eyes, which are the seven spirits of God sent out into all the earth.

A horn is a metaphor for strength. The seven horns of Christ as the lamb of God (compare John 1:29) show his perfect strength. Because here in Revelation 5 Jesus is worthy to be worshiped by all creatures he is shown to be God. Therefore his perfect strength is his being God Almighty. His seven eyes pointing to "the seven spirits of God sent out into all the earth" speak of his special relationship with the Spirit of God. Seven is again the number of perfection and fullness. Revelation calls the one Spirit of God the Seven Spirits of God because of the idea of fullness, because of the lampstand in the Tabernacle,¹¹ and because of Isaiah 11:1-2¹².

It is important to note that the omnipresence of the Spirit in the world here is related to the lamb, to the salvation for all mankind, and to the Spirit's "being sent" everywhere. We know from the prophets that God is everywhere seeing everyone and everything (see Jeremiah 23:24). But here we see the Spirit everywhere with the purpose of applying the salvation of the lamb (Rev 7:10) to all tribes and nations (Rev 5:9-10). Since Pentecost the Holy Spirit is out everywhere to enlighten and to lead to salvation.

The fact that those who receive the Spirit by faith in Christ the "lamb" (see John 1:29-34) become kings and priests themselves (Rev 5:9-10) is awesome. We have to remember that the lamb is king (the lion of Judah Rev 5:5) and priest (the lamb Rev 5:6; Isaiah 53:7-10). The Spirit of God being represented as the seven eyes of the lamb sent out to all countries and nations teaches us a wonderful truth: In the days of Zechariah¹³ he would use the two anointed ones of that time. He would use the High Priest Joshua and the

11. See below section 6.2.2.

12. In Isaiah 11:1-2 the Spirit of God rests on the Messiah with a sevenfold qualification.

13. See below: section 6.2.2

governor Zerubbabel to build his temple. Nowadays he uses all the people of God who have been anointed (1 John 2:20-27) to be kings and priests. They have received the seven eyes of the lamb, the Spirit of God. They start to see the world with the eyes of Jesus Christ. The compassion and love of Christ flow through them to all nations. Their priestly prayers have a deep impact on the history of the world (Rev 5:8; 8:3).

He is omniscient.

Rev 5:6 includes the idea of the omniscience of the Spirit of God: The "seven eyes" being everywhere see everything and know everything. Because the Spirit of God has full access to God's inmost being and his every thought, he is omniscient meaning he knows everything because God knows everything (1 Cor 2:10-11):

... 10 these things God has revealed to us through the Spirit. For the Spirit searches everything, even the depths of God. 11 For who knows a person's thoughts except the spirit of that person, which is in him? So also no one comprehends the thoughts of God except the Spirit of God.

He is holy.

God's Spirit is quite often¹⁴ called "holy" in the New Testament. See for example John 14:26:

But the Helper, the Holy Spirit (tõ pněuma tõ hagiõn),
whom the Father will send in my name, he will teach
you all things and bring to your remembrance all that
I have said to you.

Being the Holy Spirit he has a sanctifying power and everyone receiving him is obliged to lead a holy life having become part of the temple of God. In Romans 1:3-4 Paul speaks of the son of God

... who was descended from David according to the
flesh and was declared to be the Son of God in power
according to the Spirit of holiness by his resurrection
from the dead, Jesus Christ our Lord.

The "Spirit of holiness" points to the Holy Spirit as giving holiness. Whoever receives the Holy Spirit becomes a holy person (Rom 8:27), set aside for the purpose and plan God has for him. Here it is Jesus of Nazareth who is proven to be the son of God,

14. Here are 89 verses with the phrase: Matthew 1:18; 1:20; 3:11; 12:32; 28:19; Mark 1:8; 3:29; 12:36; 13:11; Luke 1:15; 1:35; 1:41; 1:67; 2:25; 2:26; 3:16; 3:22; 4:1; 10:21; 11:13; 12:10; 12:12; John 1:33; 14:26; 20:22; Acts 1:2; 1:5; 1:8; 1:16; 2:4; 2:33; 2:38; 4:8; 4:25; 4:31; 5:3; 5:32; 6:5; 7:51; 7:55; 8:15; 8:17; 8:19; 9:17; 9:31; 10:38; 10:44; 10:45; 10:47; 11:15; 11:16; 11:24; 13:2; 13:4; 13:9; 13:52; 15:8; 15:28; 16:6; 19:2; 19:6; 20:23; 20:28; 21:11; 28:25; Romans 5:5; 9:1; 14:17; 15:13; 15:16; 1 Corinthians 6:19; 12:3; 2 Corinthians 6:6; 13:14; Ephesians 1:13; 4:30; 1 Thessalonians 1:5; 1:6; 4:8; 2 Timothy 1:14; Titus 3:5; Hebrews 2:4; 3:7; 6:4; 9:8; 10:15; 1 Peter 1:12; 2 Peter 1:21; Jude 1:20.

the Messiah, not only by his descent from David but by his powerful resurrection from the dead, by the intervention of the "Spirit of Holiness" declaring him in this act not only not guilty after his shameful crucifixion, but to be the most holy anointed one of God, the Saviour of all nations (Rom 1:5; 1:16-17).

Paul thanks God for the Thessalonians (2 Thes 2:13) that their election to salvation goes hand in hand with the sanctifying work of the Holy Spirit and the faith of the believers:

But we ought always to give thanks to God for you, brothers beloved by the Lord, because God chose you as the firstfruits to be saved, through sanctification by the Spirit and belief in the truth.

Peter starts his first letter in the same way, combining God's election and the sanctifying work of the Holy Spirit (1 Peter 1:1-2):

1 Peter, an apostle of Jesus Christ, To those who are elect exiles of the dispersion in Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia, and Bithynia, 2 according to the foreknowledge of God the Father, in the sanctification of the Spirit, for obedience to Jesus Christ and for sprinkling with his blood: May grace and peace be multiplied to you.

He is the spirit of truth.

This is an emphasis we get especially from John. In John 14:15-18 Jesus says:

15 If you love me, you will keep my commandments. 16 And I will ask the Father, and he will give you another Helper, to be with you forever, 17 even

the Spirit of truth (tõ pñěuma tēs alēthēias), whom the world cannot receive, because it neither sees him nor knows him. You know him, for he dwells with you and will be in you. 18 I will not leave you as orphans; I will come to you.

The "Spirit of truth" is Christ related. We saw this in John 14:6:

Jesus said to him, "I am the way, and the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me."

The Spirit of truth promotes Christ as the truth and gives understanding of Christ's glory and great importance. Christ does not leave the disciples as orphans, because he comes to them in the form of the Spirit of truth. Thus it is that Jesus can teach them (John 15:26-27):

26 But when the Helper comes, whom I will send to you from the Father, the Spirit of truth, who proceeds from the Father, he will bear witness about me. 27 And you also will bear witness, because you have been with me from the beginning.

And in John 16:12-15 Jesus declares that the Spirit of truth will continue the teaching effort of Jesus and bring it to perfection:

12 "I still have many things to say to you, but you cannot bear them now. 13 When the Spirit of truth comes, he will guide you into all the truth, for he will not speak on his own authority, but whatever he hears he will speak, and he will declare to you the things that are to come. 14 He will glorify me, for he will

take what is mine and declare it to you. 15 All that the Father has is mine; therefore I said that he will take what is mine and declare it to you.

We may assume that John's use of the phrase, "the Spirit of truth", is also influenced by the Old Testament Hebrew where truth and faithfulness belong together. God's truth implies his faithfulness: whatever he promises will be fulfilled. The fact that the truth of the "Spirit of truth" is Christ related is also evident from 1 John 5:5-8:

5 Who is it that overcomes the world except the one who believes that Jesus is the Son of God? 6 This is he who came by water and blood—Jesus Christ; not by the water only but by the water and the blood. And the Spirit is the one who testifies, because the Spirit is the truth. 7 For there are three that testify: 8 the Spirit and the water and the blood; and these three agree.

The Spirit himself is truth, and he testifies to the fact that Jesus is the "Son of God". This is the target of the testimony of the Holy Spirit. If we combine this with the idea of the faithfulness of God, it means that Jesus has come as the fulfillment of the Old Testament Scriptures (John 17:17; 1:23; 1:29-34; 1:45; 5:46-47; 19:24-30; 19:36-37; 20:9) to save the world (John 1:29; 1 John 2:2; 5:11-13).

He has emotions.

The apostle Paul sees the Holy Spirit as of greatest importance and consequence for the believer. Therefore He admonishes the Christians to lead such a life that we do not make the Holy Spirit sad (Ephesians 4:29-30):

29 Let no corrupting talk come out of your mouths, but only such as is good for building up, as fits the occasion, that it may give grace to those who hear. 30 And do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God, by whom you were sealed for the day of redemption.

In this context, sins of the mouth seem to be grieving the Holy Spirit (see Eph 4:29 and 31).

He is a comforter and helper.

In his farewell speech in John (14:15-17) Jesus encourages the disciples with the idea that someone who is an equal to Christ will come and help them:

15 If you love me, you will keep my commandments. 16 And I will ask the Father, and he will give you another Helper (allōn paraklētōn), to be with you forever, 17 even the Spirit of truth, whom the world cannot receive, because it neither sees him nor knows him. You know him, for he dwells with you and will be in you.

The idea that the Father will give them "another Helper" (allōn paraklētōn) seems to imply that Jesus who is about to go to the father is also a "Helper" (paraklētōs; compare 1 John 2:1-2¹⁵). The Holy Spirit is "another" (allōs paraklētōs) of the same quality. When Jesus leaves them, they do not loose, but in the light of John 16:5-7 they will win:

15. 1 My little children, I am writing these things to you so that you may not sin. But if anyone does sin, we have an advocate (paraklētōn) with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous. 2 He is the propitiation for our sins, and not for ours only but also for the sins of the whole world.

5 But now I am going to him who sent me, and none of you asks me, ‘Where are you going?’ 6 But because I have said these things to you, sorrow has filled your heart. 7 Nevertheless, 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.

The astonishing words of Jesus in John 14:12 must also be understood in the context of the coming of the Spirit after Jesus has left:

Truly, truly, I say to you, whoever believes in me will also do the works that I do; and greater works than these will he do, because I am going to the Father.

So it is clear that the disciples gain by the going of Jesus and the coming of the Spirit. And in a way they do not lose Jesus but remain in contact with him (John 15:1-17) in the person of the Spirit. It is the set purpose of the Spirit to grant the believers the presence of Jesus and his truth all the time (John 14:25-28):

25 “These things I have spoken to you while I am still with you. 26 But the Helper, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, he will teach you all things and bring to your remembrance all that I have said to you. 27 Peace I leave with you; my peace I give to you. Not as the world gives do I give to you. Let not your hearts be troubled, neither let them be afraid. 28 You heard me say to you, ‘I am going away, and I will come to you.’ If you loved me, you would have rejoiced, because I am going to the Father, for the Father is greater than I.

The going away and the coming here seem to mean his coming in the person of the Spirit (see 14:18; and of course in addition to that at the end of time to receive them to himself for ever, John 14:3). In John 15:25-27 the hatred of the world towards Jesus is contrasted with the testimony of the Spirit and the disciples to the truth that Jesus is who he is¹⁶:

25 But the word that is written in their Law must be fulfilled: "They hated me without a cause." 26 But when the Helper comes, whom I will send to you from the Father, the Spirit of truth, who proceeds from the Father, he will bear witness about me. 27 And you also will bear witness, because you have been with me from the beginning.

According to the "The New International Dictionary of New Testament Theology" the word *paraklētōs* means "helper" or "intercessor" in the New Testament: "The sense of helper and intercessor is suitable in all occurrences of the word"¹⁷. After the conversion of Paul the first violent persecution of the church came to an end and Luke gives us this summary (Acts 9:31):

So the church throughout all Judea and Galilee and Samaria had peace and was being built up. And walking in the fear of the Lord and in the comfort of the Holy Spirit, it multiplied.

The phrase "in the comfort of the Holy Spirit" is "*tē paraklēsei tōu hagiōu pnēmatōs*". The word *paraklēsis* here is a word which

16. See John 8:24: "I told you that you would die in your sins, for unless you believe that I am he you will die in your sins."

17. Colin Brown, ed., *The New International Dictionary of New Testament Theology*, vol. 1 (Carlisle: Paternoster, 1986) p. 89.

points to an activity of the Holy Spirit. This activity is translated with "comfort" in the ESV. The word can be understood as "talking to the heart"¹⁸ of somebody with the purpose of having an effect on the heart: If he is sad, it means to comfort him. If he needs guidance and conviction, then it is to guide him and convict him of the right course of action. So it could be translated "admonish", "challenge", and "motivate" to do something. The Holy Spirit guides the church by motivating its members to take action and grow in the right direction. In Philippians 1:12-20 Paul speaks of his imprisonment and the possibility of being martyred or staying alive and the outcome of it:

18 What then? Only that in every way, whether in pretense or in truth, Christ is proclaimed, and in that I rejoice. Yes, and I will rejoice, 19 for I know that through your prayers and the help of the Spirit of Jesus Christ this will turn out for my deliverance, 20 as it is my eager expectation and hope that I will not be at all ashamed, but that with full courage now as always Christ will be honored in my body, whether by life or by death.

Paul sees already good effects of his imprisonment. He is confident of the future outcome. It will be his "deliverance" one way or the other, either living on or martyrdom. Their prayers will help with that and "the help of the Spirit of Jesus Christ" (dia ... ἑπικηρόεγας

18. A good example for this meaning of the verb "parakalēō" can be found in the synonym parallelism of Isaiah 40:1-2 (LXX) Rahlfs, Septuaginta: παρακαλεῖτε παρακαλεῖτε τον λαον μου λεγει ο θεος 2 ιερεις λαλησατε εις την καρδιαν ιερουσαλημ παρακαλεσατε αυτην οτι επλησθη η ταπεινωσις αυτης λελυται αυτης η αμαρτια οτι εδεξατο εκ χειρος κυριου διπλα τα αμαρτηματα αυτης.

tõu pněumatõs, compare Eph 4:16). The word "ěpichõrěgia" implies the idea of giving something, supplying something, helping. Compare this to Stephan facing martyrdom and being full of the Holy Spirit (Acts 7:55-60; and Matthew 10:19-20).

He sends people for a special task and gives them the gifts they need for that (see below section 6.4). This implies a will and a plan and the ability to think.

One of the earliest and greatest moves in mission history was triggered by the Holy Spirit (Acts 13:1-4):

1 Now there were in the church at Antioch prophets and teachers, Barnabas, Simeon who was called Niger, Lucius of Cyrene, Manaen a member of the court of Herod the tetrarch, and Saul. 2 While they were worshipping the Lord and fasting, the Holy Spirit said, "Set apart for me Barnabas and Saul for the work to which I have called them." 3 Then after fasting and praying they laid their hands on them and sent them off. 4 So, being sent out by the Holy Spirit, they went down to Seleucia, and from there they sailed to Cyprus.

The phrase "being sent out by the Holy Spirit" (ěkpěmphthěntěs hypõ tõu agiõu pněumatõs) seems to summarize what had happened in 13:2-3: They were sent out by the Holy Spirit, but this happened within and through the spiritual leadership of the church of Antioch. Perhaps the speaking of the Holy Spirit took the form of a prophetic utterance by one of the present prophets mentioned in 13:1. Be that as it may, one thing seems clear: That all major developments in mission history in Acts happen under the special guidance and work of the Holy Spirit (Acts 2; 8; 10-11; 13; 15; 16).

In his first report (the Gospel) Luke had "dealt with all that Jesus began to do and teach" (Acts 1:1). By implication we might understand that Luke's second report (Acts) is "about all that Jesus continued to do and teach", especially through the work of his "Spirit" or the "Holy Spirit" (compare Acts 16:6-7). This is what makes the Gospel movement so powerful in Acts and in fact unstoppable.

This is another area where Paul and Luke agree. Speaking of various gifts and ministries Paul states (1 Cor 12:11):

All these are empowered by one and the same Spirit,
who apportions to each one individually as he wills.

Different passages we have read imply that the Holy Spirit has a will, is rational and has emotions. In other words we can say that according to these passages the Holy Spirit has a personality of his own.

He is related to the presence of God.

Through the indwelling of the Holy Spirit the Church of Christ and the believers have become a temple (1 Cor 3:16-17):

16 Do you not know that you are God's temple and
that God's Spirit dwells in you? 17 If anyone destroys
God's temple, God will destroy him. For God's temple
is holy, and you are that temple.

The warning against not destroying the temple of God is given here in the context of 1 Cor 1-4 "that there be no divisions among you" (1 Cor 1:10). In 1 Cor 6:15-19 this idea is repeated to warn the Corinthians not to go to a prostitute and not to commit immorality:

15 Do you not know that your bodies are members
of Christ? Shall I then take the members of Christ and

make them members of a prostitute? Never! 16 Or do you not know that he who is joined to a prostitute becomes one body with her? For, as it is written, "The two will become one flesh." 17 But he who is joined to the Lord becomes one spirit with him. 18 Flee from sexual immorality. Every other sin a person commits is outside the body, but the sexually immoral person sins against his own body. 19 Or do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit within you, whom you have from God? You are not your own.

Paul writes to the Ephesians (2:19-22) as Gentiles and puts an emphasis on the unity of the one body of Christ with Jews and Gentiles being built together to be one temple in the Holy Spirit:

19 So then you are no longer strangers and aliens, but you are fellow citizens with the saints and members of the household of God, 20 built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Christ Jesus himself being the cornerstone, 21 in whom the whole structure, being joined together, grows into a holy temple in the Lord. 22 In him you also are being built together into a dwelling place for God by the Spirit.

When Paul admonishes Timothy (2 Tim 1:14):

By the Holy Spirit who dwells within us, guard the good deposit entrusted to you.

he also implies that the indwelling Spirit makes believers a vessel of the presence of God.

James makes it clear that God wants our undivided love with regard to the indwelling of God's Spirit (James 4:4-6):

4 You adulterous people! Do you not know that friendship with the world is enmity with God? Therefore whoever wishes to be a friend of the world makes himself an enemy of God. 5 Or do you suppose it is to no purpose that the Scripture says, “He yearns jealously over the spirit that he has made to dwell in us”¹⁹? 6 But he gives more grace. Therefore it says, “God opposes the proud, but gives grace to the humble.”

We have given here the text of the ESV which understands James 4:5 in the same way as the NASB²⁰, about which Moo²¹ states:

This translation takes *pneuma* (spirit) as the object of the verb *epipothei* (yearn); understands *pros phthonon* as adverbial (jealously) and assumes that the subject of this verb is God. However this interpretation is by no means the only possible one. The most important alternative is represented by the NIV²² translation: ‘the spirit he caused to live in us tends towards envy’... In this rendering *pneuma* is understood as the subject of the verse and is identified with the spirit breathed into man by God at creation (Gn 2:7). James would then be making a point about the human tendency to be envious and jealous.

19. ἢ δοκεῖτε ὅτι κενῶς ἡ γραφή λέγει• Πρὸς φθόνον ἐπιποθεῖ τὸ πνεῦμα ὃ κατώκισεν ἐν ἡμῖν;

20. NASB = New American Standard Bible

21. See Douglas J. Moo, James, Tyndale NT Commentaries (Leicester, England: IVP, 1988 <1985>) p. 144-145.

22. NIV = New International Version

The ESV and NASB versions seem to fit the context better, where it says we should love God with an undivided heart and not love God on the one hand and the world on the other. The world is in opposition to its creator; a worldly life and friendship with the world is by necessity enmity towards God and will arouse God's jealousy (Ex 20:4-5; 34:14; Dt 32:16,21). Or, speaking in the picture of the temple: we can not place an idol in the temple of the one and true God (compare 2 Corinthians 6:16). The sevenfold Spirit in Revelation (Rev 1:4; 3:1; 4:5; 5:6) reminds us of the one lampstand with seven arms in the Old Testament sanctuary, picturing the one spirit with manifold effects. In Revelation 1:4-5 we have the three persons of the Holy Trinity mentioned in the greeting:

4 John to the seven churches that are in Asia: Grace to you and peace from him who is and who was and who is to come, and from the seven spirits who are before his throne, 5 and from Jesus Christ the faithful witness, the firstborn of the dead, and the ruler of kings on earth...

In Revelation 3:1 Jesus is qualified as the one having God's sevenfold Spirit:

And to the angel of the church in Sardis write: The words of him who has the seven spirits of God and the seven stars. I know your works. You have the reputation of being alive, but you are dead.

In Revelation 4:5 we learn about the throne of God:

From the throne came flashes of lightning, and rumblings and peals of thunder, and before the throne were burning seven torches of fire, which are the seven spirits of God.

This goes back via Zechariah 4 to Exodus 25. Zechariah 4:1-14 is a vision of encouragement for Zerubbabel governor of Judah (and Joshua the high priest, see Zechariah 3) to go on and build the temple in Jerusalem, see Zec 4:1-2.6-10:

1 And the angel who talked with me came again and woke me, like a man who is awakened out of his sleep. 2 And he said to me, "What do you see?" I said, "I see, and behold, a lampstand all of gold, with a bowl on the top of it, and seven lamps on it, with seven lips on each of the lamps that are on the top of it... 6 Then he said to me, "This is the word of the LORD to Zerubbabel: Not by might, nor by power, but by my Spirit, says the LORD of hosts. 7 Who are you, O great mountain? Before Zerubbabel you shall become a plain. And he shall bring forward the top stone amid shouts of 'Grace, grace to it!'" 8 Then the word of the LORD came to me, saying, 9 "The hands of Zerubbabel have laid the foundation of this house; his hands shall also complete it. Then you will know that the LORD of hosts has sent me to you. 10 For whoever has despised the day of small things shall rejoice, and shall see the plumb line in the hand of Zerubbabel. "These seven are the eyes of the LORD, which range through the whole earth."

4:6 gives a clue to understanding the whole vision: "Not by might, nor by power, but by my Spirit". The lampstand with the seven lamps represents the Holy Spirit. The one lampstand points to the one Spirit of God; his seven lamps represent the fullness and perfection of the light received through the illumination and guidance of the Holy Spirit. The seven eyes are mentioned in 4:10 and 3:9.

We read in Zechariah 3:8-9 about the coming Messiah²³ who will bring atonement for the whole country on one day, just as Joshua as High Priest has to procure every year on the day of atonement:

8 Hear now, O Joshua the high priest, you and your friends who sit before you, for they are men who are a sign: behold, I will bring my servant the Branch.
9 For behold, on the stone that I have set before Joshua, on a single stone with seven eyes, I will engrave its inscription, declares the LORD of hosts, and I will remove the iniquity of this land in a single day.

The seven eyes on the one stone here pointing to the Messiah, are to be compared with the seven eyes on the lamb in Revelation 5:6:

And between the throne and the four living creatures and among the elders I saw a Lamb standing, as though it had been slain, with seven horns and with seven eyes, which are the seven spirits of God sent out into all the earth.

Revelation 5:6 and 4:5 taken together give an interpretation of Zechariah 3 and 4: The Holy Spirit is both, the seven lamps of the lampstand and the seven eyes on the stone. Of course there is also a link between lamps and eyes: both are related to visibility, to the ability to see. Without light you cannot see. Blindness is a life in darkness without light. Jesus calls the eye the lamp of the body (Matthew 6:22). The Messiah in Isaiah 42:6-7 is the light of the nations,

23. The Messiah is pointed to here with the words the "branch" (compare Jer 23:5-6), the "servant of the Lord" (see Isaiah 42:1ff; 49:1ff; 50:4ff; 52:13-53:12) and a mysterious stone with seven eyes on it (compare Isaiah 8:13-15; 28:16; Psalm 118:22-23; Mt 22:42; Acts 4:11; Eph 2:20; 1 Pet 2:4-8; 3:14-15).

healing their blindness. This is taken up by Jesus in John 8:12 and proven by him healing the man born blind (John 9:1ff). This leads us to the lampstand of the tabernacle in Exodus 25:31.37:

31 “You shall make a lampstand of pure gold. The lampstand shall be made of hammered work: its base, its stem, its cups, its calyxes, and its flowers shall be of one piece with it... 37 You shall make seven lamps for it. And the lamps shall be set up so as to give light on the space in front of it.

The lampstand in the tabernacle helps the priests to see in the presence of God, in the holy room on this side of the curtain, which covers the most holy place wherein is the ark of the covenant. The spiritual meaning we can learn here is that the natural light is not good enough to recognize God and divine things (1 Cor 2:14).²⁴ We need the light God gives us to contemplate his glory.

If we draw the line from Exodus 25 to Zechariah 4 to Revelation 4 and 5, we learn the lesson that even the chosen priests (Rev 5:10) need the illumination of the Holy Spirit, who is the seven eyes of the lamb and who leads all to adore and worship the lamb (Rev 5:13) and who is sent into all the earth.

He is related to the word of God.

John (6:14-15) states after the feeding of the five thousand:

14 When the people saw the sign that he had done, they said, “This is indeed the Prophet who is to come

24. When God reveals himself in the Old Testament there is sometimes some kind of accompanying “darkness” mentioned (Ps 97:2; Ex 20:21; Dt 4:11; 5:23; 2 Sam 22:10; Psalm 18:9; 1 Kings 8:12; 2 Chr 6:1).

into the world!" 15 Perceiving then that they were about to come and take him by force to make him king, Jesus withdrew again to the mountain by himself.

We know from Matthew 14:23 that Jesus was praying in the solitude of that night. The next day he answers the temptation to become a king without the cross with a programmatic and enigmatic speech in the synagogue of Capernaum proclaiming: "I am the bread of life."

He had decided that he would die on the cross, sacrificing his body and blood to "feed" the world with salvation (John 6:51-52.59-63):

51 I am the living bread that came down from heaven. If anyone eats of this bread, he will live forever. And the bread that I will give for the life of the world is my flesh." 52 The Jews then disputed among themselves, saying, "How can this man give us his flesh to eat?" ... 59 Jesus said these things in the synagogue, as he taught at Capernaum. 60 When many of his disciples heard it, they said, "This is a hard saying; who can listen to it?" 61 But Jesus, knowing in himself that his disciples were grumbling about this, said to them, "Do you take offense at this? 62 Then what if you were to see the Son of Man ascending to where he was before? 63 It is the Spirit who gives life; the flesh is of no avail. The words that I have spoken to you are spirit and life.

It is another of the misunderstandings in John, in which the people would misunderstand the spiritual meaning of Jesus' teaching in a

more literal way (compare John 2:19-21; 3:3-8; 4:10-15). Here for example they understand that Jesus encourages cannibalism (the eating and drinking of his flesh and blood in a literal sense). But in John 6:63 Jesus explains his spiritual meaning:

It is the Spirit who gives life; the flesh is of no avail. The words that I have spoken to you are spirit and life²⁵.

When Jesus says "...the flesh is of no avail", he means: the literal eating of my flesh and the literal drinking of my blood will not save you, but the "spiritual" eating and drinking of my flesh and blood will save you. This means, everyone, who puts his trust in Christ's sacrificial death on the cross, will be saved (see John 6:35; 3:14-16). Trust or faith means that I take the words of Jesus and cling to them: "It is the Spirit who gives life; ... the words that I have spoken to you are spirit and are life." For our subject it is very important to notice that we gain the Spirit of God by accepting the words of Christ.

That the Spirit works through the word is also taught in Ephesians 6:17:

... and take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God²⁶...

When we ask what kind of word of God is imagined here, I think, the word that has become Scripture fits best. In the realm of spiritual warfare it must be a weapon the believer can grasp and use, like

25. τὸ πνεῦμά ἐστιν τὸ ζωοποιόν, ἡ σὰρξ οὐκ ὠφελεῖ οὐδέν• τὰ ῥήματα ἃ ἐγὼ λελάληκα ὑμῖν πνεῦμά ἐστιν καὶ ζωὴ ἐστιν.

26. καὶ τὴν περικεφαλαίαν τοῦ σωτηρίου δέξασθε, καὶ τὴν μάχαιραν τοῦ πνεύματος, ὅ ἐστιν ῥῆμα θεοῦ,

Jesus Christ did when he was attacked and tempted by Satan. Just three consecutive chapters of the Old Testament (Dt 6-8) proved enough to have victory over the devil (Matthew 4:1-11; Luke 4:1-13). This should teach us a double lesson: Firstly we also must know the word of God in order to have the victory. Secondly we should not be surprised that Satan will try to discredit the word of God, that is to beat the sword of the Spirit out of our hands (compare Genesis 3:1-5).

A comparison of Ephesians 5:18-21 with Colossians 3:16-18 clearly shows that being full of the Spirit in Eph 5:18 resembles the Word of Christ dwelling richly in someone in Col 3:16.

Eph 5:18 And do not get drunk with wine, for that is debauchery, but be filled with the Spirit,

19 addressing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody to the Lord with all your heart,

20 giving thanks always and for everything to God the Father in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ,

21 submitting to one another out of reverence for Christ.

Col 3:16 Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly,

teaching and admonishing one another in all wisdom, singing psalms and hymns and spiritual songs,

with thankfulness in your hearts to God. 17 And whatever you do, in word or deed, do everything in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through him.

18 Wives, submit to your husbands, as is fitting in the Lord.

The problem of the Ephesians was that some of them got full of wine. The problem of the Colossians was that Christ was no longer in the center of their faith. Therefore Paul admonishes both of them with the appropriate words: Better full of God's Spirit than full of wine. Better having Christ in the center and being full of his words than following the deceitful philosophies of man (Col 2:8-9). But we can say the meaning of being full of the Spirit and of having the word of Christ richly dwelling in us is synonymous.

Interestingly, only Luke and Paul use the phrase of being full of the Holy Spirit in the New Testament. And Paul uses it only once; here in Eph 5:18. All the rest of the references belong to Luke in his Gospel and in Acts. Luke testifies that the reality of being filled with the Holy Spirit was known to all the apostles and the early church (see Acts 2:4; 4:31; and below). While the use of this exact phrase in the New Testament is almost exclusively Luke's, we must assume that the other authors would speak of the same reality using different words. One good example for this is Paul in Col 3:16, when compared with Eph 5:18. My impression is that John means the same when he speaks of us remaining in Christ and Christs words remaining in us in John 15:1-8, especially verses 3-5 and 7.

He is likened to ...

Wind or Storm The famous section in John 3:3-8 about the spiritual new birth is only fully understandable with the fact in mind that "pneuma" in Greek means both "spirit" and "wind"²⁷:

27. This is especially important for understanding the link between John 3:8 and the verses before. As we have seen above (subsection 6.1.1), the same is true for the Hebrew word *rûaḥ*, which also means both "spirit" and "wind".

3 Jesus answered him, “Truly, truly, I say to you, unless one is born again he cannot see the kingdom of God.” 4 Nicodemus said to him, “How can a man be born when he is old? Can he enter a second time into his mother's womb and be born?” 5 Jesus answered, “Truly, truly, I say to you, unless one is born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter the kingdom of God. 6 That which is born of the flesh is flesh, and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit. 7 Do not marvel that I said to you, ‘You must be born again.’ 8 The wind (pnēuma) blows where it wishes, and you hear its sound, but you do not know where it comes from or where it goes. So it is with everyone who is born of the Spirit (ἐκ τοῦ πνεύματος).²⁸”

Therefore it is not surprising that the Spirit came like a storm when he finally was poured out in Acts 2:1-4:

1 When the day of Pentecost arrived, they were all together in one place. 2 And suddenly there came from heaven a sound like a mighty rushing wind (pnōēs), and it filled the entire house where they were sitting²⁹. 3 And divided tongues as of fire appeared to them and rested on each one of them. 4 And they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak in other tongues as the Spirit gave them utterance³⁰.

28. τὸ πνεῦμα ὅπου θέλει πνεῖ, καὶ τὴν φωνὴν αὐτοῦ ἀκούεις, ἀλλ' οὐκ οἶδας πόθεν ἔρχεται καὶ ποῦ ὑπάγει• οὕτως ἐστὶν πᾶς ὁ γεγεννημένος ἐκ τοῦ πνεύματος.

29. καὶ ἐγένετο ἄφνω ἐκ τοῦ οὐρανοῦ ἦχος ὥσπερ φερομένης πνοῆς βιαίας καὶ ἐπλήρωσεν ὅλον τὸν οἶκον οὗ ἦσαν καθήμενοι

30. καὶ ἐπλήροθσαν πάντες πνεύματος ἁγίου, καὶ ἤρξαντο λαλεῖν ἐτέραις

Something Fluid, like Water

He is likened to purifying water in the baptism of the Holy Spirit. Every Gospel has one reference to the baptism in the Spirit. It is John the Baptist who introduces this term at a crucial point of his career. He talks of his baptism with water and himself, in contrast to the much stronger one [Jesus], who is about to come and baptize with the Spirit of God, with a much superior baptism (Matthew 3:11-12):

11 “I baptize you with water for repentance, but he who is coming after me is mightier than I, whose sandals I am not worthy to carry. He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and with fire³¹. 12 His winnowing fork is in his hand, and he will clear his threshing floor and gather his wheat into the barn, but the chaff he will burn with unquenchable fire.”

Mark puts the same statement of John like this (1:7-8):

7 And he preached, saying, “After me comes he who is mightier than I, the strap of whose sandals I am not worthy to stoop down and untie. 8 I have baptized you with water, but he will baptize you with the Holy Spirit.”

Luke (3:15-17) is the one who gives us the background of the same statement of John:

γλώσσαις καθὼς τὸ πνεῦμα ἐδίδου ἀποφθέγγεσθαι αὐτοῖς.

31. Ἐγὼ μὲν ὑμᾶς βαπτίζω ἐν ὕδατι εἰς μετάνοιαν• ὁ δὲ ὀπίσω μου ἐρχόμενος ἰσχυρότερός μου ἐστίν, οὗ οὐκ εἰμὶ ἱκανὸς τὰ ὑποδήματα βαστάσαι• αὐτὸς ὑμᾶς βαπτίσει ἐν πνεύματι ἁγίῳ καὶ πυρί•

15 As the people were in expectation, and all were questioning in their hearts concerning John, whether he might be the Christ, 16 John answered them all, saying, "I baptize you with water, but he who is mightier than I is coming, the strap of whose sandals I am not worthy to untie. He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and with fire. 17 His winnowing fork is in his hand, to clear his threshing floor and to gather the wheat into his barn, but the chaff he will burn with unquenchable fire."

So thanks to Luke we know why John the Baptist coined this phrase: Israel was about to make a great mistake regarding the person of John the Baptist, being impressed by his movement of water baptism. They had begun to think that he might be the Messiah. John was determined to erase this error from the start. For him it was unthinkable to mix up the Messiah and his own person. His baptism is only one of water, a sign of repentance, but not changing the heart from within. This would be done by the stronger one, who will be able to baptize with God's Spirit. This would be a powerful baptism changing and purifying the human heart from within like with fire.

Everyone who comes to John in repentance will receive the baptism in water as a sign that he is prepared to welcome the kingdom of God and the king of this kingdom, the Messiah. Likewise everyone coming to Jesus if he accepts him as Messiah, will receive the baptism of the Holy Spirit. The task of John is to baptize with water. The task of Jesus is to baptize with the Holy Spirit. We can trust that both fulfill their purpose. If we come to John repenting, he will baptize us with water. If we come to Christ believing, he will baptize us with the Holy Spirit. He will reject no one (John 6:37).

The apostle John gives us in his gospel the witness of John the Baptist about his own service and about Jesus (John 1:24-34):

24 (Now they had been sent from the Pharisees.)
 25 They asked him, "Then why are you baptizing, if you are neither the Christ, nor Elijah, nor the Prophet?"
 26 John answered them, "I baptize with water, but among you stands one you do not know, 27 even he who comes after me, the strap of whose sandal I am not worthy to untie." 28 These things took place in Bethany across the Jordan, where John was baptizing.
 29 The next day he saw Jesus coming toward him, and said, "Behold, the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world! 30 This is he of whom I said, 'After me comes a man who ranks before me, because he was before me.' 31 I myself did not know him, but for this purpose I came baptizing with water, that he might be revealed to Israel." 32 And John bore witness: "I saw the Spirit descend from heaven like a dove, and it remained on him. 33 I myself did not know him, but he who sent me to baptize with water said to me, 'He on whom you see the Spirit descend and remain, this is he who baptizes with the Holy Spirit.' 34 And I have seen and have borne witness that this is the Son of God."

The verses in John 1:26-27 and 33 taken together correspond to Mt 3:11-12, Mk 1:7-8, and Lk 3:16-17. But at the same time John gives us more background information.

In all 4 verses in the Gospels (Matthew 3:11; Mark 1:8; Luke 3:16 and John 1:33) two baptisms are compared (in water and in

Spirit) and two persons (John and Jesus). That is the key to understanding this phrase. In Matthew 11:9-14 Jesus gives this testimony about John:

9 What then did you go out to see? A prophet? Yes, I tell you, and more than a prophet. 10 This is he of whom it is written, “Behold, I send my messenger before your face, who will prepare your way before you.’ 11 Truly, I say to you, among those born of women there has arisen no one greater than John the Baptist. Yet the one who is least in the kingdom of heaven is greater than he. 12 From the days of John the Baptist until now the kingdom of heaven has suffered violence, and the violent take it by force. 13 For all the Prophets and the Law prophesied until John, 14 and if you are willing to accept it, he is Elijah who is to come.

The essence of what Jesus is telling us here, is that John and Jesus represent two times. The time of the old and the new covenant; the time of preparation and the time of fulfillment; the time of the waiting for the kingdom of God and the time of the arrived kingdom. In a way John belongs to the New Testament, the new covenant as well, being a link between the old and the new. This is what makes him so great. There is no greater prophet than him. Moses and Elijah might be his equal, but they are not greater. Within the New Testament his role is the role of preparing the way for the Lord. But he is not the Lord. He is the friend of the bridegroom, but not the bridegroom (John 3:29). As the last one in the long line of prophets who have prepared the way for the Messiah, John the Baptist stands up and stands out; not as a weakling amongst the prophets, but as the one in comparison to whom no other can claim to be superior.

In him the power of the Old Testament prophecy stands up in full force, pointing to Jesus Christ, exclaiming (John 1:29.33):

Behold, the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world! ... this is he who baptizes with the Holy Spirit.

We should also note what Jesus has testified (Matthew 11:11):

Truly, I say to you, among those born of women there has arisen no one greater than John the Baptist. Yet the one who is least in the kingdom of heaven is greater than he.

According to John 3:3-5 it is necessary to be born again to become a citizen of the kingdom of God. Everyone who is born again by the Spirit of God, even the smallest Christian in a church service, has tasted a greater grace than anyone under the Old Covenant (see 1 Peter 1:10-12).

More than one hundred years ago people began using the term "baptism in the Holy Spirit" to make a distinction between weaker and stronger Christians, and not between people still under the Old Covenant and people under the New Covenant. The thinking is that some Christians have received this baptism in the Holy Spirit and fire, and others have not. They understand that some Christians have "only" been born again, but they have not received the baptism in the Holy Spirit yet. They say that those with the baptism of the Holy Spirit lead a more powerful and victorious life and are more spiritual than those who have only received Jesus Christ as their Saviour, but have not been baptized in the Spirit.

This understanding is not according to Scripture as we will see. The term "to baptize in the (Holy) Spirit" is not used to make a dis-

tion between weaker and stronger Christians in the New Testament. A look at all seven contexts will show this (Matthew 3:11; Mark 1:8; Luke 3:16; John 1:33; Acts 1:5; 11:16; 1 Cor 12:13).

We have already had a look at the four texts in the Gospels. There John uses this term to make a distinction between himself and Jesus, between his followers and the future followers of Jesus. His disciples are only baptized in water; the disciples of Christ will be baptized in the Holy Spirit.

The two verses in Acts give the same idea of comparison between the baptism of John on the one hand and the baptism in the Spirit on the other. In Acts 1:4-5 Jesus tells the disciples what will happen on Pentecost in Acts 2:

4 And while staying with them he ordered them not to depart from Jerusalem, but to wait for the promise of the Father, which, he said, “you heard from me; 5 for John baptized with water, but you will be baptized with the Holy Spirit not many days from now.”

When this prophecy of Jesus was fulfilled, the Holy Spirit was given to all (Acts 2:3-4). There was no distinction related to this phrase between weaker and stronger Christians. The same is true for Acts 11:16. There this phrase is used to put an emphasis on the unity of all believers, those from the Jews on the one hand, and those from the Gentiles on the other. In Acts 10:43-44 Peter had seen how the Holy Spirit fell on all Gentiles in the house of Cornelius who heard and believed the Good News that Jesus Christ died for all nations to forgive their sins. Afterwards Peter had been strongly criticized for eating with uncircumcised Gentiles. To defend himself Peter only had to tell what God had done to bring this about. And then Peter says looking back on Acts 10 (see Acts 11:15-17):

15 As I began to speak, the Holy Spirit fell on them just as on us at the beginning. 16 And I remembered the word of the Lord, how he said, 'John baptized with water, but you will be baptized with the Holy Spirit.'³² 17 If then God gave the same gift to them as he gave to us when we believed in the Lord Jesus Christ, who was I that I could stand in God's way?"

Peters account had a powerful impact (Acts 11:18):

When they heard these things they fell silent. And they glorified God, saying, "Then to the Gentiles also God has granted repentance that leads to life."

Here again the phrase "the baptism in the Holy Spirit" is not used to distinguish between weaker and stronger Christians but to emphasize the spiritual unity of all, be they Jews or Gentiles. They all have one spiritual experience and are united by having received the same Holy Spirit.

The last section has an even stronger emphasis on unity (1 Cor 12:11-14):

11 All these are empowered by one and the same Spirit, who apportions to each one individually as he wills. 12 For just as the body is one and has many members, and all the members of the body, though many, are one body, so it is with Christ. 13 For in one Spirit we were all baptized into one body — Jews or Greeks, slaves or free — and all were made to drink

32. ἐμνήσθην δὲ τοῦ ῥήματος τοῦ κυρίου ὡς ἔλεγεν• Ἰωάννης μὲν ἐβάπτισεν ὕδατι, ὑμεῖς δὲ βαπτισθήσεσθε ἐν πνεύματι ἁγίῳ.

of one Spirit.³³ 14 For the body does not consist of one member but of many.

The Holy Spirit gives every believer at least one gift. Using this gift he works as a member of the body of Christ which is made up of many different Christians exercising many different spiritual gifts. But all are one in Christ, one body. The way to become part of the body of Christ is to be baptized in the Spirit [ěň hěni pněmati ... ěbaptishēměň]. Without this baptism in God's Spirit you can not belong to the body of Christ.

Therefore the baptism in the Spirit belongs to the start of the Christian life. It is not a later experience or a "second blessing". It is a first blessing. All believers in Corinth had been baptized in the Holy Spirit, but at the same time Paul can say that most of them are still at the start of their spiritual development (1 Cor 3:1-4):

1 But I, brothers, could not address you as spiritual people, but as people of the flesh, as infants in Christ. 2 I fed you with milk, not solid food, for you were not ready for it. And even now you are not yet ready, 3 for you are still of the flesh. For while there is jealousy and strife among you, are you not of the flesh and behaving only in a human way? 4 For when one says, "I follow Paul," and another, "I follow Apollos," are you not being merely human?

Paul sees most of the believers in Corinth as "babies" in Christ, still in need of milk and not being able to digest solid food. It is clear that for Paul the baptism in the Spirit is not the start of a higher

33. καὶ γὰρ ἐν ἐνὶ πνεύματι ἡμεῖς πάντες εἰς ἓν σῶμα ἐβαπτίσθημεν, εἴτε Ἰουδαῖοι εἴτε Ἕλληνες, εἴτε δούλοι εἴτε ἐλεύθεροι, καὶ πάντες ἐν πνεῦμα ἐποτίσθημεν.

and more powerful and fruitful spiritual life. It is simply like being born again; the very start of the spiritual life.

It is strange that an expression Paul has used to put an emphasis on the unity of all believers has been used in a different sense causing many splits and divisions in the Church. This should teach us the lesson that we should try to use the biblical words in their biblical sense, understood within the biblical context.

He is likened to something fluid in the phrases of being full of the Holy Spirit. In the New Testament there are only two writers who speak of being filled with the Holy Spirit: Paul, once, in Ephesians 5:18. All the rest of the passages are from Luke. Only a few people are said to be full of the Holy Spirit "plērēs pnēmatōs hagiōu" ³⁴ using it as an adjective: Jesus, the seven deacons of Acts 6 including Stephen, and Barnabas. Luke tells us about Jesus (Luke 4:1-2):

1 And Jesus, full of the Holy Spirit, returned from the Jordan and was led by the Spirit in the wilderness³⁵ 2 for forty days, being tempted by the devil. And he ate nothing during those days. And when they were ended, he was hungry.

When there were problems in the early church in Jerusalem, because Greek speaking widows were overlooked in the social care of the church, the twelve apostles suggested (Acts 6:3-6):

3 Therefore, brothers, pick out from among you seven men of good repute, full of the Spirit and of

34. πλήρης πνεύματος ἁγίου

35. Ἰησοῦς δὲ πλήρης πνεύματος ἁγίου ὑπέστρεψεν ἀπὸ τοῦ Ἰορδάνου, καὶ ἦγετο ἐν τῷ πνεύματι ἐν τῇ ἐρήμῳ

wisdom, whom we will appoint to this duty³⁶. 4 But we will devote ourselves to prayer and to the ministry of the word.” 5 And what they said pleased the whole gathering, and they chose Stephen, a man full of faith and of the Holy Spirit, and Philip, and Prochorus, and Nicanor, and Timon, and Parmenas, and Nicolaus, a proselyte of Antioch³⁷. 6 These they set before the apostles, and they prayed and laid their hands on them.

In a way Luke tells us three times that Stephen was "full of the Spirit": in Acts 6:3 being one of the seven who are elected according to this qualification, then in Acts 6:5, again singling him out as "a man full of faith and of the Holy Spirit", and then finally in Acts 7:55-56 before he is martyred:

55 But he, full of the Holy Spirit, gazed into heaven and saw the glory of God, and Jesus standing at the right hand of God³⁸. 56 And he said, "Behold, I see the heavens opened, and the Son of Man standing at the right hand of God."

The last person in the New Testament described as being "full of the Holy Spirit" is Barnabas (Acts 11:19-24):

19 Now those who were scattered because of the persecution that arose over Stephen traveled as far as

36. ἐπισκέψασθε δέ, ἀδελφοί, ἄνδρας ἐξ ὑμῶν μαρτυρουμένους ἐπὶ πλήρεις πνεύματος καὶ σοφίας, οὓς καταστήσομεν ἐπὶ τῆς χρείας ταύτης•

37. καὶ ἤρεσεν ὁ λόγος ἐνώπιον παντὸς τοῦ πλήθους, καὶ ἐξελέξαντο Στέφανον, ἄνδρα πλήρης πίστεως καὶ πνεύματος ἁγίου, καὶ Φίλιππον καὶ Πρόχορον καὶ Νικάνορα καὶ Τίμωνα καὶ Παρμενᾶν καὶ Νικόλαον προσήλυτον Ἀντιοχείας,

38. ὑπάρχων δὲ πλήρης πνεύματος ἁγίου ἀτενίσας εἰς τὸν οὐρανὸν εἶδεν δόξαν θεοῦ καὶ Ἰησοῦν ἐστῶτα ἐκ δεξιῶν τοῦ θεοῦ

Phoenicia and Cyprus and Antioch, speaking the word to no one except Jews. 20 But there were some of them, men of Cyprus and Cyrene, who on coming to Antioch spoke to the Hellenists also, preaching the Lord Jesus. 21 And the hand of the Lord was with them, and a great number who believed turned to the Lord. 22 The report of this came to the ears of the church in Jerusalem, and they sent Barnabas to Antioch. 23 When he came and saw the grace of God, he was glad, and he exhorted them all to remain faithful to the Lord with steadfast purpose, 24 for he was a good man, full of the Holy Spirit and of faith. And a great many people were added to the Lord³⁹.

We can assume that the church in Jerusalem has sent Barnabas into the revival area of Antioch because he was known to be a "good man, and full of the Holy Spirit and of faith". It was a great challenge, being the first church in history with a significant number of Gentile believers, who were probably the majority. A man full of the Spirit was a good asset to guide that church. It is remarkable that he immediately thought of Paul as being the right man for such a situation (see Acts 11:25-26; 9:26-28; 13:1-4).

While the adjectival phrase, "full of the Holy Spirit", seems to point to a continuous state of fullness, the different verbal constructions have differing significance.⁴⁰ The Aorist forms indicate

39. ὅτι ἦν ἀνὴρ ἀγαθὸς καὶ πλήρης πνεύματος ἁγίου καὶ πίστεως. καὶ προσετέθη ὄχλος ἰκανὸς τῷ κυρίῳ.

40. Luke 1:15 fut. pass. from πίμπλημι fill Zerwick and Grosvenor, An Analysis of the Greek New Testament; Luke 1:41 aor. pass. from πίμπλημι fill *ibid.*; Luke 1:67 aor. pass. from πίμπλημι fill like 1:41; Acts 2:4 all 120 present believers; aor. pass. from πίμπλημι fill *ibid.*; Acts 4:8 Peter;

a certain point in time when somebody is filled with the Holy Spirit to say something. The forms of the present tense stem speak of being filled with the Holy Spirit continuously or repeatedly.

The first time a verbal form is used in the New Testament it is in the future passive tense and is a promise of the angel Gabriel for the future son of Zacharias, John the Baptist (Luke 1:14-17):

14 And you will have joy and gladness, and many will rejoice at his birth, 15 for he will be great before the Lord. And he must not drink wine or strong drink, and he will be filled with the Holy Spirit, even from his mother's womb⁴¹. 16 And he will turn many of the children of Israel to the Lord their God, 17 and he will go before him in the spirit and power of Elijah, to turn the hearts of the fathers to the children, and the disobedient to the wisdom of the just, to make ready for the Lord a people prepared."

The powerful service of John the Baptist as a prophet like Elijah is related to his being filled with the Holy Spirit, even from his mother's womb (see Luke 1:39-45), but of course later as well:

39 In those days Mary arose and went with haste into the hill country, to a town in Judah, 40 and she

aor. ptc. pass. from πίμπλημι fill Zerwick and Grosvenor, *An Analysis of the Greek New Testament*; Acts 4:31 all; aor. pass. from πίμπλημι fill *ibid.*; Acts 9:17 Paul; aor. subj. pass. πίμπλημι τινος fill with *ibid.*; Acts 13:9 Paul; aor. ptc. pass. from πίμπλημι fill *ibid.*; Acts 13:52 the disciples in Antioch in Pisidia; impf. pass. from πληρώω fill; Eph 5:18 all believers should be filled; impv. pass. from πληρώω let yourselves be filled *ibid.*

41. ἔσται γὰρ μέγας ἐνώπιον τοῦ κυρίου, καὶ οἶνον καὶ σίκερα οὐ μὴ πίη, καὶ πνεύματος ἁγίου πλησθήσεται ἔτι ἐκ κοιλίας μητρὸς αὐτοῦ

entered the house of Zechariah and greeted Elizabeth.
 41 And when Elizabeth heard the greeting of Mary,
 the baby leaped in her womb. And Elizabeth was
 filled with the Holy Spirit, 42 and she exclaimed with
 a loud cry, “Blessed are you among women, and blessed
 is the fruit of your womb⁴²! 43 And why is this granted
 to me that the mother of my Lord should come to me?
 44 For behold, when the sound of your greeting came
 to my ears, the baby in my womb leaped for joy. 45
 And blessed is she who believed that there would be a
 fulfillment of what was spoken to her from the Lord.”

Elizabeth is filled with the Holy Spirit (ἐπλήσθη, Aorist) for this special occasion to speak the words noted for us in 1:42-45. Her speech has to be understood as an inspired speech explaining first to Mary and then to us, what the leaping of the baby in her womb meant: John even as a baby hearing the voice of Mary, mother of Jesus, has recognized in her, through the Holy Spirit (Luke 1:15), the mother of his Lord and answered with joy. His mother Elizabeth filled by the Holy Spirit is able to share the faith and joy of her son with Mary and with us.

The next in line in Luke's infancy narrative to be filled with the Holy Spirit is John's father (Luke 1:67-69):

67 And his father Zechariah was filled with the
 Holy Spirit and prophesied, saying, 68 “Blessed be
 the Lord God of Israel, for he has visited and redeemed

42. 41 καὶ ἐγένετο ὡς ἤκουσεν τὸν ἀσπασμὸν τῆς Μαρίας ἢ Ἑλισάβετ, ἐσκίρτησεν τὸ βρέφος ἐν τῇ κοιλίᾳ αὐτῆς, καὶ ἐπλήσθη πνεύματος ἁγίου ἢ Ἑλισάβετ, 42 καὶ ἀνεφώνησεν κραυγὴ μεγάλη καὶ εἶπεν• Εὐλογημένη σὺ ἐν γυναιξίν, καὶ εὐλογημένος ὁ καρπὸς τῆς κοιλίας σου.

his people 69 and has raised up a horn of salvation for us in the house of his servant David...

Here again it is in the Aorist form showing us that Zacharias was filled with the Spirit at this moment in time to prophesy what we have recorded in Luke 1:68-79. In short, Zacharias praises God that he has given them John to be a prophet preparing the way for the Messiah soon to come.

He is likened to something fluid in the outpouring of the spirit. Peter quotes the prophet Joel 2:28f in his sermon in Acts 2:17-18 and affirms Joel's message as being fulfilled now in the events of Pentecost:

17 And in the last days it shall be, God declares,
that I will pour out my Spirit on all flesh,
and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy,
and your young men shall see visions,
and your old men shall dream dreams;
18 even on my male servants and female servants
in those days I will pour out my Spirit,
and they shall prophesy.

That Peter understood the outpouring of God's Spirit on the day of Pentecost as the fulfilment of Joel 2:28f is also implied in his words in Acts 2:33:

Being therefore exalted at the right hand of God,
and having received from the Father the promise of
the Holy Spirit, **he has poured out** this that you yourselves are seeing and hearing⁴³.

43. τῇ δεξιᾷ οὖν τοῦ θεοῦ ὑψωθείς τὴν τε ἐπαγγελίαν τοῦ πνεύματος τοῦ ἁγίου λαβὼν παρὰ τοῦ πατρὸς ἐξέχεεν τοῦτο ὃ ὑμεῖς βλέπετε καὶ ἀκούετε.

The bold printed words (emphasis mine) identify Jesus with the Lord of Joel 2:28f who had promised to pour out his spirit.

By using the same term in Acts 10:45 Luke makes the experience of the household of Cornelius parallel to the experience of the Apostles and believers in the second chapter:

And the believers from among the circumcised who had come with Peter were amazed, because the gift of the Holy Spirit was poured out even on the Gentiles.

Paul combines the outpouring of God's love with the Holy Spirit (Rom 5:5):

... and hope does not put us to shame, because God's love has been poured into our hearts through the Holy Spirit who has been given to us.

He is likened to something fluid which is being given to drink. Paul states that all believers receive the Spirit as something to drink (1 Cor 12:13):

For in one Spirit we were all baptized into one body—Jews or Greeks, slaves or free—and all were made to drink of one Spirit.

That Paul was thinking of Israel in the wilderness receiving water from the rock we can gather from chapter 10 in the same letter (1 Cor 10:1-4):

1 I want you to know, brothers, that our fathers were all under the cloud, and all passed through the sea, 2 and all were baptized into Moses in the cloud

and in the sea, 3 and all ate the same spiritual food, 4 and all drank the same spiritual drink. For they drank from the spiritual Rock that followed them, and the Rock was Christ. 5 Nevertheless, with most of them God was not pleased, for they were overthrown in the wilderness.

The same identification of Jesus Christ as the rock in the wilderness from which living waters burst forth seems to be the meaning in John 7:37-39:

37 On the last day of the feast, the great day, Jesus stood up and cried out, "If anyone thirsts, let him come to me and drink. 38 Whoever believes in me, as the Scripture has said, 'Out of his heart will flow rivers of living water.'" 39 Now this he said about the Spirit, whom those who believed in him were to receive, for as yet the Spirit had not been given, because Jesus was not yet glorified.

John explains in 7:39 that the glorification of Jesus has to happen first, before the Holy Spirit can be received as life giving water. In John this includes the death of Jesus, his resurrection and going to the Father (12:23-24.31-32; 13:31-32; 16:5-7). In the picture of the rock in the wilderness: Moses first had to strike the rock and then the waters could burst forth (Exodus 17:5-6; compare Isaiah 48:21; 41:18; 44:3-5; 12:3; 32:15; 55:1-4). Jesus first had to be hit by his sufferings at the cross and then the living water could come forth (John 19:34; 1 John 5:5-8). John 7:39 helps us to understand the gift of the living water in John 4:10-14 as the gift of the Holy Spirit:

10 Jesus answered her, "If you knew the gift of God, and who it is that is saying to you, 'Give me

a drink,' you would have asked him, and he would have given you living water." 11 The woman said to him, "Sir, you have nothing to draw water with, and the well is deep. Where do you get that living water? 12 Are you greater than our father Jacob? He gave us the well and drank from it himself, as did his sons and his livestock." 13 Jesus said to her, "Everyone who drinks of this water will be thirsty again, 14 but whoever drinks of the water that I will give him will never be thirsty forever. The water that I will give him will become in him a spring of water welling up to eternal life."

The woman could misunderstand Jesus, because the term "living water" was used for flowing water or fresh water, in contrast to standing water or stale water. Jesus took this well known phrase and filled it with a new meaning.

A very similar phrase is used twice in John's other big book, the Revelation. There he speaks of "water of life", which the redeemed drink in the New Jerusalem (7:16-17):

16 They shall hunger no more, neither thirst anymore;
the sun shall not strike them, nor any scorching heat.
17 For the Lamb in the midst of the throne will be
their shepherd,
and he will guide them to springs of living water,
and God will wipe away every tear from their eyes.

When the New Jerusalem is revealed in Rv 21-22, the water of life is mentioned more than once (21:6):

And he said to me, "It is done! I am the Alpha and the Omega, the beginning and the end. To the thirsty

I will give from the spring of the water of life without payment.

In 22:1-2 we see the river of life nourishing the tree of life:

1 Then the angel showed me the river of the water of life, bright as crystal, flowing from the throne of God and of the Lamb 2 through the middle of the street of the city; also, on either side of the river, the tree of life with its twelve kinds of fruit, yielding its fruit each month. The leaves of the tree were for the healing of the nations.

The Old Testament background for this passage is Ezekiel 47 (see especially verse 12). For Rv 7:16-17 compare Is 49:10. At the end of Revelation (22:17) there is an invitation similar to that in John 7:37⁴⁴ to drink from the water of life:

The Spirit and the Bride say, "Come." And let the one who hears say, "Come." And let the one who is thirsty come; let the one who desires take the water of life without price.

44. Compare Revelation 22:17:

καὶ τὸ πνεῦμα καὶ ἡ νύμφη λέγουσιν• Ἔρχου•

καὶ ὁ ἀκούων εἰπάτω• Ἔρχου•

καὶ ὁ διψῶν ἐρχέσθω, ὁ θέλων λαβέτω ὕδωρ ζωῆς δωρεάν.

with John 7:37-38:

37 Ἐν δὲ τῇ ἑσχάτῃ ἡμέρᾳ τῇ μεγάλῃ τῆς ἑορτῆς εἰστήκει ὁ Ἰησοῦς, καὶ ἔκραξεν λέγων•

Ἐάν τις διψᾷ ἐρχέσθω πρὸς με

καὶ πινέτω. 38 ὁ πιστεύων εἰς ἐμέ,

καθὼς εἶπεν ἡ γραφή,

ποταμοὶ ἐκ τῆς κοιλίας αὐτοῦ ῥεύσουσιν ὕδατος ζῶντος.

He is likened to oil. This is implied in Acts 10:37-38 where Peter preaches about Jesus in the house of the centurion Cornelius:

37 You yourselves know what happened throughout all Judea, beginning from Galilee after the baptism that John proclaimed: 38 how God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Spirit and with power. He went about doing good and healing all who were oppressed by the devil, for God was with him⁴⁵.

When John speaks of the anointing, he also means the Holy Spirit (1 John 2:20-21.26-27):

20 But you have been anointed by the Holy One, and you all have knowledge⁴⁶. 21 I write to you, not because you do not know the truth, but because you know it, and because no lie is of the truth... 26 I write these things to you about those who are trying to deceive you. 27 But the anointing that you received from him abides in you, and you have no need that anyone should teach you. But as his anointing teaches you about everything — and is true and is no lie, just as it has taught you — abide in him⁴⁷.

This anointing is something all believers have received and because of this they have a protection and remain faithful to Jesus ("abide in

45. Ἰησοῦν τὸν ἀπὸ Ναζαρέθ, ὡς ἔχρισεν αὐτὸν ὁ θεὸς πνεύματι ἁγίῳ καὶ δυνάμει, ὃς διῆλθεν ἐνεργειῶν καὶ ἰώμενος πάντας τοὺς καταδυναστευομένους ὑπὸ τοῦ διαβόλου, ὅτι ὁ θεὸς ἦν μετ' αὐτοῦ•

46. καὶ ὑμεῖς χρίσμα ἔχετε ἀπὸ τοῦ ἁγίου καὶ οἴδατε πάντες•

47. καὶ ὑμεῖς τὸ χρίσμα ὃ ἐλάβετε ἀπ' αὐτοῦ μένει ἐν ὑμῖν, καὶ οὐ χρειαν ἔχετε ἵνα τις διδάσκῃ ὑμᾶς• ἀλλ' ὡς τὸ αὐτοῦ χρίσμα διδάσκει ὑμᾶς περὶ πάντων, καὶ ἀληθὲς ἐστὶν καὶ οὐκ ἔστιν ψεῦδος, καὶ καθὼς ἐδίδαξεν ὑμᾶς, μένετε ἐν αὐτῷ.

him"). Because they are anointed with the Holy Spirit they know what is true and what is false. They have spiritual discernment. In the Old Testament there was the anointment of someone to be a high priest, a king, or a prophet. Whoever is anointed in the New Covenant has become a child of God and is separate from the world (1 John 3:1):

See what kind of love the Father has given to us, that we should be called children of God; and so we are. The reason why the world does not know us is that it did not know him.

The power of the anointment makes the person holy, sets him aside for his calling, to be a prophet, a king, a high priest or in our case a member of the family of God with kingship and priesthood included (Rv 5:10; 1 Peter 2:9). Therefore we should not use the phrase "fresh anointment". It leads to a misunderstanding as though God's anointment could become stale or corrupted like vegetables and fruit that are no longer fresh. The holy anointment is done once and for all and has not to be repeated. David was anointed three times, but the decisive one was the first, done by the prophet Samuel. This was the divine one. The second by the tribe of Judah and the third by all of Israel was only a recognition of the first one that David was God's chosen and anointed king. We can only be born again once, once be baptized with the Holy Spirit and once be anointed to become a member of the family of God. All three phrases point to one and the same initial spiritual experience of being incorporated in Christ. This is what Paul means in 2 Cor 1:21-22:

21 And it is God who establishes us with you in Christ, and has anointed us, 22 and who has also put his seal

on us and given us his Spirit in our hearts as a guarantee⁴⁸.

He is likened to a seal with which the believers are sealed. In the above quoted passage of 2 Cor 1:21-22 Paul combines the being anointed and being sealed with the Holy Spirit. He uses the seal of the Holy Spirit again in Ephesians 1:13-14:

13 In him you also, when you heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation, and believed in him, were sealed with the promised Holy Spirit, 14 who is the guarantee of our inheritance until we acquire possession of it, to the praise of his glory⁴⁹.

The seal includes the idea of protection. Everyone who has been sealed with the Spirit, is set aside by the special protecting force of God so that he will be redeemed on the day of redemption. This idea is repeated in Eph 4:30-31:

30 And do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God, by whom you were sealed for the day of redemption⁵⁰.
31 Let all bitterness and wrath and anger and clamor and slander be put away from you, along with all malice.

48. 21 ὁ δὲ βεβαιῶν ἡμᾶς σὺν ὑμῖν εἰς Χριστὸν καὶ χρίσας ἡμᾶς θεός, 22 ὁ καὶ σφραγισάμενος ἡμᾶς καὶ δοὺς τὸν ἀρραβῶνα τοῦ πνεύματος ἐν ταῖς καρδίαις ἡμῶν.

49. 13 ἐν ᾧ καὶ ὑμεῖς ἀκούσαντες τὸν λόγον τῆς ἀληθείας, τὸ εὐαγγέλιον τῆς σωτηρίας ὑμῶν, ἐν ᾧ καὶ πιστεύσαντες ἐσφραγίσθητε τῷ πνεύματι τῆς ἐπαγγελίας τῷ ἁγίῳ, 14 ὃ ἐστὶν ἀρραβὼν τῆς κληρονομίας ἡμῶν, εἰς ἀπολύτρωσιν τῆς περιποιήσεως, εἰς ἔπαινον τῆς δόξης αὐτοῦ.

50. καὶ μὴ λυπεῖτε τὸ πνεῦμα τὸ ἅγιον τοῦ θεοῦ, ἐν ᾧ ἐσφραγίσθητε εἰς ἡμέραν ἀπολύτρωσεως.

We are sealed by the Holy Spirit so that He stays with us at all times, being the guarantee of our protection. It is not fair that we grieve Him while He protects us. Therefore there should be no bitterness and slander in our heart but rather kindness and a forgiving attitude.

He is likened to an advance payment as assurance of the rest to be given. We have heard Paul already in 2 Cor 1:21-22:

21 And it is God who establishes us with you in Christ, and has anointed us, 22 and who has also put his seal on us and given us his Spirit in our hearts as a guarantee.

The word translated with "as a guarantee" is *arrabōn*⁵¹. It could be translated "as a pledge". This means you give somebody money as a down payment so that he is sure you are in earnest and that the rest will come as well. So the Spirit is given to us as a present and an assurance to us that all the rest of God's salvation and glory will come. The idea is repeated in the same letter in 5:4-8:

4 For while we are still in this tent, we groan, being burdened—not that we would be unclothed, but that we would be further clothed, so that what is mortal may be swallowed up by life. 5 He who has prepared us for this very thing is God, who has given us the Spirit as a guarantee⁵². 6 So we are always of good courage. We know that while we are at home in the body we are away from the Lord, 7 for we walk by

51. ἀρραβὼν

52. ὁ δὲ κατεργασάμενος ἡμᾶς εἰς αὐτὸ τοῦτο θεός, ὁ δοὺς ἡμῖν τὸν ἀρραβῶνα τοῦ πνεύματος.

faith, not by sight. 8 Yes, we are of good courage, and we would rather be away from the body and at home with the Lord.

Because of the powerful influence of the Holy Spirit as a pledge in our hearts, we can carry on and endure all sufferings knowing that finally we will be home with the Lord for ever. The last step of our journey will bring us home.

He is likened to fire. John the Baptist says in Mt 3:11-12:

11 “I baptize you with water for repentance, but he who is coming after me is mightier than I, whose sandals I am not worthy to carry. He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and with fire. 12 His winnowing fork is in his hand, and he will clear his threshing floor and gather his wheat into the barn, but the chaff he will burn with unquenchable fire.”

The passage in Luke 3:16-17 is very similar. The fire consumes everything which is not fit for God's kingdom, everything which is not spiritual but carnal. The wheat is gathered, the chaff is burnt. We can easily imagine how this fire has to continue throughout our lifetime. It is the refiner's fire and its aim is to make us more like Jesus or as in the picture of the trees: To make us people who bring forth good fruit (Matthew 3:8-10). In Luke 12:49-50 Jesus explains:

49 “I came to cast fire on the earth, and would that it were already kindled! 50 I have a baptism to be baptized with, and how great is my distress until it is accomplished!

We can combine this passage Luke 3:16-17, and Acts 2:1-4 to identify the fire and the baptism Jesus is talking about: The fire is the coming of the Holy Spirit on Pentecost. The baptism is a baptism into suffering, Jesus being tortured, crucified, and murdered, carrying the sin of all mankind.

Paul speaks of the Holy Spirit as a fire not to be quenched (1 Thes 5:19-22):

19 Do not quench the Spirit⁵³. 20 Do not despise prophecies, 21 but test everything; hold fast what is good. 22 Abstain from every form of evil.

Viewed in this context Paul seems to mean that we should give the Holy Spirit room in our service, not quenching his activities. But at the same time we should be on our guard. We should allow prophetic utterances, but we must examine them and only accept what is good and reject everything that is bad.

He is likened to tongues of fire. Luke writes about the coming of the Holy Spirit (Acts 2:1-4):

1 When the day of Pentecost arrived, they were all together in one place. 2 And suddenly there came from heaven a sound like a mighty rushing wind, and it filled the entire house where they were sitting. 3 And divided tongues as of fire appeared to them and rested on each one of them. 4 And they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak in other tongues as the Spirit gave them utterance.

53. τὸ πνεῦμα μὴ σβέννυτε

This text continues to show the Holy Spirit as fire, but it also adds a new element, the words "tongues as of fire". The word tongues in Greek does not only denote the part of the body called "the tongue", but the word also means "language", which is important in this chapter. The nearly 120 believers receive the gift to speak languages they have never learned so that people of all different areas and cultures can understand them, praising God (2:4-12). These languages of Pentecost underline the worldwide impact of this outpouring of God's Spirit on "all flesh".

Pentecost is the start of the gathering of the people of all nations and languages as the people of God. Pentecost corresponds to Genesis 11 and 12. In Genesis 11:1ff God had given the many languages to stop mankind from storming heaven by building the tower of Babylon. As a result mankind was also divided. In Genesis 12:1ff God had called one man through whose offspring he would bless all nations. They also would be united again by the unique source of the blessings, the son of Abraham, the coming Messiah. Pentecost presents Jesus as this Messiah, the hope for all the world (Acts 1:7-8; 2:32-40). The fire started by this outpouring of the Spirit on all flesh has "all flesh" as its target and will spread to all nations without being stopped.

He is likened to a dove. We see this likeness in all four Gospels. Mt 3:16-17:

16 And when Jesus was baptized, immediately he went up from the water, and behold, the heavens were opened to him, and he saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove and coming to rest on him; 17 and behold, a voice from heaven said, "This is my beloved Son, with whom I am well pleased."

Luke 3:21-22:

21 Now when all the people were baptized, and when Jesus also had been baptized and was praying, the heavens were opened, 22 and the Holy Spirit descended on him in bodily form, like a dove; and a voice came from heaven, "You are my beloved Son; with you I am well pleased."

Mark 1:10-11:

10 And when he came up out of the water, immediately he saw the heavens opening and the Spirit descending on him like a dove. 11 And a voice came from heaven, "You are my beloved Son; with you I am well pleased."

John 1:29-34:

29 The next day he saw Jesus coming toward him, and said, "Behold, the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world! 30 This is he of whom I said, 'After me comes a man who ranks before me, because he was before me.' 31 I myself did not know him, but for this purpose I came baptizing with water, that he might be revealed to Israel." 32 And John bore witness: "I saw the Spirit descend from heaven like a dove, and it remained on him. 33 I myself did not know him, but he who sent me to baptize with water said to me, 'He on whom you see the Spirit descend and remain, this is he who baptizes with the Holy Spirit.' 34 And I have seen and have borne witness that this is the Son of God."

In Mark and Luke the voice of God speaking from heaven is directed towards Jesus ("You..."). In Matthew God the father proclaims about Jesus "This is My beloved Son" so that we could think that perhaps others might have heard the voice as well, especially John the Baptist who had just baptized him. This idea becomes certainty when we read John's testimony that he did not know who the Messiah would be, but God had given him a sign. This sign was the coming down and remaining of the Spirit on the Messiah. When John witnessed the coming of God's Spirit as a dove on Jesus, John proclaimed: "And I have seen and have borne witness that this is the Son of God." The baptism of Jesus was not only a special experience for Jesus, but also a turning point in the ministry of John the Baptist. He started to point to Jesus of Nazareth as the Son of God (compare the voice from heaven) and as the "lamb of God". The voice from heaven had combined two verses of the Old Testament: Psalm 2:7 and Is 42:1. I think that John the Baptist had heard this voice and understood the significance of it. Psalm 2 is about the Messiah as the Son of God. Is 42:1ff starts a series in Isaiah about the "servant of the Lord" which is continued in 49:1ff; 50:4ff and 52:13-53:12. John the Baptist understood his own service set against the background of the book of Isaiah (see John 1:23). We can assume that he knew this prophetic book very well. God's voice from heaven taught John the Baptist that Jesus was not only the Son of God according to Psalm 2, but also the lamb of God according to Is 53:6-7.

What role does the dove play in all this? Just as the lamb could be a pure sacrifice animal and was worthy to become a picture of Jesus as the lamb of God, so was the dove a pure animal which could be used for sacrifices (see Luke 2:24; compare Matthew 10:16). This makes it worthy to be a parable for the Holy Spirit. Some point to Genesis 1:2 which talks of the Spirit of God perhaps be-

having similar to a bird (not especially a dove):

The earth was without form and void, and darkness
was over the face of the deep. And the Spirit of God
was hovering over the face of the waters.

The Hebrew verb which is translated here with "was hovering over" is also used for an eagle in Dt 32:11.

What I would like to do to answer the question of the dove, is to first have a look at the crucial points of our context and then look to the rest of the Bible for help. The main persons in all four Gospel contexts are the same: God the father, the Son, the Holy Spirit and John the Baptist who was also a prophet. What are the main actions? There are two actions: The baptism of Jesus on the one hand and his identification as the Son of God, the anointed Messiah, on the other. To understand the picture of the dove, we have to take all this into account.

John the Baptist is part of this. The summary of his prophetic message was (Matthew 3:2):

“Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand.”

The same sentence could also be used as a summary of the preaching of Jesus (Matthew 4:17). The idea is an eschatological one: The coming of the kingdom of heaven or of God is the end of this world and the beginning of a new world and a new kingdom.⁵⁴

John understood his baptism as an expression of an eschatological movement waiting for the kingdom of God. Or expressed in the words of Isaiah 40: John's baptism was a preparation of the believer for the coming of God. It was a preparation of the way for

54. See Daniel 2:44 and 7:13-14.27; Matthew 24:35; 25:34.

the Lord to visit Israel. The people who repent and prepare themselves are saved; the others are blown away by God's "Spirit" or "scorching hot wind" (Is 40:7). This world comes to an end, and the coming of the kingdom of God starts the new world. And baptism is a sign of separation between the two worlds, the kingdoms of this world and the kingdom of the world to come.

Peter, who was both, a disciple of John the Baptist and secondly a disciple of Jesus, gives us an important piece of information about this aspect of baptism (1 Pt 3:18-22):

18 For Christ also suffered once for sins, the righteous for the unrighteous, that he might bring us to God, being put to death in the flesh but made alive in the spirit, 19 in which he went and proclaimed to the spirits in prison, 20 because they formerly did not obey, when God's patience waited in the days of Noah, while the ark was being prepared, in which a few, that is, eight persons, were brought safely through water. 21 Baptism, which corresponds to this, now saves you, not as a removal of dirt from the body but as an appeal to God for a good conscience, through the resurrection of Jesus Christ, 22 who has gone into heaven and is at the right hand of God, with angels, authorities, and powers having been subjected to him.

This text is not easy to understand. But for our purpose a few points are clear enough: 1. Christ has also preached to the generation of Noah "in the spirit". 2. Only eight of that generation were saved at the time of the flood being brought safely through the waters by the means of the ark. 3. The waters of Christian baptism can be compared to this. Whoever gets baptized in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit is dead to the old world

and made alive to the new world in Christ (1 Peter 2:24-25). Peter compares the waters of the flood and the waters of baptism: Both waters have carried the believers from the finished old world to the shores of the blessed new world.

The dove does come right in here. There was a dove related to the flood story in Gen 6-8, especially in 8:8-12:

8 Then he sent forth a dove from him, to see if the waters had subsided from the face of the ground. 9 But the dove found no place to set her foot, and she returned to him to the ark, for the waters were still on the face of the whole earth. So he put out his hand and took her and brought her into the ark with him. 10 He waited another seven days, and again he sent forth the dove out of the ark. 11 And the dove came back to him in the evening, and behold, in her mouth was a freshly plucked olive leaf. So Noah knew that the waters had subsided from the earth. 12 Then he waited another seven days and sent forth the dove, and she did not return to him anymore.

What did the sign of the dove tell Noah? "So Noah knew that the waters had subsided from the earth" (8:11). The dove with "a freshly plucked olive leaf" was proof to Noah, the man of God, that the waters of judgment had passed away and the new world was ready to be inhabited. For Peter the flood story was very important. He comes back to it twice in his second letter (in 2 Peter 2:5 and in 3:5-7). The latter passage will help our understanding:

5 For they deliberately overlook this fact, that the heavens existed long ago, and the earth was formed out of water and through water by the word of God, 6

and that by means of these the world that then existed was deluged with water and perished. 7 But by the same word the heavens and earth that now exist are stored up for fire, being kept until the day of judgment and destruction of the ungodly.

Peter seems to distinguish three worlds. The first world lasted from creation to the judgment of the waters of the flood. The second world we are living in now will last till the judgment of fire on the day of the Lord. The third world will be eternal, never ending, full of righteousness (2 Peter 3:13).

The way of salvation in the time of Noah was "to be in the ark", having accepted God's word of judgment over the old world and taking refuge in the ark by faith. The way of salvation nowadays is "to be in Christ", having accepted God's word of judgment over this world and taking refuge in God's mercy, in the crucified and risen Christ. Water baptism is the confession of the believer that Christ is his only hope of salvation.

If we now combine Peter's testimony and Christ's own baptism by John the Baptist and what happened afterwards, we can say this. As the dove was a sign to the man of God Noah that the new world had come and they were free to enter it, so the Holy Spirit descending as a dove out of heaven on Jesus was a sign for the man of God John the Baptist. John knew therefore that Jesus of Nazareth was the Christ (John 1:32-34):

32 And John bore witness: "I saw the Spirit descend from heaven like a dove, and it remained on him. 33 I myself did not know him, but he who sent me to baptize with water said to me, 'He on whom you see the Spirit descend and remain, this is he who

baptizes with the Holy Spirit.' 34 And I have seen and have borne witness that this is the Son of God."

For John the Baptist, to enter the new world was to enter the kingdom of heaven. This would happen through the king of this kingdom of heaven, the Messiah. The Messiah is Jesus. He gives entrance into the kingdom of heaven by his baptizing the believers in the Holy Spirit and fire.

Here we see how the Holy Spirit, descending on the Messiah like a dove, fits in the picture. The dove of the flood had to wait till the waters of the judgment of the flood were gone. So the Holy Spirit had to wait for the Messiah to come, to be born and to grow up, and reach his age of service. The Holy Spirit had to wait for Jesus to come to the prophet John the Baptist, to be baptized by him in the waters of the Jordan river, to reveal to John the fact, the king is here: The kingdom of God has come at last. The heavens are open, the kingdom of heaven is open to be entered by faith in Jesus the Messiah, the son of God.

6.2.3 **Divine Works of God's Spirit**

He makes alive.

Jesus explains in his speech "I am the bread of life" held in the synagogue at Capernaum (John 6:63):

It is the Spirit who gives life; the flesh is of no avail.
The words that I have spoken to you are spirit and life⁵⁵.

55. τὸ πνεῦμά ἐστιν τὸ ζωοποιοῦν, ἡ σὰρξ οὐκ ὠφελεῖ οὐδέν• τὰ ῥήματα ἃ ἐγὼ λελάληκα ὑμῖν πνεῦμά ἐστιν καὶ ζωὴ ἐστιν.

The hearers had misunderstood the words of Jesus. They thought Jesus meant that they had to eat his flesh and drink his blood literally to have eternal life (6:51-60). In our verse 6:63 Jesus explains to them that he had meant his words spiritually. It is a spiritual eating of the flesh and blood of Jesus. It is that I believe that his death at the cross is my salvation and that his rising from the dead on the third day is my eternal life. But this knowledge and faith is only born, where the Holy Spirit uses the words of Jesus to open the eyes of a "dead sinner" to make him alive.

He responds to sin against the Holy Spirit with judgment.

Because of the divine nature of the Holy Spirit, sins against the Spirit are dangerous.

Blasphemy against him will not be forgiven. Jesus teaches this in three Gospels. Let us start with Mark 3:28-30:

28 "Truly, I say to you, all sins will be forgiven the children of man, and whatever blasphemies they utter,
29 but whoever blasphemes against the Holy Spirit never has forgiveness, but is guilty of an eternal sin"⁵⁶
— 30 for they had said, "He has an unclean spirit."

The last verse gives us a clue, as to what the blasphemy against the Holy Spirit is. The enemies of Jesus identified the Holy Spirit working in Jesus with Beelzebul (Mark 3:22):

56. ὃς δ' ἂν βλασφημήσῃ εἰς τὸ πνεῦμα τὸ ἅγιον, οὐκ ἔχει ἄφεσιν εἰς τὸν αἰῶνα, ἀλλὰ ἔνοχός ἐστιν αἰωνίου ἁμαρτήματος.

And the scribes who came down from Jerusalem were saying, "He is possessed by Beelzebul," and "by the prince of demons he casts out the demons."

When we read about the same event in Matthew we get more information (Mt 12:31-32):

31 Therefore I tell you, every sin and blasphemy will be forgiven people, but the blasphemy against the Spirit will not be forgiven. 32 And whoever speaks a word against the Son of Man will be forgiven, but whoever speaks against the Holy Spirit will not be forgiven, either in this age or in the age to come⁵⁷.

Here Jesus says that the sin is not forgiven in this time, or age, nor in the time or age to come. This is a Jewish way of talking of "neither in this world nor in the world to come". If a sin is not forgiven in this world nor the world to come, it means that it is never forgiven. That is exactly the way Mark puts it (3:29).

Matthew tells us also in 12:22-24 what miracle had triggered off the accusation of Jesus being possessed:

22 Then a demon-oppressed man who was blind and mute was brought to him, and he healed him, so that the man spoke and saw. 23 And all the people were amazed, and said, "Can this be the Son of David?" 24 But when the Pharisees heard it, they said,

57. 31 διὰ τοῦτο λέγω ὑμῖν, πᾶσα ἁμαρτία καὶ βλασφημία ἀφεθήσεται τοῖς ἀνθρώποις, ἡ δὲ τοῦ πνεύματος βλασφημία οὐκ ἀφεθήσεται. 32 καὶ ὅς ἐάν εἴπῃ λόγον κατὰ τοῦ υἱοῦ τοῦ ἀνθρώπου, ἀφεθήσεται αὐτῷ· ὅς δ' ἂν εἴπῃ κατὰ τοῦ πνεύματος τοῦ ἁγίου, οὐκ ἀφεθήσεται αὐτῷ οὔτε ἐν τούτῳ τῷ αἰῶνι οὔτε ἐν τῷ μέλλοντι.

“It is only by Beelzebul, the prince of demons, that this man casts out demons.”

The Pharisees were desperate to stop Jesus. They saw his influence spreading and growing all the time. So they took their refuge in the most vehement accusation; that Jesus was a servant of the devil, even that he was possessed by Satan. In his answer Jesus proves this to be a false accusation. After this Jesus states that this sin will never be forgiven. By identifying the Holy Spirit with the devil, they have totally shut their hearts to the influence of the Holy Spirit who would be the only one who is able to lead them to repentance. They are lost forever.

Luke 12:8-12 gives us some further help to understand a merciful part of the statement of Jesus:

8 “And I tell you, everyone who acknowledges me before men, the Son of Man also will acknowledge before the angels of God, 9 but the one who denies me before men will be denied before the angels of God. 10 And everyone who speaks a word against the Son of Man will be forgiven, but the one who blasphemes against the Holy Spirit will not be forgiven. 11 And when they bring you before the synagogues and the rulers and the authorities, do not be anxious about how you should defend yourself or what you should say, 12 for the Holy Spirit will teach you in that very hour what you ought to say.”

In Luke the context is the persecution of the believers. Believers should confess Jesus and not deny him. They should be firm and be guided by the Holy Spirit in their defense. But sometimes the pressure might become so great that a believer might grow weak

and utter something against "the son of man", meaning against Jesus. Full of mercy Jesus says that this will be forgiven, meaning he himself will forgive it. This is exactly what happened to Peter who denied Jesus and put a curse between himself and his Lord. But Jesus forgave him in this world and changed him to become the rock; transformed by God's grace.

But at the same time Jesus distinguishes the blasphemy against the Holy Spirit from this sin against Jesus. Having Matthew 12 in mind, I think, we can say: The blasphemy against the Holy Spirit happens when somebody sees the clear work of God's Holy Spirit but deliberately identifies it with the work of the devil, shutting oneself and others off from the further influence of the Holy Spirit (compare Matthew 23:13). Because no repentance happens in this world it is a sin that is not forgiven. If we can understand this sin in this way we can give comfort to those believers who are troubled and worried because they think they have somehow committed this sin against the Holy Spirit. Most probably their weakness lies somewhere else, more in the direction of 1 Thes 5:14, "Encourage the fainthearted." We must help troubled believers to have peace in Christ.

Those who have a share in the Holy Spirit and then fall away can not be renewed. Somehow related to the sin of blasphemy against the Holy Spirit is what is written in Hebrews 6:4-12:

4 For it is impossible to restore again to repentance those who have once been enlightened, who have tasted the heavenly gift, and have shared in the Holy Spirit, 5 and have tasted the goodness of the word of God and the powers of the age to come⁵⁸, 6 if they

58. 4 Ἀδύνατον γὰρ τοὺς ὑπαξ φωτισθέντας γευσάμενους τε τῆς δωρεᾶς

then fall away, since they are crucifying once again the Son of God to their own harm and holding him up to contempt. 7 For land that has drunk the rain that often falls on it, and produces a crop useful to those for whose sake it is cultivated, receives a blessing from God. 8 But if it bears thorns and thistles, it is worthless and near to being cursed, and its end is to be burned. 9 Though we speak in this way, yet in your case, beloved, we feel sure of better things — things that belong to salvation. 10 For God is not so unjust as to overlook your work and the love that you showed for his sake in serving the saints, as you still do. 11 And we desire each one of you to show the same earnestness to have the full assurance of hope until the end, 12 so that you may not be sluggish, but imitators of those who through faith and patience inherit the promises.

The first question we want to ask about this section is whether the writer thinks that the recipients have committed this sin or are in danger of committing it. The answer is no! See 6:9: "Though we speak in this way, yet in your case, beloved, we feel sure of better things — things that belong to salvation." I think he puts a theoretical possibility in front of them to scare them away from this possibility. It is like two people standing on a very high place and one telling the other: "If you jump down here, you are dead." It has not happened. It should not happen. The possibility is told to prevent the thing from happening.

τῆς ἐπουρανίου καὶ μετόχους γεννηθέντας πνεύματος ἁγίου 5 καὶ καλὸν γευσάμενους θεοῦ ῥῆμα δυνάμεις τε μέλλοντος αἰῶνος

The context makes it clear that he wants them to push forward, to make progress (6:1):

Therefore let us leave the elementary doctrine of Christ and go on to maturity, not laying again a foundation of repentance from dead works and of faith toward God...

He knows that they have repented, now they should make progress and grow. He had complained in 5:12 that their progress was very slow:

For though by this time you ought to be teachers, you need someone to teach you again the basic principles of the oracles of God. You need milk, not solid food.

What he wants to tell them is: You can not go backwards. There is only one way: going forward and growing in maturity. He wants to shock them forward (6:11-12):

11 And we desire each one of you to show the same earnestness to have the full assurance of hope until the end, 12 so that you may not be sluggish, but imitators of those who through faith and patience inherit the promises.

When we compare Hebrews 6:7-8 with Matthew 7:15-23, it becomes clearer that the earth bringing forth thorns and thistles more relates to the area of false Christians and false prophets (compare also 2 Peter 2:1-3.12-22). But as in Matthew 7 and 2 Peter 2 this is used to shock the believers, to wake them up so that they really live what they believe and are called to.

We can recognize the same way of speaking and purpose in Hebrews 10:26-39:

26 For if we go on sinning deliberately after receiving the knowledge of the truth, there no longer remains a sacrifice for sins, 27 but a fearful expectation of judgment, and a fury of fire that will consume the adversaries. 28 Anyone who has set aside the law of Moses dies without mercy on the evidence of two or three witnesses. 29 How much worse punishment, do you think, will be deserved by the one who has spurned the Son of God, and has profaned the blood of the covenant by which he was sanctified, and has outraged the Spirit of grace?⁵⁹ 30 For we know him who said, “Vengeance is mine; I will repay.” And again, “The Lord will judge his people.” 31 It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God. 32 But recall the former days when, after you were enlightened, you endured a hard struggle with sufferings, 33 sometimes being publicly exposed to reproach and affliction, and sometimes being partners with those so treated. 34 For you had compassion on those in prison, and you joyfully accepted the plundering of your property, since you knew that you yourselves had a better possession and an abiding one. 35 Therefore do not throw away your confidence, which has a great reward. 36 For you have need of endurance, so that when you have done the will of God you may receive what is promised. 37 For, “Yet a little while, and the coming one will come

59. πόσω δοκεῖτε χείρονος ἀξιωθήσεται τιμωρίας ὁ τὸν υἱὸν τοῦ θεοῦ καταπατήσας, καὶ τὸ αἷμα τῆς διαθήκης κοινὸν ἡγησάμενος ἐν ᾧ ἡγιάσθη, καὶ τὸ πνεῦμα τῆς χάριτος ἐνυβρίσας.

and will not delay; 38 but my righteous one shall live by faith, and if he shrinks back, my soul has no pleasure in him." 39 But we are not of those who shrink back and are destroyed, but of those who have faith and preserve their souls.

We can again ask the question as to whether the writer of this letter⁶⁰ thinks that the recipients are about to commit this sin (10:26) or not. I think he only wants to scare them away from it as he says in 10:39: "But we are not of those who shrink back and are destroyed, but of those who have faith and preserve their souls." And then he develops in a positive way the whole subject of faith in chapter 11 and points to "Jesus, the author and perfecter of faith" in chapter 12 (verse 2). The author is confident that they will get saved in the end, but they will have to remain faithful to the end. To help them with this, he has written the letter (Hebrew 13:22).

To lie to the Holy Spirit or put him to the test, was a grave sin punished by death. We read in Acts 5:1-11:

1 But a man named Ananias, with his wife Sapphira, sold a piece of property, 2 and with his wife's knowledge he kept back for himself some of the proceeds and brought only a part of it and laid it at the

60. My personal opinion following much of the old church is that the apostle Paul wrote this letter. There is an enormous number of ideas which we find in the New Testament in the letters bearing the name of this apostle on the one hand and in this letter without his name on the other. One example is the crucial use of Habakkuk 2:4 in Romans 1:17 and Galatians 3:11 and here in Hebrews 10:38 preparing the way for the climax of the letter with its emphasis of faith in Hebrews 11 and 12. But of course, it would not be good to be too dogmatic in this matter.

apostles' feet. 3 But Peter said, "Ananias, why has Satan filled your heart to lie to the Holy Spirit and to keep back for yourself part of the proceeds of the land? 4 While it remained unsold, did it not remain your own? And after it was sold, was it not at your disposal? Why is it that you have contrived this deed in your heart? You have not lied to men but to God." 5 When Ananias heard these words, he fell down and breathed his last. And great fear came upon all who heard of it. 6 The young men rose and wrapped him up and carried him out and buried him. 7 After an interval of about three hours his wife came in, not knowing what had happened. 8 And Peter said to her, "Tell me whether you sold the land for so much." And she said, "Yes, for so much." 9 But Peter said to her, "How is it that you have agreed together to test the Spirit of the Lord? Behold, the feet of those who have buried your husband are at the door, and they will carry you out." 10 Immediately she fell down at his feet and breathed her last. When the young men came in they found her dead, and they carried her out and buried her beside her husband. 11 And great fear came upon the whole church and upon all who heard of these things.

Luke tells us that there was a great revival in Jerusalem during the times of Acts 2-5 (see 2:41.47; 4:4.31-33; 5:12-16). Whenever there are times of great revival and God works marvelous miracles, the responsibility of the believers is raised to a higher level. Compare Luke 12:48:

... Everyone to whom much was given, of him much

will be required, and from him to whom they entrusted much, they will demand the more.

Ananias and Sapphira committed the sin of lying to the Holy Spirit (5:3). They were not lying to men but to God (5:4). They did this because they gave Satan room to fill their hearts (5:3). So they put the the Holy Spirit (5:9) to the test and consequently simply dropped dead. This divine judgment triggered off a great fear amongst the believers and all who heard about it (5:5.11).

Reading this we must remember that a believer can die because of his sin, but this does not automatically mean that he will go to hell. It could be that this is an act of education of God for his people to teach them his holiness with the intention that the sinner might get saved in the end (1 Cor 11:30-32; 5:1-5; Ez 18:23).

6.3 The Holy Spirit Empowers People in the Old Testament.

The Holy Spirit empowers people in the Old and in the New Testament.

6.3.1 God's Spirit Is the Instructor and Guide for God's People.

... in the 40 years of the wilderness

The leading Levites in the time of Nehemiah (about 445 B.C.) pray in Nehemiah 9:20-21:

20 You gave your good Spirit to instruct them and did not withhold your manna from their mouth and gave them water for their thirst. 21 Forty years you

sustained them in the wilderness, and they lacked nothing. Their clothes did not wear out and their feet did not swell.

Amongst the gifts God provided Israel in their 40 years in the desert was this gift: "You imparted your good Spirit [rûḥa-kā ḥaṭ-ṭôḇāh] to instruct them". They would have thought of Moses as having been guided by the spirit and also of Aaron and Miriam as spiritual leaders. God instructed Israel throughout the 40 years in the desert through his spirit.

... providing God's presence as part of his covenant promise

In 520 B.C. the prophet Haggai encourages the leaders and the people of Judah to build the temple (2:4-5):

4 Yet now be strong, O Zerubbabel, declares the LORD. Be strong, O Joshua, son of Jehozadak, the high priest. Be strong, all you people of the land, declares the LORD. Work, for I am with you, declares the LORD of hosts, 5 according to the covenant that I made with you when you came out of Egypt. My Spirit remains in your midst. Fear not.

God has promised in his covenant to be with his people. This means in the words of God here through Haggai, "My Spirit [rûḥî] remains in your midst." My spirit has always been with you from Egypt to this very day. Therefore do not fear!

6.3.2 **God's Spirit Is Empowering People for Certain Tasks.**

The Spirit enables them to be wise and just rulers.

Joseph becomes Egypt's vice regent because he has the spirit of God [rûaḥ 'ēlōhîm] (Gn 41:38):

And Pharaoh said to his servants, “Can we find a man like this, in whom is the Spirit of God?”

Moses could lead the people because of God's Spirit on him (Numbers 11:24-25):

24 So Moses went out and told the people the words of the LORD. And he gathered seventy men of the elders of the people and placed them around the tent. 25 Then the LORD came down in the cloud and spoke to him, and took some of the Spirit that was on him and put it on the seventy elders. And as soon as the Spirit rested on them [kənôaḥ 'ālêhem hā-rûaḥ], they prophesied. But they did not continue doing it.

In the context Moses complains that he is not able to carry the burden of the whole nation alone (11:14). God answers him (11:16-17):

16 Then the LORD said to Moses, “Gather for me seventy men of the elders of Israel, whom you know to be the elders of the people and officers over them, and bring them to the tent of meeting, and let them take their stand there with you. 17 And I will come down and talk with you there. And I will take

some of the Spirit that is on you and put it on them,
and they shall bear the burden of the people with
you, so that you may not bear it yourself alone.

Isaiah 63:11-12 looks back to the same gift of the Spirit for
Moses as a leader of the people:

11 Then he remembered the days of old, of Moses
and his people.

Where is he who brought them up out of the sea
with the shepherds of his flock?

Where is he who put in the midst of them his Holy
Spirit,

12 who caused his glorious arm to go at the right
hand of Moses,

who divided the waters before them
to make for himself an everlasting name.

Israel's seventy elders In Numbers 11:16-17.25-26 Israel's seventy elders receive the spirit which before was on Moses alone so that they may share the burden of God's people. See above under section 6.3.2.

Joshua When Joshua became the successor of Moses, the gift of the spirit was crucial. Numbers 27:15-20:

15 Moses spoke to the LORD, saying, 16 “Let
the LORD, the God of the spirits of all flesh, ap-
point a man over the congregation 17 who shall go
out before them and come in before them, who shall
lead them out and bring them in, that the congrega-
tion of the LORD may not be as sheep that have no

shepherd.” 18 So the LORD said to Moses, “Take Joshua the son of Nun, a man in whom is the Spirit [rûah], and lay your hand on him. 19 Make him stand before Eleazar the priest and all the congregation, and you shall commission him in their sight. 20 You shall invest him with some of your authority, that all the congregation of the people of Israel may obey.

Dt 34:9 continues the same idea:

And Joshua the son of Nun was full of the spirit of wisdom, for Moses had laid his hands on him. So the people of Israel obeyed him and did as the LORD had commanded Moses.

God's Spirit here has the effect on Joshua of making him a wise and good leader of God's people. Moses laid his hands on him. This makes him the successor to Moses in front of all. If we combine Nm 11:16-17, 11:24-25, 27:15-20, and Dt 34:9, we can understand the spirit of wisdom as God's Spirit granting the wisdom necessary for leading Israel.

Othniel became one of Israel's Judges under the Spirit's guidance (Judges 3:9-10):

9 But when the people of Israel cried out to the LORD, the LORD raised up a deliverer for the people of Israel, who saved them, Othniel the son of Kenaz, Caleb's younger brother. 10 The Spirit of the LORD was upon him, and he judged Israel.

He went out to war, and the LORD gave Cushan-rishathaim king of Mesopotamia into his hand. And his hand prevailed over Cushan-rishathaim.

The expression "The Spirit of the LORD was upon him" is "watəhî 'ālāw rūaḥ yhwḥ". This signals the "start" of the Spirit being upon him. Therefore some translate "the Spirit of the LORD came upon him". This is used frequently when the Lord wanted to do something through somebody in a special situation. He empowered him in this way (see below for further instances).

Gideon Judges 6:34:

But the Spirit of the LORD clothed Gideon, and he sounded the trumpet, and the Abiezrites were called out to follow him.

Look at the phrase "the Spirit of the LORD clothed Gideon" [wə-rūaḥ yhwḥ lāḇəšāḥ 'et gid'ôn]. The idea is of a person being clothed. This metaphor seems to say that the Lord's Spirit is like clothes for Gideon. And because military action follows, it points to the receiving of power and ability to lead God's army in war and defeat the enemy. Compare Ephesians 6:10-20 as a New Testament parallel.

Jephthah Judges 11:29:

Then the Spirit of the LORD was upon Jephthah, and he passed through Gilead and Manasseh and passed on to Mizpah of Gilead, and from Mizpah of Gilead he passed on to the Ammonites.

As in the coming of the spirit upon Othniel the expression "the Spirit of the LORD was upon Jephthah" [watəhî 'al yiṭtāḥ rūaḥ yhwḥ] is constructed with the verb "to be (upon)" in an ingressive sense, meaning "came upon Jephthah". This again results in military action (11:30-33).

Samson Judges 13:24-25:

24 And the woman bore a son and called his name Samson. And the young man grew, and the LORD blessed him. 25 And the Spirit of the LORD began to stir him in Mahaneh-dan, between Zorah and Eshtaol.

Samson's birth was a miracle since his mother had been barren for a long time. He was born under special promises and commandments of God (13:3-5). In fulfillment of this the Lord blessed him after his birth during his youth. One special work which the Lord was doing in his life, is "And the Spirit of the LORD began to stir him" [watāḥel rūaḥ yhwḥ ləṣā'āmô]. This seems to mean that Samson's movements "between Zorah and Eshtaol" were guided by God's Spirit. He was impelled or moved around by God.

Judges 14:5-6:

5 Then Samson went down with his father and mother to Timnah, and they came to the vineyards of Timnah. And behold, a young lion came toward him roaring. 6 Then the Spirit of the LORD rushed upon him [watiṣlah 'ālāw rūaḥ yhwḥ], and although he had nothing in his hand, he tore the lion in pieces

as one tears a young goat. But he did not tell his father or his mother what he had done.

The expression "the Spirit of the LORD" [rûaḥ yhwḥ, 5 times] or "the Spirit of God" [rûaḥ 'ēlōhîm, twice] "rushed upon him" is used in a positive way for the coming of God's Spirit upon someone "to empower the person for service"⁶¹. It is used in this way three times for Samson, three times for Saul, and once for David. However at least one example is negative. That is found in 1 Sm 18:10 and speaks of the rejected Saul (see below section 6.3.2).

After the Philistines had solved Samson's riddle after compelling his wife to help, the following happens (Judges 14:19):

And the Spirit of the LORD rushed upon him [watiṣlaḥ 'ālāw rūaḥ yhwḥ], and he went down to Ashkelon and struck down thirty men of the town and took their spoil and gave the garments to those who had told the riddle. In hot anger he went back to his father's house.

In Judges 15:12-15 Samson is bound by his countrymen, but then freed by the spirit:

12 And they said to him, "We have come down to bind you, that we may give you into the hands of the Philistines." And Samson said to them, "Swear to me that you will not attack me yourselves." 13 They said to him, "No; we will only bind you and give you into their hands. We will surely not kill

61. See Vangemeren, *New International Dictionary of Old Testament Theology and Exegesis* p. 804 under צלח .

you.” So they bound him with two new ropes and brought him up from the rock. 14 When he came to Lehi, the Philistines came shouting to meet him. Then the Spirit of the LORD rushed upon him⁶², and the ropes that were on his arms became as flax that has caught fire, and his bonds melted off his hands. 15 And he found a fresh jawbone of a donkey, and put out his hand and took it, and with it he struck 1,000 men.

Saul Samuel prophesied that Saul would be changed by the spirit of the Lord (1 Sm 10:6-10):

6 Then the Spirit of the LORD will rush upon you (wə-šāləḥāḥ ‘ālēkā rūaḥ yhwḥ), and you will prophesy with them and be turned into another man. 7 Now when these signs meet you, do what your hand finds to do, for God is with you. 8 Then go down before me to Gilgal. And behold, I am coming to you to offer burnt offerings and to sacrifice peace offerings. Seven days you shall wait, until I come to you and show you what you shall do.” 9 When he turned his back to leave Samuel, God gave him another heart. And all these signs came to pass that day. 10 When they came to Gibeah, behold, a group of prophets met him, and the Spirit of God rushed upon him, and he prophesied among them (wətišlah ‘ālāw rūaḥ ’ēlōhīm).

62. wətišlah ‘ālāw rūaḥ yhwḥ

Saul, after having been anointed and recognized as king, did his first great deed as king under the influence of God's Spirit (1 Sm 11:5-7):

5 Now, behold, Saul was coming from the field behind the oxen. And Saul said, "What is wrong with the people, that they are weeping?" So they told him the news of the men of Jabesh. 6 And the Spirit of God rushed upon Saul [wəṣṣāḥ rûaḥ 'ēlōhîm 'al šā'ûl] when he heard these words, and his anger was greatly kindled. 7 He took a yoke of oxen and cut them in pieces and sent them throughout all the territory of Israel by the hand of messengers, saying, "Whoever does not come out after Saul and Samuel, so shall it be done to his oxen!" Then the dread of the LORD fell upon the people, and they came out as one man.

Naturally, the majority of the Israelites were impressed with God's work through Saul in this war that they happily affirmed the kingdom of Saul (1 Sm 11:14). The power of God's Spirit made it clear to God's people who God's chosen leader was. But after Saul's repeated disobedience he was rejected by God. When God had anointed David through the prophet Samuel, God's Spirit came upon David and left Saul (1 Sm 16:14-16):

14 Now the Spirit of the LORD [wə-rûaḥ yḥwḥ] departed from Saul, and an evil spirit [rûaḥ rā'āḥ] from the LORD tormented him. 15 And Saul's servants said to him, "Behold now, an evil spirit from God is tormenting you. [rûaḥ 'ēlōhîm rā'āḥ məḇa'itekā] 16 Let our lord now command your

servants who are before you to seek out a man who is skillful in playing the lyre, and when the evil spirit from God is upon you [bihyôṭ ʿālêkā rūaḥ ʿēlōhîm rāʿāh], he will play it, and you will be well.”

In this way David was called to the court to comfort the king through his great music. It is the tragedy of Saul's life that he who was first chosen and close to God was then rejected because of his disobedience. The evil spirit terrorizing him seems to have triggered some kind of repeated attacks of depression resulting in dangerous outbursts (1 Sm 18:10-11):

10 The next day a harmful spirit from God rushed upon Saul, and he raved within his house [watiṣlaḥ rūaḥ ʿēlōhîm rāʿāh ʿel šāʾûl wayyiṭnabbēʾ bəṭôḵ habbayiṭ] while David was playing the lyre, as he did day by day. Saul had his spear in his hand. 11 And Saul hurled the spear, for he thought, “I will pin David to the wall.” But David evaded him twice.

In these passages it is stated more than once that Saul was plagued by an "evil" or "harmful" spirit (1 Sm 16:14.15.16; 18:10). The first time (1 Sm 16:14) it is stated that "an evil spirit" [rūaḥ rāʿāh] from the LORD tormented him". The next three times (1 Sm 16:15.16; 18:10) it is literally "God's evil spirit" rūaḥ ʿēlōhîm rāʿāh]: a genitive construction (God's Spirit) with an adjective (evil). This genitive construction in 1 Sm 16:15.16 and 18:10 should be understood rather in the light of the previous verse (1 Sm 16:14) as an "evil spirit" from God, sent by God or the Lord. It does not contain the teaching that God's Spirit is "evil", or that

he can sometimes be good but here he was "evil" or "harmful". No, the genitive in 16:15.16 and 18:10 must be understood in the light of 16:14: it was sent by God as a punishment. Saul became depressed and lost control because he had rejected God's word and because he did not want to be controlled by God's word and God's Spirit. God rejected Saul and elected David. God's good and holy Spirit left Saul and came upon David (1 Sm 16:13-14). In the light of this rejection of Saul we can understand Saul's being tormented by an "evil spirit", sent by God. Finally Saul had one more experience with God's Spirit in 1 Sm 19:23. When Saul wanted to hunt David down and catch him, the Spirit stopped Saul:

23 And he went there to Naioth in Ramah. And the Spirit of God came upon him also [watəhî 'ālāw gam hû' rūah 'ēlōhîm], and as he went he prophesied until he came to Naioth in Ramah. 24 And he too stripped off his clothes, and he too prophesied before Samuel and lay naked all that day and all that night. Thus it is said, "Is Saul also among the prophets?"

David After David's being anointed with oil, God's Spirit came upon him and stayed with him (1 Sm 16:13):

Then Samuel took the horn of oil and anointed him in the midst of his brothers. And the Spirit of the LORD rushed upon David from that day forward [watiṣlah rūah yhw̄h 'el dāwīd]. And Samuel rose up and went to Ramah.

In 1 Sm 16 the Holy Spirit starts his special work in David's life.

This continued over the years. When David was about to die he still could claim to speak by God's Spirit (2 Sam 23:1-2):

1 Now these are the last words of David:
 The oracle of David, the son of Jesse,
 the oracle of the man who was raised on high,
 the anointed of the God of Jacob,
 the sweet psalmist of Israel:
 2 "The Spirit of the LORD speaks by me [rûaḥ
 yḥwh dibber bî];
 his word is on my tongue.

David handed some plans for the temple building to Solomon (1 Chr 28:11-12):

11 Then David gave to Solomon his son the pattern of the porch, and of the houses thereof, and of the treasures thereof, and of the upper chambers thereof, and of the inner parlours thereof, and of the place of the mercy seat, 12 And the pattern of all that he had by the spirit [wə-ṭāḇnîṭ kōl 'āšer ḥāyāḥ bā-rûaḥ 'immô], of the courts of the house of the Lord, and of all the chambers round about, of the treasures of the house of God, and of the treasures of the dedicated things.⁶³

The spirit mentioned here could be David's own spirit or the spirit of God who had inspired him. David asks God's forgiveness for his sins in the famous psalm of repentance and he requests God that God's Spirit may remain with him (Psalm 51:10-13) :

63. KJV, The Holy Bible - King James Version (Oxford: Oxford University Press, n.d.)

10 Create in me a clean heart, O God,
and renew a right spirit within me.

11 Cast me not away from your presence,
and take not your Holy Spirit from me.

[wə-rûaḥ qodšəḵā 'al tiqqah mimmennî]

12 Restore to me the joy of your salvation,
and uphold me with a willing spirit.

13 Then I will teach transgressors your ways,
and sinners will return to you.

David knew exactly what had happened to Saul when God took his Holy Spirit away from his predecessor. David repents and hopes for God's grace which was granted to him.

The King of Israel as Anointed One In Lam 4:20 the king is depicted in his importance for all citizens:

The breath of our nostrils, the LORD's anointed,
[rûaḥ 'appênû məšîaḥ yhwḥ]
was captured in their pits,
of whom we said, "Under his shadow
we shall live among the nations."

Therefore his being captured and taken into captivity is a big blow for God's people. Being the anointed, the king is the bearer of God's Spirit. At the same time he is the "breath of our nostrils", describing him as "life giving" or "life" for the whole nation. He can only have such great importance through the Spirit of God, given to him by being the anointed one. If he does not obey God and his Spirit, the damage is even greater. If he is taken away by God's judgment, hope is quenched as the breath is taken, and the nation is choked.

The Messiah In contrast to this the coming Messiah from the house of David is to be the one who will change the world by God's sevenfold spirit (Is 11:1-4):

1 There shall come forth a shoot from the stump of
Jesse,

and a branch from his roots shall bear fruit.

2 And the Spirit of the LORD shall rest upon him,
the Spirit of wisdom and understanding,
the Spirit of counsel and might,
the Spirit of knowledge and the fear of the LORD.

(wəṇāḥāḥ 'ālāw rūaḥ yhw)

rūaḥ ḥokmāḥ ûḥînāḥ

rūaḥ 'eṣāḥ ûḡəḇûrāḥ

rūaḥ da'aṭ wəyir'aṭ yhw)

3 And his delight shall be in the fear of the LORD.

He shall not judge by what his eyes see,

or decide disputes by what his ears hear,

4 but with righteousness he shall judge the poor,

and decide with equity for the meek of the earth;

and he shall strike the earth with the rod of his

mouth,

and with the breath of his lips he shall kill the wicked.

(ûḇəruāḥ šəpāṭāw yāmîṭ rāšā')

In 11:2 there are seven words used with the "Spirit": the first word being the "Lord". Seven symbolizes the fullness of the work of the Lord's Spirit in the Messiah and through him. The Holy Spirit empowers the Messiah to establish God's justice throughout the world resulting in an everlasting peace (Isa 9:6). He shall kill the wicked "with the breath of his lips". This means that he has only to utter the verdict and it is realized, even if it

means that the wicked drops dead (compare Acts 5:4-10; 2 Thes 2:8). The same work is the task of the servant of the Lord in Isa 42:1-4, and he is given the same spirit to accomplish it:

1 Behold my servant, whom I uphold,
 my chosen, in whom my soul delights;
 I have put my Spirit upon him;
 (nāṭattî rūḥî 'ālâw)
 he will bring forth justice to the nations.
 2 He will not cry aloud or lift up his voice,
 or make it heard in the street;
 3 a bruised reed he will not break,
 and a faintly burning wick he will not quench;
 he will faithfully bring forth justice.
 4 He will not grow faint or be discouraged
 till he has established justice in the earth;
 and the coastlands wait for his law.

Within the book of Isaiah the Messiah of Is 7-11 and the personal servant of God in Is 42-53 seem to point to the same person, the future saviour of the world, who is here called light of the nations and who frees the prisoners (Isa 42:6-7):

6 "I am the LORD; I have called you in righteousness-
 ness;
 I will take you by the hand and keep you;
 I will give you as a covenant for the people,
 a light for the nations,
 7 to open the eyes that are blind,
 to bring out the prisoners from the dungeon.

These same qualities are presented by the speaker of Isa 61:1-2 pointing to the same person:

1 The Spirit of the Lord GOD is upon me,
 because the LORD has anointed me
 (rûaḥ 'ăḏonāy yḥwh 'ālāy
 ya'an māšāḥ yḥwh 'oṭî)
 to bring good news to the poor;
 he has sent me to bind up the brokenhearted,
 to proclaim liberty to the captives,
 and the opening of the prison to those who are
 bound;
 2 to proclaim the year of the LORD's favor,
 and the day of vengeance of our God;
 to comfort all who mourn.

God's Spirit inspires good workmanship for the tabernacle and temple.

He gives inspiration for the work related to the tabernacle. Ex 28:3

You shall speak to all the skillful,
 whom I have filled with a spirit of skill,
 (wə-'attāḥ təḏabbēr 'el kol ḥakmê lēḇ
 'ăšer millē'ṭiw rûaḥ ḥokmāḥ)
 that they make Aaron's garments
 to consecrate him for my priesthood.

If we combine this verse with the next section we know that "the spirit of wisdom" here is God's Spirit granting wisdom to do this kind of work: Ex 31:1-5:

1 The LORD said to Moses, 2 "See, I have called by name Bezalel the son of Uri, son of Hur,

of the tribe of Judah, 3 and I have filled him with the Spirit of God, with ability (wā'āmallē' 'ōtô rūah 'ēlōhîm bəḥokmāh) and intelligence, with knowledge and all craftsmanship, 4 to devise artistic designs, to work in gold, silver, and bronze, 5 in cutting stones for setting, and in carving wood, to work in every craft.

The same idea is repeated in Ex 35:30-35, but in addition the gift of teaching these skills is mentioned:

30 Then Moses said to the people of Israel, “See, the LORD has called by name Bezalel the son of Uri, son of Hur, of the tribe of Judah; 31 and he has filled him with the Spirit of God, with skill (wāyāmallē' 'ōtô rūah 'ēlōhîm bəḥokmāh), with intelligence, with knowledge, and with all craftsmanship, 32 to devise artistic designs, to work in gold and silver and bronze, 33 in cutting stones for setting, and in carving wood, for work in every skilled craft. 34 And he has inspired him to teach, both him and Oholiab the son of Ahisamach of the tribe of Dan. 35 He has filled them with skill to do every sort of work done by an engraver or by a designer or by an embroiderer in blue and purple and scarlet yarns and fine twined linen, or by a weaver—by any sort of workman or skilled designer.

He inspires David's plans given to Solomon for the work related to the temple. 1 Chr 28:11-13

11 Then David gave to Solomon his son the pattern of the porch, and of the houses thereof, and

of the treasures thereof, and of the upper chambers thereof, and of the inner parlours thereof, and of the place of the mercy seat, 12 And the pattern of all that he had by the spirit [wə-ṭəḇnîṭ kōl 'ăšer hāyāh bā-rûah 'immô], of the courts of the house of the Lord, and of all the chambers round about, of the treasures of the house of God, and of the treasures of the dedicated things: 13 Also for the courses of the priests and the Levites, and for all the work of the service of the house of the LORD, and for all the vessels of service in the house of the LORD. ⁶⁴

The phrase in 28:12 "the pattern of all that he had by the spirit" could either point to David's own spirit (his mind) or the "the Spirit" (of God). In the first case it would be designed according to David's human artistic insights. In the latter case it is a hint for God originating the plans in his "king-prophet". This latter understanding would fit the scope and emphasis of the book of Chronicles very well.

He grants the gift of prophecy.

Israel's 70 elders Numbers 11:24-26:

24 So Moses went out and told the people the words of the LORD. And he gathered seventy men of the elders of the people and placed them around the tent. 25 Then the LORD came down in the cloud and spoke to him, and took some of the Spirit that was on him and put it on the seventy elders

64. KJV, The Holy Bible - King James Version

(wayyā'sel min hā-rûaḥ 'ăšer 'ālâw wayyittēn 'al šib'îm 'îš haz-zəqēnîm). And as soon as the Spirit rested on them, they prophesied. But they did not continue doing it (wa-yəḥî kənôaḥ 'ălêhem hā-rûaḥ wayyitnabbə'û wə-lō' yāsāpû). 26 Now two men remained in the camp, one named Eldad, and the other named Medad, and the Spirit rested on them. They were among those registered, but they had not gone out to the tent, and so they prophesied in the camp.

It seems that the act of prophesying here was a one time affair (11:25) as a sign that these 70 were now also people with the gift of God's Spirit so that they could lead the whole nation under God's guidance.

Balaam In Numbers 24:1-9 we are told that Balaam spoke by God's Spirit:

1 When Balaam saw that it pleased the LORD to
bless Israel, he did not go, as at other times,
to look for omens, but set his face toward the
wilderness. 2 And Balaam lifted up his eyes
and saw Israel camping tribe by tribe. And the
Spirit of God came upon him 3 and he took up
his discourse and said,
“The oracle of Balaam the son of Beor,
the oracle of the man whose eye is opened,
4 the oracle of him who hears the words of God,
who sees the vision of the Almighty,
falling down with his eyes uncovered:

5 How lovely are your tents, O Jacob,
 your encampments, O Israel!
 6 Like palm groves that stretch afar,
 like gardens beside a river,
 like aloes that the LORD has planted,
 like cedar trees beside the waters.
 7 Water shall flow from his buckets,
 and his seed shall be in many waters;
 his king shall be higher than Agag,
 and his kingdom shall be exalted.
 8 God brings him out of Egypt
 and is for him like the horns of the wild ox;
 he shall eat up the nations, his adversaries,
 and shall break their bones in pieces
 and pierce them through with his arrows.
 9 He crouched, he lay down like a lion
 and like a lioness; who will rouse him up?
 Blessed are those who bless you,
 and cursed are those who curse you.”

In the phrase in Numbers 24:2 "And the Spirit of God came upon him" (watəhî 'ālāw rūah 'ēlōhîm), we have again more literally "(started to) be on him". Balaam is a tragic figure. He wanted the money from Balak, king of the Moabites, very badly. Balak had called him to curse Israel (Numbers 22:6). But God's Spirit led him to bless Israel again and again. He even prophesied about the coming Messiah (Numbers 24:17-19). Later Balaam was killed by the Israelites because he had given the Moabites some clever, but evil advice to trap them in idolatry (Numbers 31:8.16; 25:1-18). In 2 Peter 2:15-16 he is called a prophet.

Saul Samuel says to Saul in 1 Sm 10:6:

6 Then the Spirit of the LORD will rush upon you (wə-šāləḥāḥ ‘ālêḱā rūaḥ yhwḥ), and you will prophesy with them and be turned into another man.

This was fulfilled on the same day (1 Sm 10:10):

10 When they came to Gibeah, behold, a group of prophets met him, and the Spirit of God rushed upon him (wətiṣlaḥ ‘ālāw rūaḥ ’ēlōhîm), and he prophesied among them. 11 And when all who knew him previously saw how he prophesied with the prophets, the people said to one another, “What has come over the son of Kish? Is Saul also among the prophets?” 12 And a man of the place answered, “And who is their father?” Therefore it became a proverb, “Is Saul also among the prophets?” 13 When he had finished prophesying, he came to the high place.

While these passages are related to Saul's anointment, the next passage in 1 Sm 19:23-24 belongs to a time when God had already rejected him:

23 And he went there to Naioth in Ramah. And the Spirit of God came upon him also [wətiḥi ‘ālāw gam hū’ rūaḥ ’ēlōhîm], and as he went he prophesied until he came to Naioth in Ramah. 24 And he too stripped off his clothes, and he too prophesied before Samuel and lay naked all that day and all that night. Thus it is said, “Is Saul also among the prophets?”

Saul wanted to destroy David whom God had appointed to be king instead of Saul. But God's Spirit stopped him in this marvelous way. Prior to this He had stopped Saul's messengers in the same way.

Saul's messengers 1 Sm 19:20-21:

20 Then Saul sent messengers to take David, and when they saw the company of the prophets prophesying, and Samuel standing as head over them, the Spirit of God came upon the messengers of Saul, and they also prophesied (watəhî 'āl mal'ākê šā'ūl rūaḥ 'ēlōhîm way-yiṭnabbə'û gam hēm-māh). 21 When it was told Saul, he sent other messengers, and they also prophesied (way-yiṭnabbə'û gam hēm-māh). And Saul sent messengers again the third time, and they also prophesied (way-yiṭnabbə'û gam hēm-māh).

While they were prophesying they were in a state of mind in which they were unable to act militarily. In this strange way God saved David's life.

Elijah Elijah was famous as a prophet or man of God. We learn from 2 Kings 2:9-13 that Elisha and others saw the Spirit as the power source of Elijah's service:

9 When they had crossed, Elijah said to Elisha, "Ask what I shall do for you, before I am taken from you." And Elisha said, "Please let there be a double portion of your spirit on me" (wîhî nā' pî šənayim bə-rûḥākā 'ēlāy). 10 And he said, "You

have asked a hard thing; yet, if you see me as I am being taken from you, it shall be so for you, but if you do not see me, it shall not be so.” 11 And as they still went on and talked, behold, chariots of fire and horses of fire separated the two of them. And Elijah went up by a whirlwind into heaven. 12 And Elisha saw it and he cried, “My father, my father! The chariots of Israel and its horsemen!” And he saw him no more. Then he took hold of his own clothes and tore them in two pieces. 13 And he took up the cloak of Elijah that had fallen from him and went back and stood on the bank of the Jordan.

When Elisha asks for "a double portion" of Elijah's spirit for himself, he wishes for himself the right of a first born son who gets two portions of the heritage while all other sons get one portion (Dt 21:17). For example, if a man has two sons, all is divided by three. The first born gets two thirds and the other son one third of the possessions of the father. Elisha clearly understands Elijah as his spiritual leader and father ("My father, my father ..."). It is clear that Elisha asks for a double portion of Elijah's spirit. So is it Elijah's spirit or God's Spirit? It seems that God's Spirit practices a kind of personalization when he combines himself with a chosen vessel. Thus when God wanted to give the 70 elders the gift of carrying Israel and caring for them he took of the spirit which was upon Moses and gave it to them. Similarly Joshua was appointed by God through Moses placing his hands upon him to put some of his authority on him (see above section 6.3.2). But without a doubt the idea is that it was God's Spirit upon Moses, the 70 elders, and Joshua who

would guide them to lead the nation. At the same time God put an emphasis on the authority of his chosen vessel Moses. The seventy could not compete with Moses and Joshua humbled himself under the hand of Moses, receiving his blessing and authority. Here it seems to be similar. Elisha was already chosen by God to be Elijah's successor (1 Kings 19:16). A human spirit can not divide the Jordan river, but God's Spirit can do it through working in a prophet through his faith. Elisha's request for "a double portion of your spirit" seems to mean: "May God grant me through you to become your first born son-like successor in the prophetic ministry empowered by the Holy Spirit."

Elisha It seems that Elisha's request has been granted (2 Kings 2:14-15):

14 Then he took the cloak of Elijah that had fallen from him and struck the water, saying, "Where is the LORD, the God of Elijah?" And when he had struck the water, the water was parted to the one side and to the other, and Elisha went over. 15 Now when the sons of the prophets who were at Jericho saw him opposite them, they said, "The spirit of Elijah rests on Elisha." (nāḥāh rūaḥ 'ēliyyāhū 'al 'ēlišā') And they came to meet him and bowed to the ground before him.

The whole story of Elijah and Elisha seems to confirm this because of the many parallel miracles in the life of the one and the other (1 Kings 17:1 - 2 Kings 13:25).

Micaiah 1 Kings 22:24:

Then Zedekiah the son of Chenaanah came near and struck Micaiah on the cheek and said, "How did the Spirit of the LORD go from me to speak to you?" ('ê zeh 'āḇar rūaḥ yhwh mē-'ittî lə-ḡabbēr 'ôṭāk)

The false prophet Zedekiah presupposes that a prophet prophecies by God's Spirit. Because he sees himself as the true prophet, in contrast to Micaiah the "false prophet", he "punishes" him. The same is found in 2 Chr 18:23.

Amasai Because of a prophetic utterance of Amasai, David accepted the men as a part of his military forces (1 Chr 12:18):

Then the Spirit clothed Amasai, chief of the thirty,
and he said,
"We are yours, O David,
and with you, O son of Jesse!
Peace, peace to you,
and peace to your helpers!
For your God helps you."
Then David received them and made them officers
of his troops.

The expression "Then the Spirit clothed Amasai" (wə-rūaḥ lāḇəššāh 'et 'āmāšay) is similar to what we have seen in the experience of Gideon in Judges 6:34 above (compare also Luke 24:49).

Azariah the son of Oded 2 Chr 15:1-2:

1 The Spirit of God came upon Azariah the son
of Oded, 2 and he went out to meet Asa and said to

him, "Hear me, Asa, and all Judah and Benjamin: The LORD is with you while you are with him. If you seek him, he will be found by you, but if you forsake him, he will forsake you.

The expression "the Spirit of God came on Azariah" (hāyətāh 'ālāw rūah 'ēlōhīm) is again literally "started to be upon him" (understood in an ingressive sense).

Jahaziel the son of Zechariah When the Spirit came upon Jahaziel he gave a stunning powerful prophecy (2 Chr 20:13-17):

13 Meanwhile all Judah stood before the LORD, with their little ones, their wives, and their children. 14 And the Spirit of the LORD came upon Jahaziel the son of Zechariah, son of Benaiah, son of Jeiel, son of Mattaniah, a Levite of the sons of Asaph, in the midst of the assembly. 15 And he said, "Listen, all Judah and inhabitants of Jerusalem and King Jehoshaphat: Thus says the LORD to you, 'Do not be afraid and do not be dismayed at this great horde, for the battle is not yours but God's. 16 Tomorrow go down against them. Behold, they will come up by the ascent of Ziz. You will find them at the end of the valley, east of the wilderness of Jeruel. 17 You will not need to fight in this battle. Stand firm, hold your position, and see the salvation of the LORD on your behalf, O Judah and Jerusalem.' Do not be afraid and do not be dismayed. Tomorrow go out against them, and the LORD will be with you."

The expression "the Spirit of the LORD came upon Jahaziel" (2 Chr 20:14; *hāyətāh 'ālāw rūaḥ yhwḥ*) is again literally "started to be upon him" (understood in an ingressive sense).

Zechariah the son of Jehoiada Zechariah was one of the prophets who was killed because of his message (2 Chr 24:20-22):

20 Then the Spirit of God clothed Zechariah the son of Jehoiada the priest, and he stood above the people, and said to them, "Thus says God, 'Why do you break the commandments of the LORD, so that you cannot prosper? Because you have forsaken the LORD, he has forsaken you.'" 21 But they conspired against him, and by command of the king they stoned him with stones in the court of the house of the LORD. 22 Thus Joash the king did not remember the kindness that Jehoiada, Zechariah's father, had shown him, but killed his son. And when he was dying, he said, "May the LORD see and avenge!"

For the expression "the Spirit of God clothed Zechariah" (*wə-rūaḥ 'ēlōhīm lāḥṣāh 'et zəḵaryāh*) compare Jgs 6:34 and 1 Chr 12:18 above.

Ezekiel After Ezekiel had seen the glory of the Lord, he had fallen to the ground on his face. Now he is commanded (Ezekiel 2:1-2):

1 And he said to me, "Son of man, stand on your feet, and I will speak with you." 2 And as he spoke to me, the Spirit entered into me (*watāḇō'*

ḥî rūah) and set me on my feet, and I heard him speaking to me.

Here the Spirit of God had to come into Ezekiel to help him to stand up. Ezekiel had the same experience a second time (Ez 3:22-24):

22 And the hand of the LORD was upon me there. And he said to me, “Arise, go out into the valley, and there I will speak with you.” 23 So I arose and went out into the valley, and behold, the glory of the LORD stood there, like the glory that I had seen by the Chebar canal, and I fell on my face. 24 But the Spirit entered into me (watābō’ ḥî rūah) and set me on my feet, and he spoke with me and said to me, “Go, shut yourself within your house.

God gives Ezekiel a prophecy of doom through the Spirit (Ez 11:5-8):

5 And the Spirit of the LORD fell upon me and he said to me, “Say, Thus says the LORD: So you think, O house of Israel. For I know the things that come into your mind. 6 You have multiplied your slain in this city and have filled its streets with the slain. 7 Therefore thus says the Lord GOD: Your slain whom you have laid in the midst of it, they are the meat, and this city is the cauldron, but you shall be brought out of the midst of it. 8 You have feared the sword, and I will bring the sword upon you, declares the Lord GOD.

The expression "the Spirit of the LORD fell upon me" (wa-tippōl 'ālay rūaḥ yhwh), is literal (compare in the New Testament to Acts 8:16; 10:44 and 11:15).

Micah In Micah 3:8 the prophet is speaking about his own spirit filled service in contrast to the false prophets (see Micah 3:5-12):

But truly I am full of power
by the spirit of the Lord,
and of judgment, and of might
(wə-'ûlām 'ānōkî mālē'tî kōaḥ
'eṭ rūaḥ yhwh
û-mišpāt û-ḡəbûrāh)
to declare unto Jacob his transgression,
and to Israel his sin.⁶⁵

Micah means that he is filled with power, just judgment, and might by the work of the Spirit of the Lord in order to fulfill his prophetic ministry.

The Holy Spirit working through the prophets There are also some passages in the Old Testament speaking summarily about the service of the prophets in the power of God's Spirit. The leading Levites in the time of Nehemiah (about 445 B.C.)⁶⁶ pray in Nehemiah 9:30-31:

30 Many years you bore with them and warned
them by your Spirit through your prophets. Yet

65. KJV, The Holy Bible - King James Version

66. F. Ch. Fensham, The Books of Ezra and Nehemiah (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Eerdmans, 1982), , p. 7.

they would not give ear. Therefore you gave them into the hand of the peoples of the lands. 31 Nevertheless, in your great mercies you did not make an end of them or forsake them, for you are a gracious and merciful God.

When they say, "You ... warned them by your Spirit through your prophets" (watā'ad bām bə-rûḥākā bə-yad nāḥî'êkā) they mean that God's Spirit used the prophets to testify the truth to them and admonish them.

Hosea describes the depravity in Israel and the consequences for the prophets in Hosea 9:7-8:

7 The days of punishment have come;
the days of recompense have come;
Israel shall know it.
The prophet is a fool; the man of the spirit is mad
(ʿēwîl han-nāḥî' māsuggā' ʾîš hā-rûḥ),
because of your great iniquity and great hatred.
8 The prophet is the watchman of Ephraim with my
God;
yet a fowler's snare is on all his ways,
and hatred in the house of his God.

The word "prophet" (han-nāḥî') in 9:7 is used in parallel with the expression "the man of the spirit" (ʾîš hā-rûḥ). Both expressions denote the same person. The "spirit" is God's Spirit. The prophet knows of the coming danger for Ephraim because God has warned him. He is like a watchman for Ephraim. But they do not thank him for his faithful duty. They hate him and want to catch him.

According to Joel 2:28-29 (Hebrew 3:1-2) the outpouring of God's Spirit "on all flesh" in the last days will result in the use of spiritual gifts, one of them being prophecy:

28 "And it shall come to pass afterward,
that I will pour out my Spirit on all flesh;
your sons and your daughters shall prophesy
(wə-hāyāh 'āḥārê kēn 'ešpōk 'eṭ rūḥî 'al kōl bāsār
wə-nibbə'û bənêkēm û-bənôṭîkēm),
your old men shall dream dreams,
and your young men shall see visions.
29 Even on the male and female servants
in those days I will pour out my Spirit.
(wə-gam 'al hā-'āḇāḏîm wə-'al haš-šəpāḥôt
bayyāmîm hā-hēmmāh 'ešpōk 'eṭ rūḥî)

For the fulfillment of this prophecy see Acts 2:16-21. For the use of the "outpouring of the Holy Spirit" compare Acts 2:17.18.33; 10:45; Rom 5:5 and Titus 3:5-6.

Zechariah reflects on the disobedience of former Israel in Zec 7:11-12:

11 But they refused to pay attention and turned a stubborn shoulder and stopped their ears that they might not hear. 12 They made their hearts diamond-hard lest they should hear the law and the words that the LORD of hosts had sent by his Spirit through the former prophets ('āšer šālah yḥwh šəḇā'ôt bə-rûḥô bə-yaḏ han-nəḇî'im hā-ri'sōnîm). Therefore great anger came from the LORD of hosts.

Not to obey the words of God, his prophets, or His Spirit, is one

and the same thing, resulting in the wrath of God falling upon sinners.

He miraculously transports people from one place to another.

Elijah It seems to have been a well known phenomenon that God would take the prophet from one place and put him down in another. This idea is what shocked the faithful Obadiah who was in charge of the household of the extremely wicked king Ahab of Israel (9th century B.C.). Elijah had ordered Obadiah to tell Ahab that he wanted to meet him. His answer was (1 Kings 18:9-12):

9 And he said, "How have I sinned, that you would give your servant into the hand of Ahab, to kill me? 10 As the LORD your God lives, there is no nation or kingdom where my lord has not sent to seek you. And when they would say, 'He is not here,' he would take an oath of the kingdom or nation, that they had not found you. 11 And now you say, 'Go, tell your lord, "Behold, Elijah is here."' 12 And as soon as I have gone from you, the Spirit of the LORD will carry you I know not where (wə-rûaḥ yhwh yiśśā'ākā 'al 'ăšer lō' 'ēdā'). And so, when I come and tell Ahab and he cannot find you, he will kill me, although I your servant have feared the LORD from my youth.

We find the same idea in 2 Kings 2,1-18 when Elijah was taken up to heaven, this time "transported" away forever, joining Enoch who had had a similar experience long before (Gen 5:24; Hebrews 11:5). When Elijah had gone, the "sons of the prophets"

had the idea to look for him (2 Kings 2:16-18):

16 And they said to him, “Behold now, there are with your servants fifty strong men. Please let them go and seek your master. It may be that the Spirit of the LORD has caught him up and cast him upon some mountain (pen nəśā’ô rūaḥ yḥwh wayyašlikēḥû bə-’aḥaḍ he-hārîm) or into some valley.” And he said, “You shall not send.” 17 But when they urged him till he was ashamed, he said, “Send.” They sent therefore fifty men. And for three days they sought him but did not find him. 18 And they came back to him while he was staying at Jericho, and he said to them, “Did I not say to you, ‘Do not go’?”

The idea of the "sons of the prophets" also presupposes that Elijah had had these experiences quite often.

Ezekiel Another prophet with this experience was Ezekiel. Ez 3:12-15:

12 Then the Spirit lifted me up (wattiśśā’ēnî rūaḥ), and I heard behind me the voice of a great earthquake: “Blessed be the glory of the LORD from its place!” 13 It was the sound of the wings of the living creatures as they touched one another, and the sound of the wheels beside them, and the sound of a great earthquake. 14 The Spirit lifted me up and took me away, and I went (wə-rūaḥ nəśā’aṭnî wattiqqāḥēnî wā-’ēlēḵ) in bitterness in the heat of my spirit, the hand of the LORD being

strong upon me. 15 And I came to the exiles at Tel-abib, who were dwelling by the Chebar canal, and I sat where they were dwelling. And I sat there overwhelmed among them seven days.

After Ezekiel's call in Ez 1-3 he gives an exact date for another similar experience in Ez 8:1-4:

1 In the sixth year, in the sixth month, on the fifth day of the month, as I sat in my house, with the elders of Judah sitting before me, the hand of the Lord GOD fell upon me there. 2 Then I looked, and behold, a form that had the appearance of a man. Below what appeared to be his waist was fire, and above his waist was something like the appearance of brightness, like gleaming metal. 3 He put out the form of a hand and took me by a lock of my head, and the Spirit lifted me up between earth and heaven (wattiśśā' 'ōtî rūaḥ bên hā-'āreṣ ûbên haššāmayim) and brought me in visions of God to Jerusalem, to the entrance of the gateway of the inner court that faces north, where was the seat of the image of jealousy, which provokes to jealousy. 4 And behold, the glory of the God of Israel was there, like the vision that I saw in the valley.

It is interesting that this visionary transportation experience opens and closes the vision cycle in Ez 8-11 which has been summarized in this way:

The Temple is defiled with abominations of every description; therefore the glory of the Lord de-

parts from it and from the city, and dedicates them to flames."⁶⁷

So we read in 11:1-2:

1 The Spirit lifted me up and brought me (wat-tiśśā' 'ōfi rūaḥ wattabē' 'ōfi) to the east gate of the house of the LORD, which faces east. And behold, at the entrance of the gateway there were twenty-five men. And I saw among them Jaazaniah the son of Azzur, and Pelatiah the son of Benaiah, princes of the people. 2 And he said to me, "Son of man, these are the men who devise iniquity and who give wicked counsel in this city..."

And at the end of this chapter (11:24-25):

24 And the Spirit lifted me up and brought me in the vision by the Spirit of God into Chaldea, to the exiles (wə-rūaḥ nəsā'aṭənî wattəḥî'ēnî kaśdîmāḥ 'el haggôlāḥ bam-mar'eh bə-rūaḥ 'ēlōhîm) Then the vision that I had seen went up from me. 25 And I told the exiles all the things that the LORD had shown me.

Again in Ez 37:1 this experience stands at the beginning of a vision; it is the vision of the dry bones which will be made alive again miraculously by God's Spirit:

67. See Emil G. Hirsch and Karl Heinrich Cornill, Book of Ezekiel, Jewish Encyclopedia, [accessed May 17, 2011], 2002, <http://jewishencyclopedia.com/view.jsp?artid=563&letter=E&search=Book%20of%20Ezekiel>

The hand of the LORD was upon me, and he brought me out in the Spirit of the LORD (hāyāṭāh ‘ālay yaḏ yhwḥ wayyôṣi’ēnî ḥērûaḥ yhwḥ) and set me down in the middle of the valley; it was full of bones.

Ezekiel had been transported in Ez 8-11 to Jerusalem and back to witness the sins of Jerusalem and to prophecy that God's glory had left his temple and the city. Again he has this experience in Ez 43:1-5 to witness the opposite, namely that God's glory will return to the New Jerusalem in the age of salvation:

1 Then he led me to the gate, the gate facing east. 2 And behold, the glory of the God of Israel was coming from the east. And the sound of his coming was like the sound of many waters, and the earth shone with his glory. 3 And the vision I saw was just like the vision that I had seen when he came to destroy the city, and just like the vision that I had seen by the Chebar canal. And I fell on my face. 4 As the glory of the LORD entered the temple by the gate facing east, 5 the Spirit lifted me up and brought me into the inner court (wat-tîśšā’ēnî rūaḥ wattəḥî’ēnî ’el he-ḥāṣēr happənîmî); and behold, the glory of the LORD filled the temple.

6.3.3 God's Spirit as a Regenerating Gift for God's People.

Moses' wish

When the spirit came upon all the 70 elders in spite of the fact that two had been disobedient before, it was Joshua who wanted Moses to stop the two. But Moses replied (Nm 11:29):

But Moses said to him, “Are you jealous for my sake? Would that all the LORD's people were prophets, that the LORD would put his Spirit on them!” (û-mî yittēn kōl ‘am yhw̄h nāḇî’îm kî yittēn yhw̄h ‘eṭ rūḥô ‘ălêhem)

This is the first time in the Bible that we have the wish that all might receive God's Spirit.

Isaiah

Later God promised through prophets that he would do exactly this. We learn from Isaiah 32:14-17, that the inhabited land will first become like a desert in God's judgment, but after the pouring out of the Spirit, the wilderness will be changed again to a fertile field:

14 For the palace is forsaken,
the populous city deserted;
the hill and the watchtower
will become dens forever,
a joy of wild donkeys,
a pasture of flocks;
15 until the Spirit is poured upon us from on high,

(‘aḏ yē‘āreh ‘ālênû rûaḥ mimmārôm)
 and the wilderness becomes a fruitful field,
 and the fruitful field is deemed a forest.
 16 Then justice will dwell in the wilderness,
 and righteousness abide in the fruitful field.
 17 And the effect of righteousness will be peace,
 and the result of righteousness, quietness and trust
 forever.

The same idea of the great change and revival through God's Spirit being poured out from above is repeated in Isaiah 44:3-4:

3 For I will pour water on the thirsty land,
 and streams on the dry ground;
 I will pour my Spirit upon your offspring,
 (‘eṣṣōq rûḥî ‘al zar‘ekā)
 and my blessing on your descendants.
 4 They shall spring up among the grass
 like willows by flowing streams.

God's Spirit is like rain changing the desert into a fruitful garden.

In Is 59:20-21 the future gift of God's Spirit is related to the coming of the Lord for judgment (59:16-19) and salvation (59:20-21):

20 “And a Redeemer will come to Zion,
 to those in Jacob who turn from transgression,” declares the LORD.
 21 “And as for me, this is my covenant with them,”
 says the LORD:
 “My Spirit that is upon you,

and my words that I have put in your mouth,
 shall not depart out of your mouth,
 (rûhî 'ăšer 'ālêkâ
 û-ḏəḥāray 'ăšer śamtî bə-ṗîkâ
 lō' yāmûšû mippîkâ)
 or out of the mouth of your offspring,
 or out of the mouth of your children's offspring,"
 says the LORD,
 "from this time forth and forevermore."

Joel

The same idea is also true for Joel 2:28-29: God's Spirit will be poured out on all in the eschatological context of the coming of the Lord for judgment (2:31; 3:2-15) and salvation (2:32; 3:1):

28 "And it shall come to pass afterward,
 that I will pour out my Spirit on all flesh;
 your sons and your daughters shall prophesy
 (wə-hāyāh 'āḥrê kēn 'ešpôk 'eṭ rûhî 'al kōl bāsār
 wə-nibbə'û bənêkēn û-ḥənôṭêkēn),
 your old men shall dream dreams,
 and your young men shall see visions.
 29 Even on the male and female servants
 in those days I will pour out my Spirit.
 (wə-gam 'al hā-'āḇāḏîm wə-'al haš-šəṗāḥôṭ
 bayyāmîm hā-hēmmāh 'ešpôk 'eṭ rûhî)

Ezekiel

Ezekiel uses, for the coming renewal of God's people, these words (Ez 11:19-20) :

19 And I will give them one heart,
and a new spirit I will put within them.
(wə-rûaḥ ḥăḏāšāh 'ettēn bə-qirbəkem)
I will remove the heart of stone from their flesh
and give them a heart of flesh,
20 that they may walk in my statutes
and keep my rules and obey them.
And they shall be my people,
and I will be their God.

If we ask what kind of "new spirit" God puts into them, we might turn to Ez 18:30-32:

30 "Therefore I will judge you, O house of Israel,
every one according to his ways, declares the Lord
GOD.
Repent and turn from all your transgressions,
lest iniquity be your ruin.
31 Cast away from you all the transgressions
that you have committed,
and make yourselves a new heart and a new spirit!
(wa-‘āšû lākem lēḥ ḥăḏāš wə-rûaḥ ḥăḏāšāh)
Why will you die, O house of Israel?
32 For I have no pleasure in the death of anyone,
declares the Lord GOD; so turn, and live."

In the light of Ez 36:24-27 it becomes clear that the receiving of the "new spirit" in these verses is related to receiving the Spirit of God:

24 I will take you from the nations
and gather you from all the countries

and bring you into your own land.
 25 I will sprinkle clean water on you,
 and you shall be clean from all your uncleannesses,
 and from all your idols I will cleanse you.
 26 And I will give you a new heart,
 and a new spirit I will put within you.
 And I will remove the heart of stone from your flesh
 and give you a heart of flesh.
 27 And I will put my Spirit within you,
 (wə-’eṭ rūḥî ’ettēn bə-qirbəkem)
 and cause you to walk in my statutes
 and be careful to obey my rules.

Ez 39:28-29 points us to the same truth that the great change of Israel happens through God's Spirit having been poured out on them:

28 Then they shall know that I am the LORD their
 God,
 because I sent them into exile among the nations
 and then assembled them into their own land.
 I will leave none of them remaining among the na-
 tions anymore.
 29 And I will not hide my face anymore from them,
 when I pour out my Spirit upon the house of Israel,
 (’āšer šāpāktî ’eṭ rūḥî ‘al bêt yisrā’ēl)
 declares the Lord GOD.”

In Ez 37:11 we learn about the Israelites after the destruction of Jerusalem, that they have lost all hope as a nation:

Then he said to me, “Son of man,

these bones are the whole house of Israel.
Behold, they say, 'Our bones are dried up,
and our hope is lost; we are clean cut off.'

But with this background the powerful vision of Ez 37:1-14 teaches that God is able to grant the dry bones new life, to resurrect a vast army out of the dead. Ez 37:5-10 :

5 Thus says the Lord GOD to these bones:
Behold, I will cause breath to enter you, and you
shall live.

6 And I will lay sinews upon you,
and will cause flesh to come upon you,
and cover you with skin,
and put breath in you, and you shall live,
and you shall know that I am the LORD."

7 So I prophesied as I was commanded.
And as I prophesied, there was a sound, and behold,
a rattling,
and the bones came together, bone to its bone.

8 And I looked, and behold, there were sinews on
them,
and flesh had come upon them, and skin had covered them.

But there was no breath in them.

9 Then he said to me, "Prophecy to the breath;
prophecy, son of man, and say to the breath,
Thus says the Lord GOD: Come from the four winds,
O breath,

and breathe on these slain, that they may live."

10 So I prophesied as he commanded me,
and the breath came into them,

and they lived and stood on their feet,
an exceedingly great army.

Much here reminds us of Gn 2:7 where God created Adam in two steps, first his body from the "dust of the ground", and secondly breathing life into him. Ez 37:7-8 resembles the first step, Ez 37:9-10 the second step. We have already seen in other passages that God's Spirit has a role in the creation of man and in sustaining the life of man. The same is true in this passage because God explains this vision in 37:11-14:

11 Then he said to me, "Son of man,
these bones are the whole house of Israel.
Behold, they say, 'Our bones are dried up,
and our hope is lost; we are clean cut off.'
12 Therefore prophesy, and say to them, Thus says
the Lord GOD:
Behold, I will open your graves
and raise you from your graves, O my people.
And I will bring you into the land of Israel.
13 And you shall know that I am the LORD,
when I open your graves,
and raise you from your graves, O my people.
14 And I will put my Spirit within you, and you
shall live,
(wə-nāṭattî rūḥî bākem wiḥyîtem)
and I will place you in your own land.
Then you shall know that I am the LORD;
I have spoken, and I will do it, declares the LORD."

According to 37:14 the instrument of the regeneration of Israel is God's Spirit.

Zechariah

Zechariah teaches us like Isaiah and Joel, that God's Spirit will be poured out on all of Israel in the eschatological context of the coming of the Lord, for judgment (Zac 12:9) and salvation (12:10-13:1):

- 9 And on that day I will seek to destroy
all the nations that come against Jerusalem.
- 10 “And I will pour out
on the house of David and the inhabitants of Jerusalem
a spirit of grace and pleas for mercy,
(wə-šāpāktî ‘al bêt dāwîd
wə-‘al yôšēb yērûšālaïm rūaḥ ḥēn wə-ṭaḥānûnîm)
so that, when they look on me, on him whom they
have pierced,
they shall mourn for him, as one mourns for an only
child,
and weep bitterly over him, as one weeps over a
firstborn.
- 11 On that day the mourning in Jerusalem will be
as great
as the mourning for Hadad-rimmon in the plain of
Megiddo.
- 12 The land shall mourn, each family by itself:
the family of the house of David by itself,
and their wives by themselves;
the family of the house of Nathan by itself,
and their wives by themselves;
- 13 the family of the house of Levi by itself,
and their wives by themselves;
the family of the Shimeites by itself,

and their wives by themselves;

14 and all the families that are left, each by itself,
and their wives by themselves.

13:1 On that day there shall be a fountain opened
for the house of David and the inhabitants of Jerusalem,
to cleanse them from sin and uncleanness.

6.4 The Holy Spirit Empowers People in the New Testament.

6.4.1 The Holy Spirit Has a Unique Relationship with Jesus.

Mary Conceived Jesus by the Holy Spirit.

The incarnation, the miracle that God became man in Jesus Christ, is the greatest of all miracles. God and man are united in one person. According to the Holy Scriptures this miracle was brought about by the work of the Holy Spirit. We read in Matthew 1:18-23:

18 Now the birth of Jesus Christ took place in this way. When his mother Mary had been betrothed to Joseph, before they came together she was found to be with child from the Holy Spirit. 19 And her husband Joseph, being a just man and unwilling to put her to shame, resolved to divorce her quietly. 20 But as he considered these things, behold, an angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream, saying, “Joseph, son of David, do not fear to take Mary as your wife, for that which is con-

ceived in her is from the Holy Spirit⁶⁸. 21 She will bear a son, and you shall call his name Jesus, for he will save his people from their sins.” 22 All this took place to fulfill what the Lord had spoken by the prophet: 23 “Behold, the virgin shall conceive and bear a son, and they shall call his name Immanuel” (which means, God with us).

We are told twice (1:18 and 20) that Jesus was conceived by Mary through the work of the Holy Spirit. Jesus was conceived and born by a virgin in fulfilment of Is 7:14. He became the "Immanuel", "God with us", "God with man". Here, of course, the meaning is that God is with us to save us. Therefore the name of Jesus was given: "The Lord saves".

While Matthew 1 gives us a testimony more from the perspective of Joseph, Luke 1 shows us how Mary heard the news of her special calling. When she was told that she will become the mother of the Messiah, she has a question (Luke 1:34-38):

34 And Mary said to the angel, “How will this be, since I am a virgin?” 35 And the angel answered her, “The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you; therefore the child to be born will be called holy—the Son of God⁶⁹. 36 And behold, your relative Elizabeth in her old age has also conceived a

68. ταῦτα δὲ αὐτοῦ ἐνθυμηθέντος ἰδοὺ ἄγγελος κυρίου κατ' ὄναρ ἐφάνη αὐτῷ λέγων• Ἰωσήφ υἱὸς Δαβὶδ, μὴ φοβηθῆς παραλαβεῖν Μαρίαν τὴν γυναικὰ σου, τὸ γὰρ ἐν αὐτῇ γεννηθὲν ἐκ πνεύματος ἔστιν ἁγίου•

69. καὶ ἀποκριθεὶς ὁ ἄγγελος εἶπεν αὐτῇ• Πνεῦμα ἅγιον ἐπελεύσεται ἐπὶ σέ, καὶ δύναμις Ὑψίστου ἐπισκιάσει σοι• διὸ καὶ τὸ γεννώμενον ἅγιον κληθήσεται, υἱὸς θεοῦ•

son, and this is the sixth month with her who was called barren. 37 For nothing will be impossible with God.” 38 And Mary said, “Behold, I am the servant of the Lord; let it be to me according to your word.” And the angel departed from her.

Because Mary conceived Jesus by the power of the Holy Spirit, Jesus would be called "holy" and the "Son of God". All this is a great miracle from God, who can do what is impossible for man.

The Holy Spirit Descends on Jesus and Stays on Him.

Like a dove We have discussed these passages (Mt 3:16; Mk 1:10; Luke 3:22; John 1:32-33) already above (section 6.2.2).

As prophesied by Isaiah God speaks through Isaiah (42:1):

Behold my servant, whom I uphold,
my chosen, in whom my soul delights;
I have put my Spirit upon him;
he will bring forth justice to the nations.

It is the first presentation of the special "servant of the Lord" in Isaiah's book. He will be gifted with the Holy Spirit and be a source of delight for God. He will change the world by revealing and implementing God's law and justice amongst all nations. Matthew tells us that this is being fulfilled through the mission of Jesus (12:17-21):

17 This was to fulfill what was spoken by the prophet
Isaiah:
18 Behold, my servant whom I have chosen,

my beloved with whom my soul is well pleased.
I will put my Spirit upon him,
and he will proclaim justice to the Gentiles.
19 He will not quarrel or cry aloud,
nor will anyone hear his voice in the streets;
20 a bruised reed he will not break,
and a smoldering wick he will not quench,
until he brings justice to victory;
21 and in his name the Gentiles will hope"

In Matthew 12 the contrast is between the Jews who want to kill Jesus (12:14-16) and the Gentiles who will hope in him (12:18.20.21). Jesus has the power to change mankind because the Holy Spirit is on him and he is God's servant to accomplish this task.

In Luke 4:16-21 we see Jesus in his home town Nazareth claiming to fulfill Is 61:1-2:

16 And he came to Nazareth, where he had been brought up. And as was his custom, he went to the synagogue on the Sabbath day, and he stood up to read. 17 And the scroll of the prophet Isaiah was given to him. He unrolled the scroll and found the place where it was written,
18 "The Spirit of the Lord is upon me,
because he has anointed me
to proclaim good news to the poor.
He has sent me to proclaim liberty to the captives
and recovering of sight to the blind,
to set at liberty those who are oppressed,

19 to proclaim the year of the Lord's favor."⁷⁰
 20 And he rolled up the scroll and gave it back to the attendant and sat down. And the eyes of all in the synagogue were fixed on him. 21 And he began to say to them, "Today this Scripture has been fulfilled in your hearing."

In this passage Jesus himself reveals to us that the great success of his revival movement can be traced back to the power of the Holy Spirit resting on him.

Jesus baptizes with the Holy Spirit.

We have already looked at these references (Mt 3:11; Mk 1:8; Luke 3:16; John 1:33) above (section 6.2.2).

Jesus was full of the Holy Spirit.

We have seen earlier that Jesus is one of a few people in the New Testament who were constantly full of the Holy Spirit (Luke 4:1-2):

1 And Jesus, full of the Holy Spirit, returned from the Jordan and was led by the Spirit in the wilderness 2 for forty days, being tempted by the devil. And he ate nothing during those days. And when they were ended, he was hungry.

70. 18 Πνεῦμα κυρίου ἐπ' ἐμέ, οὗ ἕνεκεν ἔχρισέν με εὐαγγελίσασθαι πτωχοῖς, ἀπέσταλκέν με κηρύξαι αἰχμαλώτοις ἄφρσιν καὶ τυφλοῖς ἀνάβλεψιν, ἀποστεῖλαι τεθραυσμένους ἐν ἀφῆσει, 19 κηρύξαι ἐνιαυτὸν κυρίου δεκτόν.

This empowered him to be victorious even under spiritual attack from the devil and to overcome all kinds of evil.

Jesus was guided by the Holy Spirit.

Closely related to his being full of the Holy Spirit is the fact that the Spirit could guide Jesus. We have just seen this in Luke 4:1. Matthew 4:1 is a close parallel:

Then Jesus was led up by the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted by the devil⁷¹.

Mk 1:12 states the same:

The Spirit immediately drove him out into the wilderness⁷².

The guidance of the Holy Spirit here is specific, happening at a certain time in a certain place for a special task.

Jesus was working in the power of the Holy Spirit.

Before Luke mentions that Jesus went to his home town Nazareth and was rejected there, he gives the following summary statement of the activities of Jesus in Luke 4:14-15:

14 And Jesus returned in the power of the Spirit to Galilee, and a report about him went out through all the surrounding country.⁷³ 15 And he taught in their synagogues, being glorified by all.

71. Τότε ὁ Ἰησοῦς ἀνήχθη εἰς τὴν ἔρημον ὑπὸ τοῦ πνεύματος, πειρασθῆναι ὑπὸ τοῦ διαβόλου.

72. Καὶ εὐθὺς τὸ πνεῦμα αὐτὸν ἐκβάλλει εἰς τὴν ἔρημον.

73. Καὶ ὑπέστρεψεν ὁ Ἰησοῦς ἐν τῇ δυνάμει τοῦ πνεύματος εἰς τὴν Γαλιλαίαν. καὶ φήμη ἐξῆλθεν καθ' ὅλης τῆς περιχώρου περὶ αὐτοῦ.

The context makes it very clear that the teaching of Jesus was very powerful (4:15) and miracles happened as well (4:23).

A special kind of miracle in the power of the Holy Spirit was the casting out of demons (Matthew 12:24-30):

24 But when the Pharisees heard it, they said, “It is only by Beelzebul, the prince of demons, that this man casts out demons.” 25 Knowing their thoughts, he said to them, “Every kingdom divided against itself is laid waste, and no city or house divided against itself will stand. 26 And if Satan casts out Satan, he is divided against himself. How then will his kingdom stand? 27 And if I cast out demons by Beelzebul, by whom do your sons cast them out? Therefore they will be your judges. 28 But if it is by the Spirit of God that I cast out demons, then the kingdom of God has come upon you. 29 Or how can someone enter a strong man's house and plunder his goods, unless he first binds the strong man? Then indeed he may plunder his house. 30 Whoever is not with me is against me, and whoever does not gather with me scatters.

The great power of Jesus to cast out demons was not doubted, even by his enemies. All agreed that Jesus had great spiritual power, but they explained it in different ways. His enemies accused him of having this power from the devil (Beelzebul)⁷⁴ himself. But Jesus answers them that if this were the case, then Satan would cast out Satan, and this would mean civil war within the kingdom of darkness. This would also imply the end of this

74. Compare 2 Kings 1:2-3.6.16.

dark kingdom. So Jesus proves that their ideas are illogical. The only true explanation left is: "But if it is by the Spirit of God that I cast out demons, then the kingdom of God has come upon you" (Matthew 12:28).

Jesus could be jubilant in the Holy Spirit.

In Luke 10:1ff Jesus sends the 72 disciples out two by two. When they came back and gave a report of what had happened, Jesus was full of joy (10:21-22):

21 In that same hour he rejoiced in the Holy Spirit and said⁷⁵, I thank you, Father, Lord of heaven and earth, that you have hidden these things from the wise and understanding and revealed them to little children; yes, Father, for such was your gracious will. 22 All things have been handed over to me by my Father, and no one knows who the Son is except the Father, or who the Father is except the Son and anyone to whom the Son chooses to reveal him.

This teaches us that the happiness of God (1 Tim 6:15 makariōs⁷⁶) is also a characteristic of the Holy Spirit and is found in the life of Jesus Christ. Today in Christ, wherever the Holy Spirit works, you find joy as fruit of the Holy Spirit (Gal 5:22) and as part of the kingdom of God (Rom 14:17).

75. Ἐν αὐτῇ τῇ ὥρᾳ ἠγαλλιάσατο τῷ πνεύματι τῷ ἁγίῳ καὶ εἶπεν•

76. ἦν καιροῖς ἰδίους δείξει ὁ μακάριος καὶ μόνος δυνάστης, ὁ βασιλεὺς τῶν βασιλευνόντων καὶ κύριος τῶν κυριευόντων. μακάριος means happy, joyful. It is often translated with "blessed".

God has given Jesus the Holy Spirit fully, not in portions.

Within the Gospel of John we have the witness of John the Baptist about Jesus (John 3:30-36):

30 He must increase, but I must decrease. 31 He who comes from above is above all. He who is of the earth belongs to the earth and speaks in an earthly way. He who comes from heaven is above all. 32 He bears witness to what he has seen and heard, yet no one receives his testimony. 33 Whoever receives his testimony sets his seal to this, that God is true. 34 For he whom God has sent utters the words of God, for he gives the Spirit without measure.⁷⁷ 35 The Father loves the Son and has given all things into his hand. 36 Whoever believes in the Son has eternal life; whoever does not obey the Son shall not see life, but the wrath of God remains on him.

In this testimony Jesus is the one "who comes from above and is above all", while John himself is "of the earth" (31). John says, that the teaching of Jesus is special, because Jesus is an eye witness of heavenly realities and truths (32). John knows the fact that people normally will not accept the teaching of Jesus, because it is too foreign for them, and only some will do so and acknowledge that "God is true" (32-33). And now comes the verse because of which we have quoted this section: "For he whom God has sent utters the words of God, for he

77. ὃν γὰρ ἀπέστειλεν ὁ θεὸς τὰ ῥήματα τοῦ θεοῦ λαλεῖ, οὐ γὰρ ἐκ μέτρου δίδωσιν τὸ πνεῦμα.

gives the Spirit without measure." The fact that Jesus has come from above and is above all and teaches God's truth, is related to the other fact that he has God's Spirit in an unlimited way, without measure. So John the Baptist here teaches us that God the Father has given everything to Jesus and that God the Spirit is fully with him. The Trinity works in Jesus for the salvation of all mankind. Therefore whoever does not want to have faith and trust in the Son, remains under the wrath of God (36).

John the apostle, who has noted down this testimony of John the Baptist, gives us the same teaching in the book of Revelation only in other words (3:1):

And to the angel of the church in Sardis write: The words of him who has the seven spirits of God and the seven stars.⁷⁸

And later in 5:6 we read:

And between the throne and the four living creatures and among the elders I saw a Lamb standing, as though it had been slain, with seven horns and with seven eyes, which are the seven spirits of God sent out into all the earth.⁷⁹

This means, as we have already seen above, that Jesus Christ is uniquely related to the Holy Spirit and has full possession of the full Spirit of God. The two of them cooperate in a miraculous

78. Τάδε λέγει ὁ ἔχων τὰ ἑπτὰ πνεύματα τοῦ θεοῦ καὶ τοὺς ἑπτὰ ἀστέρας•

79. Καὶ εἶδον ἐν μέσῳ τοῦ θρόνου καὶ τῶν τεσσάρων ζώων καὶ ἐν μέσῳ τῶν πρεσβυτέρων ἄρνιον ἐστηκὸς ὡς ἐσφαγμένος, ἔχων κέρατα ἑπτὰ καὶ ὀφθαλμοὺς ἑπτὰ, οἳ εἰσιν τὰ ἑπτὰ πνεύματα τοῦ θεοῦ, ἀπεσταλμένοι εἰς πᾶσαν τὴν γῆν.

way to grant Jesus Christ a worldwide influence and spiritual power to save people from all nations and unite them to a spiritual temple and priesthood.

Jesus had to be glorified before the Spirit's coming.

We read in John 7:39:

Now this he said about the Spirit, whom those who believed in him were to receive, for as yet the Spirit had not been given, because Jesus was not yet glorified.

We have seen above section 6.2.2 that the glorification of Jesus includes his crucifixion, resurrection, and going to the father which had to happen before the Holy Spirit could come and be received by the believers.

The Holy Spirit is a witness to Jesus.

According to John 15:26 a main task of the Holy Spirit is to affirm that Jesus is really the one he claims to be:

But when the Helper comes, whom I will send to you from the Father, the Spirit of truth, who proceeds from the Father, he will bear witness about me.⁸⁰

John presents this idea not only in his Gospel but also in his first letter (5:6-9):

80. "Όταν ἔλθῃ ὁ παράκλητος ὃν ἐγὼ πέμψω ὑμῖν παρὰ τοῦ πατρὸς, τὸ πνεῦμα τῆς ἀληθείας ὃ παρὰ τοῦ πατρὸς ἐκπορεύεται, ἐκεῖνος μαρτυρήσει περὶ ἐμοῦ•

6 This is he who came by water and blood—Jesus Christ; not by the water only but by the water and the blood. And the Spirit is the one who testifies, because the Spirit is the truth. 7 For there are three that testify: 8 the Spirit and the water and the blood; and these three agree.⁸¹ 9 If we receive the testimony of men, the testimony of God is greater, for this is the testimony of God that he has borne concerning his Son.

The testimony of the the Holy Spirit is here combined with the "water" and the "blood" and all three are identified with "testimony of God ... concerning his Son" which is greater than any human testimony. The "blood" points to the death of Jesus at the cross (see John 19:31-37, esp. 34-35). He was a real human being with blood and flesh, God's Word incarnate (John 1:1-3.14). There is one audible testimony of God the Father when Jesus came closer to the cross, presented to us by John (12:23-32, esp. 27-28). The "water" probably points to the baptism movement of John who thus prepared the way for the coming Messiah, especially to the baptism of Jesus when God the father through another audible voice declared Jesus to be his son and when the Holy Spirit descended visibly on him (John 1:29-34; Mt 3:16-17).

In another book of John we have the teaching of the Holy Spirit as a witness for Jesus (Rev 19:10):

81. 6 Οὗτός ἐστιν ὁ ἐλθὼν δι' ὕδατος καὶ αἵματος, Ἰησοῦς Χριστός• οὐκ ἐν τῷ ὕδατι μόνον ἀλλ' ἐν τῷ ὕδατι καὶ ἐν τῷ αἵματι• καὶ τὸ πνεῦμά ἐστιν τὸ μαρτυροῦν, ὅτι τὸ πνεῦμά ἐστιν ἡ ἀλήθεια. 7 ὅτι τρεῖς εἰσιν οἱ μαρτυροῦντες, 8 τὸ πνεῦμα καὶ τὸ ὕδωρ καὶ τὸ αἶμα, καὶ οἱ τρεῖς εἰς τὸ ἓν εἰσιν.

Then I fell down at his feet to worship him, but he said to me, "You must not do that! I am a fellow servant with you and your brothers who hold to the testimony of Jesus. Worship God." For the testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy.⁸²

The fact that the Spirit of God is called here "the spirit of prophecy" and "the testimony of Jesus" shows us again what the main work of the Holy Spirit is today: He glorifies Christ and shows us the qualities of Jesus.

In Acts 5:31-32 Peter declares the Holy Spirit to be a witness, together with the human eye-witnesses, to the fact that Jesus is the Savior and the supreme Ruler of the world:

31 God exalted him at his right hand as Leader and Savior, to give repentance to Israel and forgiveness of sins. 32 And we are witnesses to these things, and so is the Holy Spirit, whom God has given to those who obey him.⁸³

As God makes alive by his divine breath so does Jesus.

See below (section 6.4.3) the explanation of John 20:22 and 1 Corinthians 15:45.

Jesus has poured out the Holy Spirit on Pentecost.

Peter declares in Acts 2:32-33 that the visible and audible coming of the Holy Spirit had been triggered by Jesus having risen

82. ἡ γὰρ μαρτυρία Ἰησοῦ ἐστὶν τὸ πνεῦμα τῆς προφητείας.

83. καὶ ἡμεῖς ἐσμεν μάρτυρες τῶν ῥημάτων τούτων, καὶ τὸ πνεῦμα τὸ ἅγιον ὃ ἔδωκεν ὁ θεὸς τοῖς πειθαρχοῦσιν αὐτῷ.

from the dead and being exalted to the highest position in heaven:

32 This Jesus God raised up, and of that we all are witnesses. 33 Being therefore exalted at the right hand of God, and having received from the Father the promise of the Holy Spirit, he has poured out this that you yourselves are seeing and hearing.⁸⁴

Jesus teaches and commands through the Holy Spirit.

In the beginning of Acts (1:1-2) Luke points to his first book, the Gospel, with the following words:

1 In the first book, O Theophilus, I have dealt with all that Jesus began to do and teach, 2 until the day when he was taken up, after he had given commands through the Holy Spirit to the apostles whom he had chosen.⁸⁵

Luke wants to tell us that the content of the first book was what "Jesus began to do and teach" until his ascension; a ministry that was crowned by his being the risen one and giving commands in the power of the Holy Spirit to his chosen apostles. What Luke seems to imply by saying this, is that his second book (meaning "Acts") deals with what Jesus "continues" to do and to teach in the power of the same Holy Spirit directing the history of the church from his exalted place above.

84. τῇ δεξιᾷ οὖν τοῦ θεοῦ ὑψωθεὶς τὴν τε ἐπαγγελίαν τοῦ πνεύματος τοῦ ἁγίου λαβὼν παρὰ τοῦ πατρὸς ἐξέχεεν τοῦτο ὃ ὑμεῖς βλέπετε καὶ ἀκούετε.

85. 1 Τὸν μὲν πρῶτον λόγον ἐποιήσαμην περὶ πάντων, ὦ Θεόφιλε, ὃν ᾤξατο ὁ Ἰησοῦς ποιεῖν τε καὶ διδάσκειν 2 ἄχρι ἧς ἡμέρας ἐντειλάμενος τοῖς ἀποστόλοις διὰ πνεύματος ἁγίου οὗς ἐξελέξατο ἀνελήμφθαι.

Jesus was appointed as the Son of God according to the Holy Spirit through his being raised from the dead.

In the beginning of his letter to the Romans (1:3-4) Paul speaks of his being an apostle appointed for the gospel of God

3 concerning his Son, who was descended from David according to the flesh 4 and was declared to be the Son of God in power according to the Spirit of holiness by his resurrection from the dead, Jesus Christ our Lord.⁸⁶

The fact that Jesus has risen from the dead is a powerful miracle singling him out as the unique and holy son of God. The Holy Spirit ("Spirit of holiness") in 1:4 stands in contrast to Jesus being a son of David "according to the flesh" in 1:3. Both things combined prove him to be the promised (1:2) and long awaited Messiah: He is a true heir to the throne of David according to the flesh, but he has been singled out from the many sons of David by being anointed with the Holy Spirit who has proven him to be the Messiah by his overcoming even the last enemy, death (see 1 Cor 15:26). In 1 Cor 15:45 Paul explains the implications of the incarnation, the death and resurrection of Jesus:

Thus it is written, "The first man Adam became a living being"; the last Adam became a life-giving spirit.⁸⁷

86. 3 περὶ τοῦ υἱοῦ αὐτοῦ, τοῦ γενομένου ἐκ σπέρματος Δαυὶδ κατὰ σάρκα, 4 τοῦ ὁρισθέντος υἱοῦ θεοῦ ἐν δυνάμει κατὰ πνεῦμα ἁγιωσύνης ἐξ ἀναστάσεως νεκρῶν, Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ τοῦ κυρίου ἡμῶν

87. οὕτως καὶ γέγραπται• Ἐγένετο ὁ πρῶτος ἄνθρωπος Ἀδὰμ εἰς ψυχὴν ζῶσαν• ὁ ἔσχατος Ἀδὰμ εἰς πνεῦμα ζωοποιοῦν.

The "last Adam", Christ, first became a son of Adam in his incarnation, then died to the old human nature on the cross and has, having risen from the dead, the new quality of being "a life-giving spirit". Here we have a line of thought that we have seen before: that the death of Christ and his resurrection (and ascension) are the foundation of his pouring out the Spirit on Pentecost. Christ became the door to our salvation and the spirit-fellowship of God's family (John 10:7-9; 1:12-13; 3:3.5.16).

In 1 Pet 3:18-20⁸⁸ we have a similar contrast of flesh and spirit together with the cross and resurrection of Jesus to what we have seen in Rom 1:3-4:

For Christ also suffered once for sins, the righteous for the unrighteous, that he might bring us to God, being put to death in the flesh but made alive in the spirit, 19 in which he went and proclaimed to the spirits in prison 20 because [better: "while", E. Lanz]⁸⁹ they formerly did not obey, when God's

88. 18 ὅτι καὶ Χριστὸς ἅπαξ περὶ ἁμαρτιῶν ἔπαθεν, δίκαιος ὑπὲρ ἀδίκων, ἵνα ὑμᾶς προσαγάγῃ τῷ θεῷ, θανατωθεὶς μὲν σαρκὶ ζωοποιηθεὶς δὲ πνεύματι• 19 ἐν ᾧ καὶ τοῖς ἐν φυλακῇ πνεύμασιν πορευθεὶς ἐκήρυξεν, 20 ἀπειθήσασιν ποτε ὅτε ἀπεξεδέχετο ἡ τοῦ θεοῦ μακροθυμία ἐν ἡμέραις Νῶε κατασκευαζομένης κιβωτοῦ εἰς ἣν ὀλίγοι, τοῦτ' ἔστιν ὁκτὼ ψυχαί, διεσώθησαν δι' ὕδατος.

89. Because the "spirits" have the definite article in Greek (τοῖς ἐν φυλακῇ πνεύμασιν) but the corresponding participle is without definite article (ἀπειθήσασιν) the grammar rules would suggest that this is an adverbially used participle. See Hoffmann and Siebenthal, *Griechische Grammatik zum Neuen Testament*, p.392ff. I think it could be best translated here in a temporal way with "while" or "when". For this understanding of 1 Pet 3:19 see Wayne A. Grudem, *The first Epistle of Peter: an introduction and commentary*, The Tyndale New Testament commentaries (Leicester: Inter-Varsity Pr., 1989).

patience waited in the days of Noah, while the ark was being prepared, in which a few, that is, eight persons, were brought safely through water.

Here the idea seems to be that Christ was killed in the flesh (in the realm of the visible world) but made alive in the spirit (in the realm of the spiritual world, where the Holy Spirit is at work), in which (the spirit, see 1 Pt 1:11; 2 Pt 2:5) he also went to preach to the generation of Noah. But they remained disobedient and were consequently judged by the waters of the flood and died. At the time of Peter's writing they were still "spirits in prison" and suffering from their former disobedience. So they are an example of the judgment to come. The believers who get baptized in these days resemble Noah and his family who were also saved through water while being in the ark (3:21-22):

21 Baptism, which corresponds to this, now saves you, not as a removal of dirt from the body but as an appeal to God for a good conscience, through the resurrection of Jesus Christ, 22 who has gone into heaven and is at the right hand of God, with angels, authorities, and powers having been subjected to him.

God's Spirit leads to the confession that Jesus is Lord.

When Paul starts his explanation of how to handle the spiritual gifts, he writes in 1 Cor 12:3:

Therefore I want you to understand that no one speaking in the Spirit of God ever says "Jesus is

accursed!" and no one can say "Jesus is Lord" except in the Holy Spirit.⁹⁰

We can learn from this that someone speaking under the influence of a spirit and cursing Jesus, is not speaking through God's Spirit but is deceived by another spirit. So for Paul Christology is the basic measure for recognizing a genuine from a false prophet. The statement, "Jesus is Lord", means the identification of Jesus of Nazareth with the "Lord", the God of Israel. Compare for this Phil 2:9-11 with Isaiah 45:22-25 and Rom 10:9-13 with Joel 2:32). Only a person, whose eyes have been opened by the power of the Holy Spirit, can believe from his heart that Jesus Christ is God incarnate.

John has the same approach in his first letter (4:2-3.6):

2 By this you know the Spirit of God: every spirit that confesses that Jesus Christ has come in the flesh is from God, 3 and every spirit that does not confess Jesus is not from God. This is the spirit of the antichrist, which you heard was coming and now is in the world already... 6 We are from God. Whoever knows God listens to us; whoever is not from God does not listen to us. By this we know the Spirit of truth and the spirit of error.⁹¹

90. διὸ γνωρίζω ὑμῖν ὅτι οὐδεὶς ἐν πνεύματι θεοῦ λαλῶν λέγει· Ἀνάθεμα Ἰησοῦς, καὶ οὐδεὶς δύναται εἰπεῖν· Κύριος Ἰησοῦς εἰ μὴ ἐν πνεύματι ἁγίῳ.

91. 2 ἐν τούτῳ γινώσκετε τὸ πνεῦμα τοῦ θεοῦ· πᾶν πνεῦμα ὃ ὁμολογεῖ Ἰησοῦν Χριστὸν ἐν σαρκὶ ἐληλυθότα ἐκ τοῦ θεοῦ ἐστίν, 3 καὶ πᾶν πνεῦμα ὃ μὴ ὁμολογεῖ τὸν Ἰησοῦν ἐκ τοῦ θεοῦ οὐκ ἔστιν· καὶ τοῦτό ἐστιν τὸ τοῦ ἀντιχρίστου, ὃ ἀκηκόατε ὅτι ἔρχεται, καὶ νῦν ἐν τῷ κόσμῳ ἐστὶν ἤδη... 6 ἡμεῖς ἐκ τοῦ θεοῦ ἐσμεν· ὃ γινώσκων τὸν θεὸν ἀκούει ἡμῶν, ὃς οὐκ ἔστιν ἐκ

The statement "that Jesus Christ has come in the flesh", points to the incarnation of God as explained in John 1:1-3.14. The idea is that Jesus is God who became a human being ("flesh") and has the title of "Christ" being the King and Saviour of Israel and all nations.

Jesus was revealed as righteous through the Spirit.

Paul gives in hymnic language what sounds like an early creed (1 Tim 3:16):

Great indeed, we confess, is the mystery of godli-
ness:
He was manifested in the flesh,
vindicated by the Spirit,
seen by angels,
proclaimed among the nations,
believed on in the world,
taken up in glory.⁹²

The words, "He was manifested in the flesh," point again to God's incarnation in Christ. But Christ was rejected and condemned to the shameful death of the cross. His vindication, his being declared righteous, happened "by the Spirit" pointing not

τοῦ θεοῦ οὐκ ἀκούει ἡμῶν. ἐκ τούτου γινώσκομεν τὸ πνεῦμα τῆς ἀληθείας καὶ τὸ πνεῦμα τῆς πλάνης.

92. καὶ ὁμολογουμένως μέγα ἐστὶν τὸ τῆς εὐσεβείας μυστήριον•
Ὅς ἐφανερώθη ἐν σαρκί,
ἐδικαιώθη ἐν πνεύματι,
ὤφθη ἀγγέλοις,
ἐκηρύχθη ἐν ἔθνεσιν,
ἐπιστεύθη ἐν κόσμῳ,
ἀνελήμφθη ἐν δόξῃ.

to his own human spirit, but to the Holy Spirit of God in the power of the resurrection.

Jesus presented his blood through the Spirit to the Father.

We read in Heb 9:13-14:

13 For if the sprinkling of defiled persons with the blood of goats and bulls and with the ashes of a heifer sanctifies for the purification of the flesh, 14 how much more will the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered himself without blemish to God, purify our conscience from dead works to serve the living God.⁹³

According to this passage Christ has sacrificed himself, his life and his blood "through the eternal Spirit", meaning God's Holy Spirit. This helps us to understand that the application of what happened on earth, at Golgotha, to the heavenly realms and God's presence, was done, and is done through God's Spirit. The triune God was active on Good Friday: God the Son being at the same time the High Priest and the sacrifice offered, the Father accepting this sacrifice as the sufficient atonement for the whole world⁹⁴ and the "eternal Spirit" through whom this sacrifice was offered to the Father. The fruit of the salvation of this day is eternal because of the eternal Spirit.

93. πόσῳ μᾶλλον τὸ αἷμα τοῦ Χριστοῦ, ὃς διὰ πνεύματος αἰωνίου ἑαυτὸν προσήνεγκεν ἁμωμον τῷ θεῷ, καθαριεῖ τὴν συνείδησιν ἡμῶν ἀπὸ νεκρῶν ἔργων εἰς τὸ λατρεῖν θεῷ ζῶντι.

94. See John 1:29; 1 John 2:2; 2 Cor 5:19.

6.4.2 God's Spirit Is God's Gift for All His People.

Repentance is necessary to receive the Holy Spirit.

When the sermon of Peter had made a strong impact on many people on the day of Pentecost they asked what they should do. He answered (Acts 2:38):

Repent and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins, and you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit.

The people of Jerusalem had cried out and demanded from Pilate that he crucify Jesus (Luke 23:18-24; Acts 2:22-23). This was done publicly. Now every single one of them had to repent from this and all their other sins and show it publicly by becoming baptized in the name of this same Jesus as the Christ, the Messiah. God then would forgive their sins and grant them the gift of the Holy Spirit.

Whoever hears the Gospel with faith receives the Holy Spirit.

In his letter to the Galatians (3:1-6.13-14) Paul wants to show them that salvation depends on faith alone and not on the works of the law. In this context to receive the Holy Spirit is the assurance of salvation:

1 O foolish Galatians! Who has bewitched you? It was before your eyes that Jesus Christ was publicly portrayed as crucified. 2 Let me ask you only this: Did you receive the Spirit by works of the law or by hearing with faith? 3 Are you so foolish? Having begun by the Spirit, are you now being

perfected by the flesh? 4 Did you suffer so many things in vain—if indeed it was in vain? 5 Does he who supplies the Spirit to you and works miracles among you do so by works of the law, or by hearing with faith⁹⁵ — 6 just as Abraham “believed God, and it was counted to him as righteousness”?... 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.

The circumcision of the heart is a work of the Holy Spirit.

For the Jews in the first century, circumcision was a very important thing. It was the sign of belonging to the covenant of God with Abraham. Therefore they looked down on the uncircumcised as lost and far away from God. Paul explains in his letter to the Romans (2:28-29) that the true circumcision is a change of heart received by the Holy Spirit:

28 For no one is a Jew who is merely one outwardly, nor is circumcision outward and physical.
29 But a Jew is one inwardly, and circumcision is a matter of the heart, by the Spirit, not by the letter.
His praise is not from man but from God.⁹⁶

95. ὁ οὖν ἐπιχορηγῶν ὑμῖν τὸ πνεῦμα καὶ ἐνεργῶν δυνάμεις ἐν ὑμῖν ἐξ ἔργων νόμου ἢ ἐξ ἀκοῆς πίστεως;

96. ἀλλ' ὁ ἐν τῷ κρυπτῷ Ἰουδαίος, καὶ περιτομὴ καρδίας ἐν πνεύματι οὐ γράμματι, οὗ ὁ ἔπαινος οὐκ ἐξ ἀνθρώπων ἀλλ' ἐκ τοῦ θεοῦ.

There is a contrast between the Spirit and the letter.

The letter stands for the law of the Old Testament written on the stone tablets of the 10 commandments, which were received through the service of Moses. This letter kills, meaning it does not give life, but has to punish the sinner through the curse and punishment of the law. The Spirit (Holy Spirit) stands for the service of the New Covenant, under which the same will of God is written on the tablets of the heart of the believers, giving them new and spiritual life, helping them to live according to God's will, according to the Spirit. This Spirit makes alive. Rom 2:29:

But a Jew is one inwardly, and circumcision is a matter of the heart, by the Spirit, not by the letter. His praise is not from man but from God.

Rom 7:6 KJV, The Holy Bible - King James Version:

But now we are delivered from the law, that being dead wherein we were held; that we should serve in newness of spirit, and not in the oldness of the letter.⁹⁷

Rom 8:2-6:

2 For the law of the Spirit of life has set you free in Christ Jesus from the law of sin and death.⁹⁸ 3 For God has done what the law, weakened by the

97. νυνὶ δὲ κατηγορήθημεν ἀπὸ τοῦ νόμου, ἀποθανόντες ἐν ᾧ κατειχόμεθα, ὥστε δουλεῦειν ἡμᾶς ἐν καινότητι πνεύματος καὶ οὐ παλαιότητι γράμματος.

98. ὁ γὰρ νόμος τοῦ πνεύματος τῆς ζωῆς ἐν Χριστῷ Ἰησοῦ ἠλευθέρωσέν σε ἀπὸ τοῦ νόμου τῆς ἁμαρτίας καὶ τοῦ θανάτου.

flesh, could not do. By sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh and for sin, he condemned sin in the flesh, ⁴ in order that the righteous requirement of the law might be fulfilled in us, who walk not according to the flesh but according to the Spirit.⁹⁹ ⁵ For those who live according to the flesh set their minds on the things of the flesh, but those who live according to the Spirit set their minds on the things of the Spirit. ⁶ To set the mind on the flesh is death, but to set the mind on the Spirit is life and peace.

2 Cor 3:3-8:

³ And you show that you are a letter from Christ delivered by us, written not with ink but with the Spirit of the living God, not on tablets of stone but on tablets of human hearts.¹⁰⁰ ⁴ Such is the confidence that we have through Christ toward God. ⁵ Not that we are sufficient in ourselves to claim anything as coming from us, but our sufficiency is from God, ⁶ who has made us competent to be ministers of a new covenant, not of the letter but of the Spirit. For the letter kills, but the Spirit gives life.¹⁰¹ ⁷ Now if the ministry of death, carved in

99. ἵνα τὸ δικαίωμα τοῦ νόμου πληρωθῇ ἐν ἡμῖν τοῖς μὴ κατὰ σάρκα περιπατοῦσιν ἀλλὰ κατὰ πνεῦμα•

100. φανερούμενοι ὅτι ἐστὲ ἐπιστολὴ Χριστοῦ διακονηθεῖσα ὑφ' ἡμῶν, ἐγγεγραμμένη οὐ μέλανι ἀλλὰ πνεύματι θεοῦ ζῶντος, οὐκ ἐν πλαξὶν λιθίναις ἀλλ' ἐν πλαξὶν καρδίαις σαρκίναις.

101. ὅς καὶ ἱκάνωσεν ἡμᾶς διακόνους καινῆς διαθήκης, οὐ γράμματος ἀλλὰ πνεύματος, τὸ γὰρ γράμμα ἀποκτεννεί, τὸ δὲ πνεῦμα ζωοποιεῖ.

letters on stone, came with such glory that the Israelites could not gaze at Moses' face because of its glory, which was being brought to an end, 8 will not the ministry of the Spirit have even more glory?

The Holy Spirit transforms us into the likeness of the glorious Lord Jesus Christ (2 Cor 3:18):

And we all, with unveiled face, beholding the glory of the Lord, are being transformed into the same image from one degree of glory to another. For this comes from the Lord who is the Spirit.

All who have received the Spirit of Christ are really Christ's.

From Rom 8:9 we learn the important principle that any person without Christ's Spirit is not really his:

You, however, are not in the flesh but in the Spirit, if in fact the Spirit of God dwells in you. Anyone who does not have the Spirit of Christ does not belong to him.¹⁰²

In every Christian there is an ongoing spiritual struggle.

According to Gal 5:16-17 there is a war being waged between the body or flesh on the one side, and the spirit (the spirit of the believer together with the Holy Spirit) on the other:

But I say, walk by the Spirit, and you will not gratify the desires of the flesh. 17 For the desires of the

102. Ὑμεῖς δὲ οὐκ ἐστὲ ἐν σαρκὶ ἀλλὰ ἐν πνεύματι, εἴπερ πνεῦμα θεοῦ οἰκεῖ ἐν ὑμῖν. εἰ δέ τις πνεῦμα Χριστοῦ οὐκ ἔχει, οὗτος οὐκ ἔστιν αὐτοῦ.

flesh are against the Spirit, and the desires of the Spirit are against the flesh, for these are opposed to each other, to keep you from doing the things you want to do.

According to Paul the realm of the flesh is death, the realm of the Spirit is life (Rom 8:10-13):

10 But if Christ is in you, although the body is dead because of sin, the Spirit is life because of righteousness. 11 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. 12 So then, brothers, we are debtors, not to the flesh, to live according to the flesh. 13 For if you live according to the flesh you will die, but if by the Spirit you put to death the deeds of the body, you will live.

He presents the same idea in a short form in Gal 5:25:

If we live by the Spirit, let us also walk by the Spirit.¹⁰³

And he repeats it with a parable in Gal 6:8:

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.

103. εἰ ζῶμεν πνεύματι, πνεύματι καὶ στοιχῶμεν.

Therefore the real children of God let themselves be guided by the Holy Spirit (Rom 8:14):

For all who are led by the Spirit of God are sons of God.¹⁰⁴

And compare Gal 5:18 to this idea:

But if you are led by the Spirit, you are not under the law.¹⁰⁵

In consequence of their being guided by the Spirit, they bring forth the fruit of the Spirit (Gal 5:22-23):

22 But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, 23 gentleness, self-control; against such things there is no law.¹⁰⁶

Believers have received the firstfruits of the Spirit.

In Rom 8 Paul speaks of the future liberation of creation from its bondage to decay and that creation therefore waits for the revealing of the sons of God which is somehow related to this big future change. And then Paul says (Rom 8:23):

And not only the creation, but we ourselves, who have the firstfruits of the Spirit, groan inwardly as

104. ὅσοι γὰρ πνεύματι θεοῦ ἄγονται, οὗτοι υἱοὶ εἰσιν θεοῦ.

105. εἰ δὲ πνεύματι ἄγεσθε, οὐκ ἐστὲ ὑπὸ νόμον.

106. 22 Ὁ δὲ καρπὸς τοῦ πνεύματος ἐστὶν ἀγάπη, χαρά, εἰρήνη, μακροθυμία, χρηστότης, ἀγαθωσύνη, πίστις, 23 πραΰτης, ἐγκράτεια• κατὰ τῶν τοιούτων οὐκ ἔστιν νόμος.

we wait eagerly for adoption as sons, the redemption of our bodies.¹⁰⁷

The firstfruits signal the beginning of the harvest. Much more is to come. When the believers here have received the firstfruits of the Spirit, they are the first to enjoy the spiritual blessings of God related to salvation and the new age to come. Firstfruits means that the believers will get even more: here, in the context of the redemption of their bodies in the resurrection, and also by being revealed as the true children of God. But firstfruits here means also that the whole of creation has something to look forward to and to receive.

Regeneration is the work of the Holy Spirit.

In John 3:5-8 Jesus explains to Nicodemus:

5 ... “Truly, truly, I say to you, unless one is born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter the kingdom of God. 6 That which is born of the flesh is flesh, and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit. 7 Do not marvel that I said to you, ‘You must be born again.’ 8 The wind blows where it wishes, and you hear its sound, but you do not know where it comes from or where it goes. So it is with everyone who is born of the Spirit.”

The new birth is necessary to introduce the deep change in the human heart which is necessary to prepare it for the eternal

107. οὐ μόνον δέ, ἀλλὰ καὶ αὐτοὶ τὴν ἀπαρχὴν τοῦ πνεύματος ἔχοντες ἡμεῖς καὶ αὐτοὶ ἐν ἑαυτοῖς στενάζομεν, υἱοθεσίαν ἀπεκδεχόμενοι τὴν ἀπολύτρωσιν τοῦ σώματος ἡμῶν.

world (the kingdom of God). Otherwise temporary man (flesh born from flesh) remains perishable. The new birth puts the emphasis on the new spiritual life of which it is the beginning. To be born "of water and the Spirit" is to be born of the Holy Spirit while the water in the context of John 1-4 may point to the repentance movement of John the Baptist. In John 1:26-27 the Baptist says:

"I baptize with water, but among you stands one you do not know, even he who comes after me, the strap of whose sandal I am not worthy to untie."

What John means is: "I baptize you only in water." On the next day John will say about Jesus (he who comes after me) that he will baptize in the Holy Spirit (John 1:33). In this context "being born of water and the Spirit" would convey the message to Nicodemus that he needed to repent and prepare himself for the kingdom of God by accepting the message of John the Baptist (Mt 3:2.6; Mk 1:4; Jn 3:23-4:2) and getting baptized in water as a public sign of his repentance from his sins. But this is "only" the water part given by John the Baptist. The one stronger than John will baptize with the Spirit and fire (Mk 1:8; Mt 3:11). To receive this baptism with the Spirit all have to wait till he is raised to the cross (John 3:14-16), has risen from the dead and gone to heaven to send the Spirit (John 7:37-39; 16:7). Then they have to trust in Christ the crucified, risen and exalted Lord so that they do not perish but have eternal life (John 3:16).

Water is of course also a means of cleansing in John 3:5, with or without pointing to water baptism. Jesus and Nicodemus are two teachers of the law, or Old Testament (3:2.10), talking to each other about the kingdom of God. Therefore it is quite

possible that the phrase "born of water and the Spirit" is pointing to an Old Testament text, like Ez 36:25-27:

25 I will sprinkle clean water on you, and you shall be clean from all your uncleannesses, and from all your idols I will cleanse you. 26 And I will give you a new heart, and a new spirit I will put within you. And I will remove the heart of stone from your flesh and give you a heart of flesh. 27 And I will put my Spirit within you, and cause you to walk in my statutes and be careful to obey my rules.

The same idea of a cleansing bath and renewal is also found in Paul's letter to Titus 3:4-7:

4 But when the goodness and loving kindness of God our Savior appeared, 5 he saved us, not because of works done by us in righteousness, but according to his own mercy, by the washing of regeneration and renewal of the Holy Spirit, 6 whom he poured out on us richly through Jesus Christ our Savior,¹⁰⁸ 7 so that being justified by his grace we might become heirs according to the hope of eternal life.

Reading the phrase "washing of regeneration and renewal of the Holy Spirit" many think of water baptism. But it might be better to think of the act of being born again as an act of cleansing by

108. 5 οὐκ ἐξ ἔργων τῶν ἐν δικαιοσύνῃ ἃ ἐποιήσαμεν ἡμεῖς ἀλλὰ κατὰ τὸ αὐτοῦ ἔλεος ἔσωσεν ἡμᾶς διὰ λουτροῦ παλιγγενεσίας καὶ ἀνακαινώσεως πνεύματος ἁγίου, 6 οὗ ἐξέχεεν ἐφ' ἡμᾶς πλουσίως διὰ Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ τοῦ σωτῆρος ἡμῶν,

the Holy Spirit which resembles the washing of our body but is a spiritual act. This is also the reason why water baptism is a fitting visible demonstration of a reality which is spiritual and invisible.

Everyone reborn is a child of God.

In his letter to the Romans (8:14-17) Paul praises the sonship of believers:

14 For all who are led by the Spirit of God are sons of God. 15 For you did not receive the spirit of slavery to fall back into fear, but you have received the Spirit of adoption as sons, by whom we cry, 'Abba! Father!' 16 The Spirit himself bears witness with our spirit that we are children of God,¹⁰⁹ 17 and if children, then heirs — heirs of God and fellow heirs with Christ, provided we suffer with him in order that we may also be glorified with him.

The same idea is also found in Gal 4:6-7.28-29:

6 And because you are sons, God has sent the Spirit of his Son into our hearts, crying, "Abba! Father!"¹¹⁰ 7 So you are no longer a slave, but a son, and if a son, then an heir through God... 28 Now

109. 14 ὅσοι γὰρ πνεύματι θεοῦ ἄγονται, οὗτοι υἱοὶ εἰσιν θεοῦ. 15 οὐ γὰρ ἐλάβετε πνεῦμα δουλείας πάλιν εἰς φόβον, ἀλλὰ ἐλάβετε πνεῦμα υἱοθεσίας ἐν ᾧ κρᾶζομεν• Αββα ὁ πατήρ• 16 αὐτὸ τὸ πνεῦμα συμμαρτυρεῖ τῷ πνεύματι ἡμῶν ὅτι ἐσμὲν τέκνα θεοῦ.

110. ὅτι δέ ἐστε υἱοί, ἐξαπέστειλεν ὁ θεὸς τὸ πνεῦμα τοῦ υἱοῦ αὐτοῦ εἰς τὰς καρδίας ἡμῶν, κρᾶζον• Αββα ὁ πατήρ.

you, brothers, like Isaac, are children of promise.
29 But just as at that time he who was born according to the flesh persecuted him who was born according to the Spirit, so also it is now.

Compare also the idea in Eph 2:18-19 that the access of the believing Jews and Gentiles as family members of God in prayer is in one Spirit:

18 For through him we both have access in one Spirit to the Father. 19 So then you are no longer strangers and aliens, but you are fellow citizens with the saints and members of the household of God.

In his first letter John also puts the emphasis on having the Spirit of God as the sign that we belong to God (3:24):

Whoever keeps his commandments abides in him, and he in them. And by this we know that he abides in us, by the Spirit whom he has given us.

And similarly in 1 John 4:13:

By this we know that we abide in him and he in us, because he has given us of his Spirit.

The writer to the Hebrews wants them to be obedient towards the heavenly Father and writes (Heb 12:9):

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?¹¹¹

God has given us his Holy Spirit in our rebirth making our individual spirits alive. He is now the father of these spirits which should be obedient to him and resemble him in holiness.

The fellowship of God's Spirit unites all believers.

In 1 Cor 12:12-13 Paul wants to speak of the unity of the church in spite of the diversity of the gifts and uses the metaphor of the human body:

12 For just as the body is one and has many members, and all the members of the body, though many, are one body, so it is with Christ. 13 For in one Spirit we were all baptized into one body - Jews or Greeks, slaves or free - and all were made to drink of one Spirit.

The desire of this blessing in 2 Cor 13:14 expresses a similar idea that all can share the fellowship of the same Holy Spirit:

The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ and the love of God and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with you all.¹¹²

111. εἴτα τοὺς μὲν τῆς σαρκὸς ἡμῶν πατέρας εἶχομεν παιδευτὰς καὶ ἐνετρεπόμεθα• οὐ πολὺ μᾶλλον ὑποταγησόμεθα τῷ πατρὶ τῶν πνευμάτων καὶ ζήσομεν;

112. 13:13 ἡ χάρις τοῦ κυρίου Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ καὶ ἡ ἀγάπη τοῦ θεοῦ καὶ ἡ κοινωνία τοῦ ἁγίου πνεύματος μετὰ πάντων ὑμῶν.

In Eph 4:4-7 we have another section where the idea of the body of Christ and the Spirit, together with the gifts of the Spirit is used to emphasize the unity of all believers:

4 There is one body and one Spirit —just as you were called to the one hope that belongs to your call¹¹³ — 5 one Lord, one faith, one baptism, 6 one God and Father of all, who is over all and through all and in all. 7 But grace was given to each one of us according to the measure of Christ's gift.

See also how Paul continues with the picture of the body and different gifts in 4:11-16. It comes as no surprise then when Paul in his letter to the Philippians (2:1-2) uses "participation in the Spirit" as a starting point to encourage spiritual unity and harmony in the church:

1 So if there is any encouragement in Christ, any comfort from love, any participation in the Spirit, any affection and sympathy, 2 complete my joy by being of the same mind, having the same love, being in full accord and of one mind.

God gives his Spirit to those who ask in Prayer.

Having seen the importance of the Holy Spirit for the whole realm of our spiritual life it is a great encouragement for a healthy prayer life to hear what Jesus has to say about prayer and the Holy Spirit (Luke 11:13):

113. ἓν σῶμα καὶ ἓν πνεῦμα, καθὼς καὶ ἐκλήθητε ἐν μιᾷ ἐλπίδι τῆς κλήσεως ὑμῶν•

If you then, who are evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will the heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to those who ask him!

Only those who obey God receive His Spirit.

Besides prayer there is another condition for receiving the Holy Spirit and that is obedience (Acts 5:32):

And we are witnesses to these things, and so is the Holy Spirit, whom God has given to those who obey him.

It is necessary to worship God in Spirit and in truth.

When Jesus was asked by the Samaritan woman in John 4 about the right place of worship, he helped her to realize that true worship of God can only be realized by people who have received the "living water", the Holy Spirit (4:10-15; 7:37-39). He explains to her the great change that is about to happen (4:21-24:

21 ... Woman, believe me, the hour is coming when neither on this mountain nor in Jerusalem will you worship the Father. 22 You worship what you do not know; we worship what we know, for salvation is from the Jews. 23 But the hour is coming, and is now here, when the true worshipers will worship the Father in spirit and truth, for the Father is seeking such people to worship him. 24 God is spirit, and those who worship him must worship in

spirit and truth.¹¹⁴

To worship God "in spirit and truth" means to worship God truthfully, that is, according to the truth. The opposite would be to worship God hypocritically, lying, not really, not according to the truth. Such hypocritical worship is associated with the one who is "the liar from the beginning" (John 8:44-45).

God's Spirit stays within believers.

Within the Gospel of John the chapters 14-16 contain very important statements of Jesus about the Holy Spirit. We find one of them in John 14:15-17:

15 If you love me, you will keep my commandments. 16 And I will ask the Father, and he will give you another Helper, to be with you forever, 17 even the Spirit of truth, whom the world cannot receive, because it neither sees him nor knows him. You know him, for he dwells with you and will be in you.

In these verses there is a chain of events leading to the indwelling of the Holy Spirit in a believer: 1. He loves Jesus and therefore accepts and keeps his teaching. 2. Jesus asks the Father to give the "Helper", the Spirit, to the believer. 3. The Spirit stays with this believer for ever. This of course was first true in the lives of the disciples Jesus was talking to in this discourse. But John

114. 23 ἀλλὰ ἔρχεται ὥρα καὶ νῦν ἐστίν, ὅτε οἱ ἀληθινοὶ προσκυνηταὶ προσκυνήσουσιν τῷ πατρὶ ἐν πνεύματι καὶ ἀληθείᾳ, καὶ γὰρ ὁ πατὴρ τοιούτους ζητεῖ τοὺς προσκυνοῦντας αὐτόν• 24 πνεῦμα ὁ θεός, καὶ τοὺς προσκυνοῦντας αὐτόν ἐν πνεύματι καὶ ἀληθείᾳ δεῖ προσκυνεῖν.

has written this for believers yet to come because it is equally true for them (John 17:20; 20:31).

God's Spirit gives power to believers.

... to be effective witnesses of Jesus Christ worldwide. When Jesus was about to ascend to heaven, he promised a great change (Acts 1:8):

But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you, and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth.

This was of course, first an address to the apostles (Acts 1:2), but the task of the great commission was greater than the lifetime of the apostles and was inherited by the church. The apostle Paul, who was of course not present at the time of Acts 1:8, later learned the same truth and speaks of it again and again, for example in Rom 15:18-19:

18 For I will not venture to speak of anything except what Christ has accomplished through me to bring the Gentiles to obedience — by word and deed, 19 by the power of signs and wonders, by the power of the Spirit of God — so that from Jerusalem and all the way around to Illyricum I have fulfilled the ministry of the gospel of Christ.

He reveals that his especially powerful service in Corinth was a combination of his own weakness and the power of the Holy Spirit (1 Cor 2:3-5):

3 And I was with you in weakness and in fear and much trembling, 4 and my speech and my message were not in plausible words of wisdom, but in demonstration of the Spirit and of power, 5 that your faith might not rest in the wisdom of men but in the power of God.

For Paul the revival amongst the Thessalonians was proof that God first had chosen them and then used the power of the Spirit to convert them (1 Thes 1:4-5):

4 For we know, brothers loved by God, that he has chosen you, 5 because our gospel came to you not only in word, but also in power and in the Holy Spirit and with full conviction. You know what kind of men we proved to be among you for your sake.

... to have abundant hope. According to Paul in Rom 15:13 one powerful influence of the Holy Spirit is hope:

May the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, so that by the power of the Holy Spirit you may abound in hope.

In Gal 5:5 Paul similarly connects hope and the Spirit:

For through the Spirit, by faith, we ourselves eagerly wait for the hope of righteousness.

Here "hope of righteousness" means that righteousness is a gift to be received when Christ comes, by those who have waited for it by faith through the Spirit.

... to be strengthened in the inner man. In his intercession for the believers in Ephesus Paul prays that the strength of the Holy Spirit may strengthen the believer in his inner being (Eph 3:14-16):

14 For this reason I bow my knees before the Father, 15 from whom every family in heaven and on earth is named, 16 that according to the riches of his glory he may grant you to be strengthened with power through his Spirit in your inner being.¹¹⁵

God's Spirit helps believers in court.

Jesus teaches that the Spirit gives the persecuted believers a special help in court appearances (Matthew 10:17-20):

17 Beware of men, for they will deliver you over to courts and flog you in their synagogues, 18 and you will be dragged before governors and kings for my sake, to bear witness before them and the Gentiles. 19 When they deliver you over, do not be anxious how you are to speak or what you are to say, for what you are to say will be given to you in that hour. 20 For it is not you who speak, but the Spirit of your Father speaking through you.

Mk 13:11:

And when they bring you to trial and deliver you over, do not be anxious beforehand what you are to

115. ἵνα δὲ ὑμῖν κατὰ τὸ πλοῦτος τῆς δόξης αὐτοῦ δυνάμει κραταιωθῆναι διὰ τοῦ πνεύματος αὐτοῦ εἰς τὸν ἔσω ἄνθρωπον,

say, but say whatever is given you in that hour, for it is not you who speak, but the Holy Spirit.

Luke 12:11-12:

11 And when they bring you before the synagogues and the rulers and the authorities, do not be anxious about how you should defend yourself or what you should say, 12 for the Holy Spirit will teach you in that very hour what you ought to say.

God's Spirit can talk and give special guidance.

In Acts 8:29 we see the evangelist Philip in Spirit-guided action:

And the Spirit said to Philip, “Go over and join this chariot.”

In 10:19-20 the apostle Peter gets directions:

19 And while Peter was pondering the vision, the Spirit said to him, “Behold, three men are looking for you. 20 Rise and go down and accompany them without hesitation, for I have sent them.”

In 11:12 Peter reports the same experience to prove that he was guided by God in going to Cornelius:

And the Spirit told me to go with them, making no distinction. These six brothers also accompanied me, and we entered the man's house.

The prophets and teachers in Antioch are guided to send Barnabas and Saul into their ministry (13:2):

While they were worshiping the Lord and fasting, the Holy Spirit said, “Set apart for me Barnabas and Saul for the work to which I have called them.”

In Acts 16:6-10 the Holy Spirit of 16:6 is the Spirit of Jesus in 16:7 guiding Paul, Silas, Timothy, and Luke:

6 And they went through the region of Phrygia and Galatia, having been forbidden by the Holy Spirit to speak the word in Asia. 7 And when they had come up to Mysia, they attempted to go into Bithynia, but the Spirit of Jesus did not allow them.¹¹⁶ 8 So, passing by Mysia, they went down to Troas. 9 And a vision appeared to Paul in the night: a man of Macedonia was standing there, urging him and saying, “Come over to Macedonia and help us.” 10 And when Paul had seen the vision, immediately we sought to go on into Macedonia, concluding that God had called us to preach the gospel to them.

The church grows through the comfort of God's Spirit.

After Paul's conversion the very tough persecution ended and a time of peace began for the church all over Israel. Luke writes about this time of growth (Acts 9:31):

So the church throughout all Judea and Galilee and Samaria had peace and was being built up. And

116. 6 Διήλθον δὲ τὴν Φρυγίαν καὶ Γαλατικὴν χώραν, κωλυθέντες ὑπὸ τοῦ ἁγίου πνεύματος λαλῆσαι τὸν λόγον ἐν τῇ Ἀσίᾳ, 7 ἐλθόντες δὲ κατὰ τὴν Μυσίαν ἐπείραζον εἰς τὴν Βιθυνίαν πορευθῆναι καὶ οὐκ εἴασεν αὐτοὺς τὸ πνεῦμα Ἰησοῦ.

walking in the fear of the Lord and in the comfort of the Holy Spirit, it multiplied.

God's Spirit appoints the leadership of a local church.

We learn from Acts 20:28 that Paul sees the work of the Holy Spirit in the appointment of the elders of Ephesus:

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.

God's Spirit helps in prayer life and intercession.

In Rom 8 Paul teaches about suffering in this world and the glory to come. Believers suffer a lot and are weak. They need special help. This is where the Spirit comes in (Rom 8:26-28):

26 Likewise the Spirit helps us in our weakness. For we do not know what to pray for as we ought, but the Spirit himself intercedes for us with groanings too deep for words. 27 And he who searches hearts knows what is the mind of the Spirit, because the Spirit intercedes for the saints according to the will of God. 28 And we know that for those who love God all things work together for good, for those who are called according to his purpose.¹¹⁷

117. 26 Ὡσαύτως δὲ καὶ τὸ πνεῦμα συναντιλαμβάνεται τῇ ἀσθενείᾳ ἡμῶν• τὸ γὰρ τί προσευξώμεθα καθὼ δεῖ οὐκ οἶδαμεν, ἀλλὰ αὐτὸ τὸ πνεῦμα ὑπερεντυγχάνει στεναγμοῖς ἀλαλήτοις, 27 ὁ δὲ ἐραυνῶν τὰς καρδίας οἶδεν τί τὸ φρόνημα τοῦ πνεύματος, ὅτι κατὰ θεὸν ἐντυγχάνει ὑπὲρ ἁγίων.

The phrase "too deep for words" means literally "without words" or "without speech" (alalētōis)¹¹⁸. This excludes "speaking in tongues" (lalēin glōssais)¹¹⁹ which some people see here, which is of course "with words" or "with speech". No, Paul here means the help of the Holy Spirit in the life of every believer such that the problems and requests of his life may be presented before God in a fitting way. Then God answers the intercession of the Holy Spirit to the effect that "all things work together for good" for believers. In Eph 6:18 Paul wants the Ephesians to be

praying at all times in the Spirit, with all prayer and supplication. To that end keep alert with all perseverance, making supplication for all the saints.¹²⁰

Here again a powerful and effective prayer life is only possible "in the (Holy) Spirit". Very much like Paul, Jude also exhorts his readers towards the end of his letter to be people of prayer in the power of the Spirit (Jude 20-21):

20 But you, beloved, build yourselves up in your most holy faith; pray in the Holy Spirit;¹²¹ 21 keep yourselves in the love of God, waiting for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ that leads to eternal life.

118. ἀλαλήτοις

119. λαλεῖν γλώσσαις

120. διὰ πάσης προσευχῆς καὶ δεήσεως, προσευχόμενοι ἐν παντὶ καιρῷ ἐν πνεύματι, καὶ εἰς αὐτὸ ἀγρυπνοῦντες ἐν πάσῃ προσκατερίσει καὶ δεήσει περὶ πάντων τῶν ἁγίων,

121. ὑμεῖς δέ, ἀγαπητοί, ἐποικοδομοῦντες ἑαυτοὺς τῇ ἀγιωτάτῃ ὑμῶν πίστει, ἐν πνεύματι ἁγίῳ προσευχόμενοι,

Without God's Spirit there is no kingdom of God.

In Rom 14:17 Paul explains what the kingdom of God is:

For the kingdom of God is not a matter of eating and drinking but of righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Spirit.¹²²

The Gentile believers are sanctified through God's Spirit.

In Rom 15:15-16 Paul writes about his own ministry:

15 But on some points I have written to you very boldly by way of reminder, because of the grace given me by God 16 to be a minister of Christ Jesus to the Gentiles in the priestly service of the gospel of God, so that the offering of the Gentiles may be acceptable, sanctified by the Holy Spirit.

When Paul leads non-Jews to faith in God through the preaching of the Gospel of Jesus Christ, he knows that God accepts them, because they are "sanctified by the Holy Spirit"¹²³.

Some of the Corinthians came to Christ from the background of a very immoral life, but they were changed by faith in Jesus and the gift of the Holy Spirit (1 Cor 6:9-11):

9 Do you not know that the unrighteous will not inherit the kingdom of God? Do not be deceived: neither the sexually immoral, nor idolaters,

122. οὐ γάρ ἐστιν ἡ βασιλεία τοῦ θεοῦ βρώσις καὶ πόσις, ἀλλὰ δικαιοσύνη καὶ εἰρήνη καὶ χαρὰ ἐν πνεύματι ἁγίῳ•

123. ἡγιασμένη ἐν πνεύματι ἁγίῳ.

nor adulterers, nor men who practice homosexuality, 10 nor thieves, nor the greedy, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor swindlers will inherit the kingdom of God. 11 And such were some of you. But you were washed, you were sanctified, you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and by the Spirit of our God.

In 2 Thes 2:13 we see the same sanctifying power of God's Spirit:

But we ought always to give thanks to God for you, brothers beloved by the Lord, because God chose you as the firstfruits to be saved, through sanctification by the Spirit and belief in the truth.¹²⁴

Peter teaches the same work of the Holy Spirit in the opening of his first letter (1 Peter 1:1-2):

1 Peter, an apostle of Jesus Christ, To those who are elect exiles of the dispersion in Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia, and Bithynia, 2 according to the foreknowledge of God the Father, in the sanctification of the Spirit, for obedience to Jesus Christ and for sprinkling with his blood.

Believers are cleansed through God's Spirit.

Paul uses the picture of being washed and so cleansed (1 Cor 6:11):

124. Ἡμεῖς δὲ ὀφείλομεν εὐχαριστεῖν τῷ θεῷ πάντοτε περὶ ὑμῶν, ἀδελφοὶ ἡγαπημένοι ὑπὸ κυρίου, ὅτι ἔλατο ὑμᾶς ὁ θεὸς ἀπαρχὴν εἰς σωτηρίαν ἐν ἁγιασμῷ πνεύματος καὶ πίστει ἀληθείας,

And such were some of you. But you were washed, you were sanctified, you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and by the Spirit of our God.

Believers are made righteous through God's Spirit.

In the same verse we have the gift of justification mentioned: (1 Cor 6:11):

And such were some of you. But you were washed, you were sanctified, you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and by the Spirit of our God.

I think that the meaning of 1 Peter 4:6 is comparable:

For for this cause was the gospel preached also to them that are dead, that they might be judged according to men in the flesh, but live according to God in the spirit. ¹²⁵

Some believers who had heard the Gospel and accepted it, while they were still alive, have then been condemned to death by unjust judges and martyred in the flesh. But according to God's judgment they are worthy to live forever in the realm of the Spirit.

125. Quoted according to KJV, The Holy Bible - King James Version. εἰς τοῦτο γὰρ καὶ νεκροῖς εὐηγγελίσθη ἵνα κριθῶσι μὲν κατὰ ἀνθρώπους σαρκὶ ζῶσι δὲ κατὰ θεὸν πνεύματι.

God's Spirit generates love in believers.

Paul urges the believers in Rome to pray for him (Rom 15:30):

I appeal to you, brothers, by our Lord Jesus Christ
and by the love of the Spirit, to strive together with
me in your prayers to God on my behalf.

The phrase "love of the Spirit" means probably the "love which the Holy Spirit generates" in the believers.

Every believer is one spirit with the Lord.

Paul warns the Corinthians of sexual immorality (1 Cor 6:15-18):

15 Do you not know that your bodies are members of Christ? Shall I then take the members of Christ and make them members of a prostitute? Never! 16 Or do you not know that he who is joined to a prostitute becomes one body with her? For, as it is written, "The two will become one flesh." 17 But he who is joined to the Lord becomes one spirit with him.¹²⁶ 18 Flee from sexual immorality. Every other sin a person commits is outside the body, but the sexually immoral person sins against his own body.

The unity of a believer with the Lord in the spirit resembles the unity of a man and a woman in the body (see Gen 2:24). Therefore any believer who commits sexual immorality is heading for great trouble and God's judgment in his life (1 Cor 3:16-17).

126. ὁ δὲ κολλώμενος τῷ κυρίῳ ἐν πνεύμα ἔστιν.

A service for God must be a service in the Holy Spirit.

For Paul true servants of God¹²⁷ serve him "in the Holy Spirit"¹²⁸ (2 Cor 6:4.6). Accordingly he can write to the Philippians (Phil 3:3):

For we are the real circumcision, who worship by the Spirit of God and glory in Christ Jesus and put no confidence in the flesh.

Believers preserve their treasures through God's Spirit.

Paul admonishes Timothy (2 Tim 1:14):

By the Holy Spirit who dwells within us, guard the good deposit entrusted to you.¹²⁹

God's Spirit rests on believers.

Peter comforts the persecuted Christians (1 Pet 4:14):

If you are insulted for the name of Christ, you are blessed, because the Spirit of glory and of God rests upon you.¹³⁰

127. θεοῦ διάκονοι

128. ἐν πνεύματι ἁγίῳ

129. τὴν καλὴν παραθήκην φύλαξον διὰ πνεύματος ἁγίου τοῦ ἐνοικοῦντος ἐν ἡμῖν.

130. εἰ ὀνειδίξεσθε ἐν ὀνόματι Χριστοῦ, μακάριοι, ὅτι τὸ τῆς δόξης καὶ τοῦ θεοῦ πνεῦμα ἐφ' ὑμᾶς ἀναπαύεται.

Simeon in Luke 2

The Holy Spirit was on Simeon (2:25). The Spirit had told him he would see the Messiah in his lifetime (2:26). He guided Simeon at the right time into the temple to see Jesus (2:27):

25 Now there was a man in Jerusalem, whose name was Simeon, and this man was righteous and devout, waiting for the consolation of Israel, and the Holy Spirit was upon him. 26 And it had been revealed to him by the Holy Spirit that he would not see death before he had seen the Lord's Christ. 27 And he came in the Spirit into the temple...¹³¹

Paul and the influence of God's Spirit on his thinking.

Paul's conscience gives witness in the Holy Spirit (Rom 9:1-2):

1 I am speaking the truth in Christ — I am not lying; my conscience bears me witness in the Holy Spirit — 2 that I have great sorrow and unceasing anguish in my heart.

His counsel about remaining unmarried if possible is not given without the Holy Spirit (1 Cor 7:40):

Yet in my judgment she is happier if she remains as she is. And I think that I too have the Spirit of God.

131. 25 Καὶ ἰδοὺ ἄνθρωπος ἦν ἐν Ἱερουσαλὴμ ᾧ ὄνομα Συμεών, καὶ ὁ ἄνθρωπος οὗτος δίκαιος καὶ εὐλαβής, προσδεχόμενος παράκλησιν τοῦ Ἰσραὴλ, καὶ πνεῦμα ἦν ἅγιον ἐπ' αὐτόν• 26 καὶ ἦν αὐτῷ κεχρηματισμένον ὑπὸ τοῦ πνεύματος τοῦ ἁγίου μὴ ἰδεῖν θάνατον πρὶν ἢ ἂν ἴδῃ τὸν χριστόν. 27 καὶ ἦλθεν ἐν τῷ πνεύματι εἰς τὸ ἱερόν•

6.4.3 Whoever Accepts Jesus Receives God's Spirit.

There are some relevant sections in John and Acts which should be examined especially when we make the claim that whoever accepts Jesus as his Lord and saviour also receives the Holy Spirit.

John 20:22

In John 20 Jesus appears on the evening of the resurrection Sunday to a group of disciples (John 20:21-23):

21 Jesus said to them again, "Peace be with you. As the Father has sent me, even so I am sending you." 22 And when he had said this, he breathed on them and said to them, "Receive the Holy Spirit.¹³² 23 If you forgive the sins of anyone, they are forgiven; if you withhold forgiveness from anyone, it is withheld."

Does John 20:22 teach that the disciples did receive the Holy Spirit on the day of the resurrection? Should we accordingly assume that they were born again on that day and then received the power of the Holy Spirit weeks later on the day of Pentecost? Is this a proof for the teaching of a second blessing and a two level Christianity? According to my understanding not really.

When we want to understand John 20:22 we must do this within the context of the whole book of John. One very important section about the coming of the Holy Spirit (here called "the Helper") is found in John 16:5-7:

132. καὶ τοῦτο εἰπὼν ἐνεφύσησεν καὶ λέγει αὐτοῖς• Λάβετε πνεῦμα ἅγιον•

5 But now I am going to him who sent me, and none of you asks me, 'Where are you going?' 6 But because I have said these things to you, sorrow has filled your heart. 7 Nevertheless, 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.¹³³

Here Jesus states that he first has to go to the Father ("to him who sent me") which implies that he has to leave the disciples. Of course this causes them great sadness. But the going away of Jesus is the condition that the Holy Spirit can come. Without his being away there can be no presence of the Holy Spirit in them.¹³⁴

Now within the immediate context of John 20:22 there is another important verse which we have to combine with John 16:7. This is what Jesus says to Mary who clings to his feet¹³⁵ (John 20:18):

"Do not cling to me, for I have not yet ascended to the Father; but go to my brothers and say to them, 'I am ascending to my Father and your Father, to my God and your God.'"¹³⁶

133. ἀλλ' ἐγὼ τὴν ἀλήθειαν λέγω ὑμῖν, συμφέρει ὑμῖν ἵνα ἐγὼ ἀπέλθω. ἐὰν γὰρ μὴ ἀπέλθω, ὁ παράκλητος οὐ μὴ ἔλθῃ πρὸς ὑμᾶς• ἐὰν δὲ πορευθῶ, πέμψω αὐτὸν πρὸς ὑμᾶς.

134. Compare Leon Morris, *The Gospel according to John*, NICOT (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Eerdmans, 1971, reprinted 1987), p. 847 note 56.

135. Compare Mt 28:1.9.

136. λέγει αὐτῇ Ἰησοῦς• Μὴ μου ἄπτου, οὕτω γὰρ ἀναβέβηκα πρὸς τὸν πατέρα• πορεύου δὲ πρὸς τοὺς ἀδελφούς μου καὶ εἰπὲ αὐτοῖς• Ἀναβαίνω πρὸς τὸν πατέρα μου καὶ πατέρα ὑμῶν καὶ θεὸν μου καὶ θεὸν ὑμῶν.

Here Jesus tells Mary that he has not yet gone to the Father. And of course he has not yet left the disciples either. But this is the condition of the coming of the Helper, the Holy Spirit. Even in the rest of John 20 and 21 Jesus has not yet left the disciples. He still meets with them as Luke tells us for about 40 days (Acts 1:30). John does not mention the 40 days, but even he presupposes a time span of several weeks (John 20:1.19.26; 21:1). Therefore when we combine John 16:7 with 20:17 we must conclude that the Holy Spirit was not really received yet in John 20:19-23. But how can we then understand what is meant by this section?

I understand John 20:22 as an acted parable pointing to Pentecost and showing the disciples that after Jesus has gone to the Father (John 16:7; 20:17) he will on the feast of Pentecost breathe the Holy Spirit into them thus making them a new creation and a new mankind.

The key for this understanding is the word used for "he breathed on them"¹³⁷. The same word even in the exact same verb form is used in the standard Greek translation of Gen 2:7 which was in use in the first century, the Septuagint¹³⁸:

Then the LORD God formed the man of dust from
the ground and breathed into his nostrils the breath
of life, and the man became a living creature.

In 1 Kgs 17:21, according to the LXX¹³⁹, Elijah thrice breathes into the dead son of the widow and asks God to let his soul

137. ἐνεφύσησεν *ēnēphysēsēn*

138. και επλασεν ο θεος τον ανθρωπον χουν απο της γης και ενεφυσησεν εις το προσωπον αυτου πνοην ζωης και εγενετο ο ανθρωπος εις ψυχην ζωσαν

139. και ενεφυσησεν τω παιδαριω τρις και επεκαλεσατο τον κυριον και

return into his body which then happens.

In Ez 37, the chapter of the resurrection of Israel, we find the same word in verse 9 (LXX) for the breathing of the wind/spirit on the restored bodies of the vast dead army so that they may become alive again (Ez 37:9-14):

9 Then he said to me, “Prophecy to the breath; prophecy, son of man, and say to the breath, Thus says the Lord God: Come from the four winds, O breath, and breathe on these slain, that they may live.”¹⁴⁰ 10 So I prophesied as he commanded me, and the breath came into them, and they lived and stood on their feet, an exceedingly great army. 11 Then he said to me, “Son of man, these bones are the whole house of Israel. Behold, they say, ‘Our bones are dried up, and our hope is lost; we are clean cut off.’ 12 Therefore prophecy, and say to them, Thus says the Lord God: Behold, I will open your graves and raise you from your graves, O my people. And I will bring you into the land of Israel. 13 And you shall know that I am the Lord, when I open your graves, and raise you from your graves, O my people. 14 And I will put my Spirit within you, and you shall live, and I will place you in your own land. Then you shall know that I am the Lord; I have spoken, and I will do it, declares the Lord.”

ειπεν κυριε ο θεος μου επιστραφητω δη η ψυχη του παιδαριου τουτου εις αυτον

140. και ειπεν προς με προφητευσον υιε ανθρωπου προφητευσον επι το πνευμα και ειπον τω πνευματι ταδε λεγει κυριος εκ των τεσσαρων πνευματων ελθε και εμφυσησον εις τους νεκρους τουτους και ζησατωσαν

The wind or spirit of 37:9 is explained to be the Spirit of God in 37:14. With the background of Gn 2:7 this passage in Ezekiel presents the restoration of Israel as its resurrection and recreation. Ez 37 is a close parallel to John 20 with the idea of resurrection and of the imparting of God's Spirit in both. Jesus seems to have acted in a way to combine both Gn 2:7 and Ez 37:9 in their relative contexts to teach the disciples a lesson in an acted parable.

By breathing on the disciples and saying that they should receive the Holy Spirit Jesus teaches something about the receiving of the Holy Spirit. This is similar to what he did in John 13:1-17 where he taught through an acted parable something about cleansing and forgiveness of sins. When he wanted to wash the feet of Peter, Peter tried to stop Jesus. Then Jesus said: "If I do not wash you, you have no share with me." (John 13:8). Of course Jesus wanted to point to the cleansing through his blood which he was going to shed on the cross (John 1:29; 6:51-53; 1 John 1:9). The water in the basin was only part of the acted parable not having itself the power to cleanse Peter from his sins. The message of this powerful parable is that we must let Jesus cleanse us from our sins through his blood on a daily basis just as it was necessary to wash ones feet every day in dusty Israel.

So what does Jesus teach us in John 20:22? He breathed on the disciples. The breath of his body in this acted parable can be compared to the water in the basin of the other acted parable in John 13. His breath symbolizes the Holy Spirit as he himself explains: "Receive the Holy Spirit." His bodily breath is not identical with the Holy Spirit as the water in his basin was not identical with his blood. What Jesus wants to teach the disciples in this symbolic action is that he himself is acting as

the creator who breathed life into Adam in Gen 2:7. As God created the first man starting with Adam, so the risen Christ has become a life-giving spirit. He is the first of the new mankind. He has the power to raise the spiritual dead and make them a new creation¹⁴¹ (compare 1 Cor 15:45; 1 Pet 1:3; 2 Cor 5:17). At the time of John 20:22 this can be only an acted parable because the Holy Spirit would come when Jesus was gone to the Father. When the Holy Spirit came on Pentecost the disciples would remember that Jesus in his divinity is breathing the Spirit into them.

That this is what was meant gets further support from the context. Jesus had shown himself to be God the creator. One disciple was missing, Thomas. He refused to accept the stories of his colleagues. He had one week to contemplate their content. When Jesus appeared to him, he immediately confessed: "My Lord and my God!" (John 20:28). When he realized that their story was true, he knew that Jesus was not only a risen man, but the living God and the creator.

Acts 2:1ff

The coming of the Holy Spirit on Pentecost started a new era. We have seen that the Holy Spirit was at work in the time of the Old Testament and in the life of John the Baptist and of course very much in the ministry of Jesus Christ. But still it is important to say that the feast of Pentecost in Acts 2 ushered in a new era, the era of the Holy Spirit, the time when God's Spirit is poured out on "all flesh" (meaning all Israelites, and further on all mankind, all nations; Acts 2:16-18):

141. So with Morris, *The Gospel according to John*, p. 846, note 53.

16 But this is what was uttered through the prophet
Joel:

17 ““And in the last days it shall be, God declares,
that I will pour out my Spirit on all flesh,
and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy,
and your young men shall see visions,
and your old men shall dream dreams;

18 even on my male servants and female servants
in those days I will pour out my Spirit,
and they shall prophesy.

Since this day God's gift of the Holy Spirit is not only for people in special chosen offices, as for the anointed high priest, the king or for prophets. It is for all, the young and the old, men and women, people who are near (Israelites) and people who are far (the Gentiles to the ends of the earth; see Acts 2:39; 1:8).

Acts 8:12-17

Together with Acts 19:1-7 this is often taken as a proof text that there can be real Christians who have not received the Holy Spirit. Let us have look at this text:

12 But when they believed Philip as he preached
good news about the kingdom of God and the name
of Jesus Christ, they were baptized, both men and
women. 13 Even Simon himself believed, and af-
ter being baptized he continued with Philip. And
seeing signs and great miracles performed, he was
amazed. 14 Now when the apostles at Jerusalem
heard that Samaria had received the word of God,
they sent to them Peter and John, 15 who came

down and prayed for them that they might receive the Holy Spirit, 16 for he had not yet fallen on any of them, but they had only been baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus. 17 Then they laid their hands on them and they received the Holy Spirit.

The argument runs like this: The Samaritans had heard the Gospel, believed it, even had been baptized, but still had not received the Holy Spirit (8:16). They received the Spirit later through the apostles (8:17). Therefore today it is also possible that people hear the Gospel, accept Christ as their Saviour, get baptized and still do not have the Holy Spirit until till God uses some spirit-filled person to help them receive the Spirit. But whoever argues like this has overlooked the special and unique situation of the Samaritans in Acts 8. It was the first time that the Gospel came to Samaria, and this situation will never be repeated. It was and stays unique. It is not an example for us today. It was a fulfillment of the prophecy of Jesus in Acts 1:8:

But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you, and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth.”

The apostles had been witnesses for Jesus in Jerusalem and Judah during the time of Acts 2-7. Now in Acts 8 Samaria is reached with the Gospel. In Acts 10 the Gentiles will be reached, and the whole way to the ends of the earth is opened up before the church. Acts 8 was a unique time of transition. The Gospel was on its way from the Jews to the Samaritans and then to the Gentiles. The Samaritans were a group in between. They were neither real Jews or Israelites, nor were they real Gentiles.

They were in between. They had the law of Moses, but a Samaritan version. They had the circumcision, but they rejected the temple in Jerusalem (see John 4:20-22). God honored their special status by bringing the Gospel first to them in Acts 8 and then opening the door for the Gentiles in Acts 10 (see 11:18). But God also knew of the enormous hatred between Jews and Samaritans. We get an impression of this in John 4:9:

The Samaritan woman said to him, "How is it that you, a Jew, ask for a drink from me, a woman of Samaria?" (For Jews have no dealings with Samaritans.)

The woman here was totally surprised. She thought a Jew would prefer to stay tired and thirsty, perhaps even die from thirst rather than ask for a bit of water from a Samaritan woman. In church history we learn that the schisms in the church are often related to issues of honor, power, culture, and nation. God wanted to have a united worldwide church "to the ends of the earth" built "on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Christ Jesus himself being the cornerstone" (Eph 2:20). Therefore God did something special in Acts 8:12-17. He humbled the Samaritans under the authority of the apostles Peter and John. The apostles had to come down to them from Jerusalem (!) and had to pray for them so that they would be incorporated into the worldwide church by receiving the Holy Spirit.¹⁴² This was very special and is not repeated today. Today the biblical principle is stated in Rom 8:9: "Anyone who does not have the Spirit of Christ

142. So with D. A. Carson, *Showing the Spirit. A theological exposition of 1 Corinthians 12-14* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Baker Book House, 1989), p. 145.

does not belong to him." To belong to Christ and to have his Spirit is one and the same. There is no being a true Christian without having the Spirit of Christ.

Acts 10:1ff

The people of the household of Cornelius receive the Spirit in Acts 10. The Holy spirit fell on those who were listening with faith to Peter's sermon (Acts 10:44; 11:15). After they received the spirit (10:47) Peter ordered them to also be baptized with water. The fact that God gave them the Spirit was a witness that God had accepted them after having purified their hearts through faith (15:8-9). Please, note the different way God was dealing with the Samaritans in Acts 8 and the Gentiles in Acts 10 according to the dangers of the respective situation. The Samaritans were in danger of despising the Jewish apostles from Jerusalem, so God humbled them under the authority of the apostles. But in Acts 10 the situation is totally different. The problem is not with the Gentiles, but with the Jews. They were in danger of never accepting any Gentile, not even eating with them. So the Jew, Peter, needed special preparation through three visions from God to even go to the house of Cornelius (10:9-20). When Peter was preaching, God did not even let him finish his preaching (11:15) but sent the Holy Spirit on the believing Gentiles as soon as they had heard that there is forgiveness of sins through the crucified and risen Christ (10:39-44). They received the Holy Spirit even before they were baptized with water (10:47)!

It is significant that Peter had an important role in all three stages of Acts 1:8 (1. Jerusalem and Judea: Acts 2; 2. Samaria: Acts 8, and 3. to the ends of the earth: Acts 10). God used the apostle Peter to open the door for each next step of spreading

the Gospel. Peter had the keys to open the door (Acts 11:18; Mt 16:19).

Acts 19:1-7

In this passage there are about 12 men in Ephesus who were disciples but did not have the Holy Spirit. Together with Acts 8:12-17 this is the most important "proof text" for those who think that there are true Christians without the Holy Spirit. Let us have a closer look at this text step by step:

1 And it happened that while Apollos was at Corinth, Paul passed through the inland country and came to Ephesus. There he found some disciples. 2 And he said to them, "Did you receive the Holy Spirit when you believed?" And they said, "No, we have not even heard that there is a Holy Spirit."¹⁴³

What we can see is that this group of men are called "disciples". It is not immediately clear whose disciples they were. Within the four Gospels we know of disciples of John the Baptist and of disciples of Jesus (see Matthew 9:14). In the immediate context of Acts we have the interesting statement about Apollos who visited Ephesus before (Acts 18:24-25):

24 Now a Jew named Apollos, a native of Alexandria, came to Ephesus. He was an eloquent man, competent in the Scriptures. 25 He had been instructed in the way of the Lord. And being fervent in spirit, he spoke and taught accurately the things

143. εἰπέν τε πρὸς αὐτοῦς• Εἰ πνεῦμα ἅγιον ἐλάβετε πιστεύσαντες; οἱ δὲ πρὸς αὐτόν• Ἀλλ' οὐδ' εἰ πνεῦμα ἅγιον ἔστιν ἠκούσαμεν.

concerning Jesus, though he knew only the baptism of John.

Apollos would have been an example of a disciple of John (knowing and acknowledging his baptism) who at the same time teaches accurately about Jesus, that he is the Christ (Acts 18:25.28). So he was also a kind of disciple of Christ and Christ's teaching. But at the same time his knowledge was limited and Priscilla and Aquila had to help him (18:26).

Whether Apollos had had an impact on these twelve men or not, we do not know for sure. But Paul was wondering what kind of disciples they were, because he sensed that they perhaps were without the Holy Spirit. After asking them he got the answer that they did not know that the Spirit had already come. Having confirmed this it is interesting to note his next question (19:3):

And he said, "Into what then were you baptized?"
They said, "Into John's baptism."

Before Jesus went into heaven he commanded the apostles (Matthew 28:19):

Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.¹⁴⁴

Paul recognized immediately that they could not have received the Christian baptism "in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit". Otherwise they would have known that the Holy Spirit was there and the Holy Spirit would be in them.

144. πορευθέντες οὖν μαθητεύσατε πάντα τὰ ἔθνη, βαπτίζοντες αὐτοὺς εἰς τὸ ὄνομα τοῦ πατρὸς καὶ τοῦ υἱοῦ καὶ τοῦ ἁγίου πνεύματος,

The problem of these disciples was a lack of teaching and a lack of knowledge of salvation. We can use the Gospel of Matthew to illustrate this. They knew about the baptism of John which we find in Matthew 3. So according to their knowledge they are somewhere after Matthew 3. But they do not know the baptism "in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit" which we find in Matthew 28 commanded by the risen Christ. This puts them according to their knowledge some time before Matthew 28. So it is clear that they do not know the teaching of the risen Christ after he had died on the cross. But it was the risen Christ who had explained the meaning of his death on the cross (Luke 24:45-47; Acts 1:3). So if they do not know one part of the teaching of the risen Christ (baptism in the name of the triune God) of course they would not know other parts (like forgiveness of our sins through the blood of Christ). But without knowing these facts and having faith in them, forgiveness of our sins is impossible and the cleansing of our heart is impossible. And surely it is impossible to receive the Spirit into an unclean heart (Acts 15:8-9).

These men were, spiritually speaking, living even before the cross of Christ. Paul only had to teach them and lead them further (Acts 19:4-7):

4 And Paul said, "John baptized with the baptism of repentance, telling the people to believe in the one who was to come after him, that is, Jesus."

5 On hearing this, they were baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus. 6 And when Paul had laid his hands on them, the Holy Spirit came on them, and they began speaking in tongues and prophesying.¹⁴⁵ 7

145. καὶ ἐπιθέντος αὐτοῖς τοῦ Παύλου χειρὰς ἦλθε τὸ πνεῦμα τὸ ἅγιον ἐπ

There were about twelve men in all.

It seems that they immediately accepted Paul's teaching and reached with his help the new age of the Holy Spirit. They are no proof for the idea that there are real Christians without the Holy Spirit. They are more like disciples of John the Baptist, still waiting for the Messiah. When Paul preached the Messiah Jesus and they accepted him and the baptism in his name, they could receive the Holy Spirit.

Summing up, we can say that even Acts 19:1-7 does not teach, on closer look, that there can be real Christians without the Holy Spirit. If somebody has received Christ as the one who died for him and rose from the dead and is now Lord in heaven at the right hand of God, he will have received the Holy Spirit. This happens according to God's promises (John 1:12-13; 3:5.16). Therefore we can say: Whoever accepts Jesus as his Lord and Saviour also receives the Holy Spirit.

6.4.4 God's Spirit Is the Instructor and Guide for God's People.

He has inspired the Old Testament prophets and scriptures.

The tabernacle and its rules were given by the Holy Spirit. The following statement in Hebrews 9:8 implies that the tabernacle with its different parts was inspired by God's Spirit:

By this the Holy Spirit indicates that the way into the holy places is not yet opened as long as the first section is still standing.¹⁴⁶

αὐτοῦς, ἐλάλουν τε γλώσσαις καὶ ἐπροφήτεον.

146. τοῦτο δηλοῦντος τοῦ πνεύματος τοῦ ἁγίου, μήπω πεφανερῶσθαι τὴν

David

In Mt 22:43-44 and Mk 12:36 Jesus presupposes that Psalm 110 is from David, inspired by the Holy Spirit and messianic (Mt 22:43-44):

43 He said to them, “How is it then that David, in the Spirit, calls him Lord, saying, 44 ‘The Lord said to my Lord, Sit at my right hand, until I put your enemies under your feet’”?

Mk 12:36

David himself, in the Holy Spirit, declared, “‘The Lord said to my Lord, Sit at my right hand, until I put your enemies under your feet.’”

In Acts 1:16 Peter says:

Brothers, the Scripture had to be fulfilled, which the Holy Spirit spoke beforehand by the mouth of David concerning Judas, who became a guide to those who arrested Jesus.

In Acts 1:20 he then points to Ps 69:25 and 109:8.

In Acts 4:18ff the religious authorities in Jerusalem command the apostles Peter and John to stop preaching in the name of Jesus. When the two come back to the other members of the church all pray together for boldness to preach and for miracles. They recognize their situation as a fulfillment of David's inspired words in Ps 2:1-2. They pray to God (Acts 4:25)

τῶν ἁγίων ὁδὸν ἔτι τῆς πρώτης σκηνῆς ἐχούσης στάσις

who through the mouth of our father David, your servant, said by the Holy Spirit

and then quote Ps 2:1-2.

In Heb 3:7-11 Psalm 95:7-11 is quoted and in Heb 4:7 David is given as author.

Joel 2:28-32 is quoted in Acts 2:16-21 and Joel is called a prophet.

In Acts 28:25 Paul quotes Is 6:9-10 and says that the Holy Spirit was right in speaking so through Isaiah.

In Heb 10:15-17 the writer points to Jer 31:33-34 saying that the Holy Spirit bears witness through these words.

The Spirit of Christ was in the prophets. In 1 Peter 1:10-11 Peter speaks of the "Spirit of Christ" in the prophets:

10 Concerning this salvation, the prophets who prophesied about the grace that was to be yours searched and inquired carefully, 11 inquiring what person or time the Spirit of Christ in them was indicating when he predicted the sufferings of Christ and the subsequent glories.¹⁴⁷

147. 10 Περὶ ἧς σωτηρίας ἐξεζήτησαν καὶ ἐξηραύνησαν προφῆται οἱ περὶ τῆς εἰς ὑμᾶς χάριτος προφητεύσαντες, 11 ἐραυνῶντες εἰς τίνα ἢ ποῖον καιρὸν ἐδήλου τὸ ἐν αὐτοῖς πνεῦμα Χριστοῦ προμαρτυρόμενον τὰ εἰς Χριστὸν παθήματα καὶ τὰς μετὰ ταῦτα δόξας.

The way I understand 1 Peter 3:19f is that the Spirit of Christ was also in Noah and preaching through Noah to the generation of the flood (1 Peter 3:19f).

The prophets of the Old Testament have prophesied under the guidance of the Holy Spirit (2 Peter 1:20-21):

20 ... knowing this first of all, that no prophecy of Scripture comes from someone's own interpretation. 21 For no prophecy was ever produced by the will of man, but men spoke from God as they were carried along by the Holy Spirit.¹⁴⁸

He teaches the church all the words of Jesus.

He teaches the church all of Jesus' words and reminds the church of them (John 14:26):

But the Helper, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, he will teach you all things and bring to your remembrance all that I have said to you.

He guides the church into the whole truth.

When Jesus was about to leave the disciples and go to the Father in heaven, he taught this as part of the last preparation of the disciples (John 16:13):

148. 20 τοῦτο πρῶτον γινώσκοντες ὅτι πᾶσα προφητεία γραφῆς ἰδίᾳς ἐπιλύσεως οὐ γίνεται, 21 οὐ γὰρ θελήματι ἀνθρώπου ἠνέχθη προφητεία ποτέ, ἀλλὰ ὑπὸ πνεύματος ἁγίου φερόμενοι ἐλάλησαν ἀπὸ θεοῦ ἄνθρωποι.

When the Spirit of truth comes, he will guide you into all the truth, for he will not speak on his own authority, but whatever he hears he will speak, and he will declare to you the things that are to come.

Paul praises the gift of the Spirit to us in 1 Cor 2:10-13 by which we can know God truly through his Spirit:

... 10 these things God has revealed to us through the Spirit. For the Spirit searches everything, even the depths of God. 11 For who knows a person's thoughts except the spirit of that person, which is in him? So also no one comprehends the thoughts of God except the Spirit of God. 12 Now we have received not the spirit of the world, but the Spirit who is from God, that we might understand the things freely given us by God. 13 And we impart this in words not taught by human wisdom but taught by the Spirit, interpreting spiritual truths to those who are spiritual.

He teaches the church about future things.

It is interesting that John, who received the Revelation about future things (Rev 1:1; 4:1), gives us this teaching of Jesus in John 16:13:

When the Spirit of truth comes, he will guide you into all the truth, for he will not speak on his own authority, but whatever he hears he will speak, and he will declare to you the things that are to come.

Paul also states in 1 Tim 4:1 that the Holy Spirit tells something about the future:

Now the Spirit expressly says that in later times some will depart from the faith by devoting themselves to deceitful spirits and teachings of demons.

God's Spirit and the Jerusalem Council solved a problem.

God's Spirit and the Jerusalem Council solved a problem of what to do with gentile converts (Acts 15:28-29):

28 For it has seemed good to the Holy Spirit and to us to lay on you no greater burden than these requirements:¹⁴⁹ 29 that you abstain from what has been sacrificed to idols, and from blood, and from what has been strangled, and from sexual immorality. If you keep yourselves from these, you will do well. Farewell.

6.4.5 God's Spirit Empowers People for Certain Tasks.

The Holy Spirit and the prophet John the Baptist

John was filled with the Holy Spirit from his mother's womb.

We read in Luke 1:15:

... for he will be great before the Lord. And he must not drink wine or strong drink, and he will be filled with the Holy Spirit, even from his mother's womb.¹⁵⁰

149. ἔδοξεν γὰρ τῷ πνεύματι τῷ ἁγίῳ καὶ ἡμῖν μηδὲν πλέον ἐπιτίθεσθαι ὑμῖν βάρος πλὴν τούτων τῶν ἐπάναγκες,

150. ἔσται γὰρ μέγας ἐνώπιον τοῦ κυρίου, καὶ οἶνον καὶ σίκερα οὐ μὴ πίῃ, καὶ πνεύματος ἁγίου πλησθήσεται ἔτι ἐκ κοιλίας μητρὸς αὐτοῦ

John grew up being strengthened by the Spirit (Luke 1:80, or in his spirit?). The ESV (and most translations) understand the spirit to be the spirit of the child:

And the child grew and became strong in spirit, and he was in the wilderness until the day of his public appearance to Israel.¹⁵¹

The verb used for "became strong" is also used in Luke 2:40; 1 Cor 16:13 and Eph 3:16. In the last verse it is combined with the Spirit of God:

... that according to the riches of his glory he may grant you to be strengthened with power through his Spirit in your inner being.¹⁵²

If the dative of the word spirit is understood as instrumental (through the Spirit) the phrase in Luke 1:80 could be translated similarly to Eph 3:16: "And the child grew and became strong through the Spirit."

The gifts of the Holy Spirit and His fruit

Gifts of the Spirit are given by the Spirit to every believer and are revelations of the work of the Spirit in the Church to edify the Church. The whole of 1 Cor 12 teaches this,¹⁵³ but let us especially hear 12:4-7:

151. Τὸ δὲ παιδίον ἡῤῥανε καὶ ἐκραταιοῦτο πνεύματι, καὶ ἦν ἐν ταῖς ἐρήμοις ἕως ἡμέρας ἀναδείξεως αὐτοῦ πρὸς τὸν Ἰσραήλ.

152. ἵνα δῶ ὑμῖν κατὰ τὸ πλοῦτος τῆς δόξης αὐτοῦ δυνάμει κραταιωθῆναι διὰ τοῦ πνεύματος αὐτοῦ εἰς τὸν ἔσω ἄνθρωπον

153. Compare also Rom 12:3ff and Eph 4:11.

4 Now there are varieties of gifts, but the same Spirit; 5 and there are varieties of service, but the same Lord; 6 and there are varieties of activities, but it is the same God who empowers them all in everyone. 7 To each is given the manifestation of the Spirit for the common good.¹⁵⁴

Apostles The word "apostle" (hō apōstōlōs)¹⁵⁵ denotes somebody who is sent with authority on a mission representing the sender (Matthew 10:5.40). The apostles had prime importance. In the following two lists they are mentioned first (1 Cor 12:28):

And God has appointed in the church first apostles, second prophets, third teachers, then miracles, then gifts of healing, helping, administrating, and various kinds of tongues.¹⁵⁶

Eph 4:11:

And he gave the apostles, the prophets, the evangelists, the pastors and teachers.¹⁵⁷

154. 4 Διαίρέσεις δὲ χαρισμάτων εἰσὶν, τὸ δὲ αὐτὸ πνεῦμα• 5 καὶ διαίρέσεις διακονιῶν εἰσιν, καὶ ὁ αὐτὸς κύριος• 6 καὶ διαίρέσεις ἐνεργημάτων εἰσὶν, ὁ δὲ αὐτὸς θεός, ὁ ἐνεργῶν τὰ πάντα ἐν πᾶσιν. 7 ἑκάστῳ δὲ δίδεται ἡ φανέρωσις τοῦ πνεύματος πρὸς τὸ συμφέρον.

155. ὁ ἀπόστολος

156. καὶ οὕς μὲν ἔθετο ὁ θεὸς ἐν τῇ ἐκκλησίᾳ πρῶτον ἀποστόλους, δεύτερον προφήτας, τρίτον διδασκάλους, ἔπειτα δυνάμεις, ἔπειτα χαρίσματα ἰαμάτων, ἀντιλήμψεις, κυβερνήσεις, γένη γλωσσῶν.

157. καὶ αὐτὸς ἔδωκεν τοὺς μὲν ἀποστόλους, τοὺς δὲ προφήτας, τοὺς δὲ εὐαγγελιστάς, τοὺς δὲ ποιμένας καὶ διδασκάλους

They were eyewitnesses of the fact that Jesus had risen from the dead (Acts 1:21-22; 1 Cor 9:1). As such they were part of the foundation of the worldwide church (Eph 2:19-21):

19 So then you are no longer strangers and aliens, but you are fellow citizens with the saints and members of the household of God, 20 built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Christ Jesus himself being the cornerstone, 21 in whom the whole structure, being joined together, grows into a holy temple in the Lord. 22 In him you also are being built together into a dwelling place for God by the Spirit.

It is possible that Paul thinks of one group when he speaks of the "foundation of the apostles and prophets" because he uses only one definite article for apostles and prophets. He himself had both gifts (being an apostle and prophet, see Acts 13:1; 14:14). The same is true for Peter (Acts 5:1-11). Because the apostles were eyewitnesses of the risen Jesus, I think that this gift was limited to the first century, to the time when God was laying the foundation of the worldwide church.¹⁵⁸

Prophets

Prophecy is a gift of the Spirit in the New Testament. A prophet (hō prōphētēs)¹⁵⁹ is somebody who, inspired by God, speaks truthfully about the past, the present, or the future. In 1

158. So with Carson, *Showing the Spirit*. A theological exposition of 1 Corinthians 12-14, p. 182, note 78.

159. ὁ προφήτης

Cor 14:3 Paul tells us about the effect of prophecy within the church:

On the other hand, the one who prophesies speaks to people for their upbuilding and encouragement and consolation.¹⁶⁰

Sometimes these days this is turned around and people say: If somebody speaks in an "upbuilding, encouraging, and consoling way," this is prophecy. But that is not the case. Prophecy even in 1 Cor 14 is speaking under the guidance of the Holy Spirit in a way that could not be done without this guidance. See 14:24-25 for proof of this:

24 But if all prophesy, and an unbeliever or outsider enters, he is convicted by all, he is called to account by all, 25 the secrets of his heart are disclosed, and so, falling on his face, he will worship God and declare that God is really among you.

This outsider experiences that "the secrets of his heart are disclosed," secrets only God can know. So he draws the conclusion: "God is really among you." To put it in another way: a normal sermon may have the effect of bringing "upbuilding and encouragement and consolation" to the church, but this does not make the sermon prophetic. The gift of prophecy includes an element of special guidance of the Spirit while speaking and prophesying.

This can be verified by examples in the New Testament. Have a look at Zechariah. His words given in Luke 1:68-79 are

160. ὁ δὲ προφητεύων ἀνθρώποις λαλεῖ οἰκοδομὴν καὶ παράκλησιν καὶ παραμυθίαν.

called prophetic in Luke 1:67. He is speaking of the service of his son John the Baptist who is going to prepare the way for the coming of the Messiah. Both chosen servants are an expression of God's mercy and faithfulness towards Israel. Zechariah predicts the future of both.

Agabus was a famous prophet of the first generation (Acts 11:27-29):

27 Now in these days prophets came down from Jerusalem to Antioch. 28 And one of them named Agabus stood up and foretold by the Spirit that there would be a great famine over all the world (this took place in the days of Claudius). 29 So the disciples determined, everyone according to his ability, to send relief to the brothers living in Judea.

Again we can see an element of prediction, a superhuman knowledge, given to Agabus by God. Another interesting element is the answer of the believers. Knowing that God has a purpose for every prophecy they ask what they should do. After examining the prophecy they decide to help the brothers and sisters in Judea with a gift of money sent to them to help the poor with the coming inflation.

The same Agabus foretells the imprisonment of Paul in Acts 21:10-12 using Paul's belt:

10 While we were staying for many days, a prophet named Agabus came down from Judea. 11 And coming to us, he took Paul's belt and bound his own feet and hands and said, "Thus says the Holy Spirit, 'This is how the Jews at Jerusalem will bind the man who owns this belt and deliver him into

the hands of the Gentiles.’” 12 When we heard this, we and the people there urged him not to go up to Jerusalem.

Again there is a superhuman source of knowledge in Agabus. And the others have to react to the prophecy. Paul's friends urge him not to go to Jerusalem, but Paul remains determined to go (21:13). Paul had already been warned before. He says to the elders of Ephesus in Miletus (Acts 20:22-23):

22 And now, behold, I am going to Jerusalem, constrained by the Spirit, not knowing what will happen to me there, 23 except that the Holy Spirit testifies to me in every city that imprisonment and afflictions await me.

Luke notes about the disciples in Tyre (21:4):

And through the Spirit they were telling Paul not to go on to Jerusalem.

(For further occurrences of this gift see 1 Cor 12:10,28,29; 1 Cor 14; Rom 12:7.) Through the quotation of Joel in Acts 2:17 we learn that prophecy will be a gift of God's Spirit for the last days before the coming of the day of the Lord.

A special prophetic book in the New Testament is the book of Revelation. In the introduction the book is marked as prophetic (Rv 1:3):

Blessed is the one who reads aloud the words of this prophecy, and blessed are those who hear, and who keep what is written in it, for the time is near.

By "being in the Spirit" (Rv 1:10¹⁶¹ and 4:2¹⁶²) John receives the prophetic book in two stages (Rev 1-3 and 4-22). That the content of Rev 1-3 is definitely given by the Holy Spirit is made clear by seven times emphasizing that the Holy Spirit is speaking to the 7 churches (2:7.11.17.29; 3:6.13.22). The Holy Spirit's voice is also heard later in the book (14:13). The Holy Spirit is the "spirit of prophecy" and the witness of Jesus (Rev 19:10). The Lord is the God of the spirits of the prophets (Rev 22:6). The Spirit and the Bride (= the New Jerusalem) invite all to drink from the living water (Rev 22:17) which of course is the Holy Spirit.

Evangelists An Evangelist (hō ēuaggēlistēs)¹⁶³ is somebody who delivers a good message, good news, having been sent and authorized to do so. The gift of the Evangelist seems also to be important, being named immediately after apostles and prophets in Eph 4:11:

And he gave the apostles, the prophets, the evangelists, the pastors and teachers.

In comparison with the pastors and teachers (here one group with one definite article) who are responsible for the "sheep" of one area, the three groups of the apostles, the prophets and the evangelists are seen moving around in the New Testament and serving beyond one town or one single area.

161. ἐγενόμην ἐν πνεύματι ἐν τῇ κυριακῇ ἡμέρᾳ, καὶ ἤκουσα ὀπίσω μου φωνὴν μεγάλην ὡς σάλπιγξ

162. εὐθέως ἐγενόμην ἐν πνεύματι• καὶ ἰδοὺ θρόνος ἔκειτο ἐν τῷ οὐρανῷ, καὶ ἐπὶ τὸν θρόνον καθήμενος

163. ὁ εὐαγγελιστής

Philip is called an evangelist in Acts 21:9, probably to distinguish him from the apostle of the same name. And Paul writes to Timothy (2 Tim. 4:5):

As for you, always be sober-minded, endure suffering, do the work of an evangelist, fulfill your ministry.

These are the three times the noun is used in the New Testament. The verb is used more often, and not only for people who have the title of being an evangelist, but also for the scattered believers evangelizing (Acts 8:4) and for apostles doing this (Acts 5:42; Paul 13:32 etc.). In the Gospels angels evangelize (Luke 1:19; 2:10), John the Baptist (Luke 3:18) and of course Jesus Christ (Luke 4:18.43 e. a.).

Shepherds (Pastors) and Teachers We have already seen that the shepherds (hō pōimēn in the singular)¹⁶⁴ and teachers have one definite article in Eph 4:11.¹⁶⁵ It is one group of persons with a double gift, therefore here counted separately, but see also the words "Teacher" and "Leadership" (compare the Prophets and Teachers in Acts 13:1). When we look at all texts of the New Testament, it seems that the group of the pastor-shepherds (Eph 4:11; Acts 20:28; 1 Pet 5:2) is one and the same as the group of elders (Acts 14:23; 20:17; 1 Tim 5:1.17.19; Titus 1:5; James 5:14; 1 Pt 5:1.5), or of overseers (Acts 20:28; Phil 1:1; 1 Tim 3:1.2; Titus 1:7; 1 Pt 2:25; 5:2), or of those "standing in

164. ὁ ποιμήν

165. καὶ αὐτὸς ἔδωκεν τοὺς μὲν ἀποστόλους, τοὺς δὲ προφήτας, τοὺς δὲ εὐαγγελιστάς, τοὺς δὲ ποιμένας καὶ διδασκάλους,

front" which means of those "who rule" (1 Tim 5:17¹⁶⁶; compare Rom 12:8; 1 Thes 5:12; 1 Tim. 3:4-5.12).

Leadership The Holy Spirit is also working to give the church good leadership (1 Cor 12:28):

And God has appointed in the church first apostles,
second prophets, third teachers, then miracles, then
gifts of healing, helping, administrating, and vari-
ous kinds of tongues.

Here we talk about "administrating". The word used *kybĕrnēsĕis*¹⁶⁷ means "government" or "administrations". In Acts 27:11 and Rv 18:17 there is a related noun¹⁶⁸ *kybĕrnētēs* for the "pilot" or "shipmaster" of a ship. As the pilot or shipmaster decides the course the ship takes, so the people with the gift of "kyberne-seis" decide under the guidance of the Holy Spirit the course of the church. Of course apostles, prophets, and shepherds are leaders as well.

Teachers In the New Testament the word teacher (*hō didaskalōs*)¹⁶⁹ is most often used for Jesus (e. g. Mt 8:19; 12:38; 19:16; 22:16.24.36). Friends and enemies talked to him like this. Some texts talk of teachers as a gift of God for the church (1 Cor 12:28.29):

166. Οἱ καλῶς προεστῶτες πρεσβύτεροι

167. κυβερνήσεις

168. κυβερνήτης

169. ὁ διδάσκαλος

28 And God has appointed in the church first apostles, second prophets, third teachers, then miracles, then gifts of healing, helping, administrating, and various kinds of tongues. 29 Are all apostles? Are all prophets? Are all teachers? Do all work miracles?

The answer to the questions of verse 29 is, of course, "No!" Not all can be spirit-gifted teachers. In Eph 4:11 the gift of the teacher is combined with the pastoral gift of the shepherd indicated by the one definite article in front of the pastors and teachers:

And he gave the apostles, the prophets, the evangelists, the pastors and teachers.

In Acts 13:1 the gift of the teacher is combined with the prophetic gift:

Now there were in the church at Antioch prophets and teachers, Barnabas, Simeon who was called Niger, Lucius of Cyrene, Manaen a member of the court of Herod the tetrarch, and Saul.

Paul understands himself as a teacher of the Gentiles and combines this with his being an apostle (1 Tm 2:7; 2 Tm 1:11). When Christians develop well they should, after some time, become mature enough to be teachers (Heb 5:12). But they should not push themselves too soon in that direction (James 3:1).

Gift of healing Paul mentions this gift in his list in 1 Cor 12:8-9:

8 To one is given through the Spirit the utterance of wisdom, and to another the utterance of knowledge according to the same Spirit, 9 to another faith by the same Spirit, to another gifts of healing by the one Spirit.¹⁷⁰

Later, in the same chapter, Paul wants to show that there is unity in the body of Christ despite the diversity in the gifts (1 Cor 12:28-30):

28 And God has appointed in the church first apostles, second prophets, third teachers, then miracles, then gifts of healing, helping, administrating, and various kinds of tongues. 29 Are all apostles? Are all prophets? Are all teachers? Do all work miracles? 30 Do all possess gifts of healing? Do all speak with tongues? Do all interpret?

The rhetorical questions of 12:29-30 all expect the answer: "No!" Every gift of course has a strong impact on the gifted person and makes him different from the people with the other gifts. Every one is special and different by the design of God for the good of the whole body of Christ, the church of God. The gift of healing reveals God's mercy towards the weak and ill and God's power to help.

Gift of performing wonders or mighty deeds In the above quoted texts we have also "miracles" or "mighty deeds" (1 Cor 12:10:

170. 8 ὃ μὲν γὰρ διὰ τοῦ πνεύματος δίδεται λόγος σοφίας, ἄλλω δὲ λόγος γνώσεως κατὰ τὸ αὐτὸ πνεῦμα, 9 ἑτέρῳ πίστις ἐν τῷ αὐτῷ πνεύματι, ἄλλω χαρίσματα ἰαμάτων ἐν τῷ ἐνὶ πνεύματι,

ἐνεργήματα δυνάμεων)¹⁷¹; 12:28.29: δυνάμεις¹⁷²). Mark 6:5-6 tells us something interesting about Jesus in Nazareth with regard to miracles:

5 And he could do no mighty work there, except that he laid his hands on a few sick people and healed them. 6 And he marveled because of their unbelief...¹⁷³

These miracles seem to be the kind of deeds which can only be done by the power of God. It also seems to be the case that God wants them to be done in an atmosphere of faith.

Gift of faith Paul speaks of the gift of faith (hē pistis)¹⁷⁴ in 1 Cor 12:8-9:

8 To one is given through the Spirit the utterance of wisdom, and to another the utterance of knowledge according to the same Spirit, 9 to another faith by the same Spirit, to another gifts of healing by the one Spirit.¹⁷⁵

We know that every Christian needs faith to be a true Christian. There are certain truths which Christians believe and there is a

171. ἐνεργήματα δυνάμεων

172. δυνάμεις

173. 5 καὶ οὐκ ἐδύνατο ἐκεῖ ποιῆσαι οὐδεμίαν δύναμιν, εἰ μὴ ὀλίγοις ἀρρώστοις ἐπιθεῖς τὰς χεῖρας ἐθεράπευσεν• 6 καὶ ἐθαύμαζεν διὰ τὴν ἀπιστίαν αὐτῶν.

174. ἡ πίστις

175. 8 ὃ μὲν γὰρ διὰ τοῦ πνεύματος δίδοται λόγος σοφίας, ἄλλω δὲ λόγος γνώσεως κατὰ τὸ αὐτὸ πνεῦμα, 9 ἑτέρω πίστις ἐν τῷ αὐτῷ πνεύματι, ἄλλω χαρίσματα ἰαμάτων ἐν τῷ ἐνὶ πνεύματι

basic attitude of trust towards God as father and saviour. But the faith Paul speaks about here, seems to be special. It is not the common faith Christians have, but a special faith for a special occasion; for a special challenge. He mentions the same gift again in the next chapter, the great chapter about the gift of love (13:2):

And if I have prophetic powers, and understand all mysteries and all knowledge, and if I have all faith, so as to remove mountains, but have not love, I am nothing.

The challenges here are "mountains" which are removed by the gift of faith. It is a comfort to know that God is able to give this gift to somebody amongst his people, when it is needed most and when there are great challenges for his church; mountains which hinder the progress of the church and which block the way. The mountains have to be removed by the power of God. And God does it by the gift of faith in some of his children. What a grace! We might think of Moses who divided the Reed Sea; or of Joshua who guided Israel by faith till the walls of Jericho came tumbling down.

The greatest obstacle for Christians is suffering and death, the last enemy. In 2 Cor 4:11-14 Pauls states:

11 For we who live are always being given over to death for Jesus' sake, so that the life of Jesus also may be manifested in our mortal flesh. 12 So death is at work in us, but life in you. 13 Since we have the same spirit of faith according to what has been written, "I believed, and so I spoke," we also believe, and so we also speak, 14 knowing that he

who raised the Lord Jesus will raise us also with Jesus and bring us with you into his presence.

Speaking a foreign language you have not learned. When Paul says that to some "various kinds of tongues" (gēnē glōssōn)¹⁷⁶ (1 Cor 12:10.28) are given. He means "various languages" because the word "tongue" was used for languages. That existing languages are meant with the word tongues, is especially clear in Acts 2:3-4 which is the first time this gift is seen in action:

3 And divided tongues (glōssai)¹⁷⁷ as of fire appeared to them and rested on each one of them. 4 And they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak in other tongues (glōssais)¹⁷⁸ as the Spirit gave them utterance.¹⁷⁹

It is clear because of the following verses 2:5-11:

5 Now there were dwelling in Jerusalem Jews, devout men from every nation under heaven. 6 And at this sound the multitude came together, and they were bewildered, because each one was hearing them speak in his own language (dialēktō, dialect).¹⁸⁰ 7 And they were amazed and astonished,

176. γένη γλωσσών

177. γλώσσαι

178. γλώσσαις

179. 3 καὶ ὤφθησαν αὐτοῖς διαμεριζόμεναι γλώσσαι ὡσεὶ πυρός, καὶ ἐκάθισεν ἐφ' ἓνα ἕκαστον αὐτῶν, 4 καὶ ἐπλήσθησαν πάντες πνεύματος ἁγίου, καὶ ἤρξαντο λαλεῖν ἑτέραις γλώσσαις καθὼς τὸ πνεῦμα ἐδίδου ἀποφθέγγεσθαι αὐτοῖς.

180. διαλέκτῳ

saying, “Are not all these who are speaking Galileans?
 8 And how is it that we hear, each of us in his own
 native language (dialēktō, dialect)?¹⁸¹ 9 Parthians
 and Medes and Elamites and residents of Mesopotamia,
 Judea and Cappadocia, Pontus and Asia, 10 Phry-
 gia and Pamphylia, Egypt and the parts of Libya be-
 longing to Cyrene, and visitors from Rome, 11 both
 Jews and proselytes, Cretans and Arabians — we
 hear them telling in our own tongues (glōssais)¹⁸²
 the mighty works of God.”

Luke uses the word "dialect" in verse 6 and 8 to denote the mother tongue of the hearers. In verse 11 he uses the literal word "tongues" (glōssais) to say the same thing: "our own tongues" means "our mother tongues" or "mother languages". So it is crystal clear that "tongues" in Acts 2 means languages. It is very probable that the same is the case in the following texts of the same book where this gift is mentioned. The Gentiles in the house of Cornelius received the Holy Spirit and this became visible and audible for the shocked Jews (10:46):

For they were hearing them speaking in tongues
 (glōssais)¹⁸³ and extolling God.

When the approximately 12 men in Acts 19:1-7 received the Holy Spirit they spoke in previously not learned languages and prophesied (19:6):

181. διαλέκτω

182. γλώσσαις

183. γλώσσαις

And when Paul had laid his hands on them, the Holy Spirit came on them, and they began speaking in tongues (glōssais)¹⁸⁴ and prophesying.

It is possible to understand the "new tongues" of Mark 16:17-18 in a similar way:

17 And these signs will accompany those who believe: in my name they will cast out demons; they will speak in new tongues (glōssais);¹⁸⁵ 18 they will pick up serpents with their hands; and if they drink any deadly poison, it will not hurt them; they will lay their hands on the sick, and they will recover.

"New tongue" here would mean new for the speaker, the person who received the gift. Not necessarily "new" for the world, the others, the people who hear him speaking. This makes more sense together with the other signs (casting out demons Acts 16:18; 19:12; surviving lethal serpents Acts 28:3-6; surviving deadly poison; healing Acts 28:8-10), if the language was not new to the hearers but their own language as in Acts 2. There it would be an impressive sign: How can he speak my language, when he has never learned it? See Acts 2:7-8.

Let us now turn to 1 Corinthians 12-14 because that is the section where the phrase "(speaking in) tongues" is used most often. Having said that God has given the gift of "various kinds of tongues" (12:10.28) together with other gifts to the church Paul asks (1 Cor 12:29-30):

184. γλώσσαις

185. γλώσσαις

29 Are all apostles? Are all prophets? Are all teachers? Do all work miracles? 30 Do all possess gifts of healing? Do all speak with tongues? Do all interpret?

As we have said before, these questions are rhetorical questions expecting the emphatic answer "No!". Paul therefore clearly teaches that the gift of tongues is one of many gifts but not one gift for all. Those who claim that this special gift is given to all real believers can not prove this from the Bible. Therefore it would be better not to put forward such a claim. Because if we say "All should have this gift!" and so put pressure on those who do not have it, we lead them into temptation. They might be tempted, if they do not get it from God, to get an imitation of the real gift. They might try to copy others, who claim to have the gift, by repeating the syllables they use or the style they speak. And so, even a chain reaction of imitations might be started with no real spiritual profit for anybody. We should stop this by simply admitting that it is one possible spiritual gift from God, but not the one gift for everybody.

Are there signs that Paul also thinks of "speaking in tongues" as "speaking in languages"? Yes, definitely. The gift of interpretation of tongues (1 Cor 12:10,30; see below) implies that "tongues" mean something which can be interpreted. Having Acts 2 in mind, knowing that Luke and Paul were part of the same team (Acts 16:10-16; 20:5ff; 27:1ff), the nearest assumption is that what has meaning and can be interpreted, is a language. Paul's next statement in 1 Cor 13:1 also points in this direction:

If I speak in the tongues (glōssais)¹⁸⁶ of men and of angels, but have not love, I am a noisy gong or a clanging cymbal.

The "tongues of men" here are definitely human languages. Since Gen 11 we as humans have not only one language but many according to the Bible. We do not know about the language or languages of the angels. Because they had nothing like the tower of Babylon perhaps they have only one "language". If God wanted them to have more, they have more. We just do not know. But the "tongues of men" point to human languages. The same understanding of the tongues as languages fits the rest of Paul's argument in 1 Cor 14 (verses: 2;4;5;6;9;13;14;18;19;22;23;26;27;39).

Sometimes nowadays people understand 1 Cor 13:8-13 as a prophecy of Paul that "speaking in tongues" would cease after the completion of the canon of the New Testament (understood to be the "perfect" of 13:10). Let us have a look at this text within the context:

8 Love never ends. As for prophecies, they will pass away; as for tongues, they will cease; as for knowledge, it will pass away. 9 For we know in part and we prophesy in part, 10 but when the perfect comes, the partial will pass away. 11 When I was a child, I spoke like a child, I thought like a child, I reasoned like a child. When I became a man, I gave up childish ways. 12 For now we see in a mirror dimly, but then face to face. Now I know in part; then I shall know fully, even as I have been fully known. 13 So now faith, hope, and

186. γλώσσαις

love abide, these three; but the greatest of these is love.

Within the context Paul's main emphasis in 1 Cor 13 is on love as the superior gift (see 12:31 introducing this superior way). He has put this chapter 13 in the center of his exposition on the gifts of the Spirit in 1 Cor 12-14 because he wants to show the Corinthians that the gifts are not as important as the way we use them and that we should use them in love. Without love, every other gift is useless (13:1-3). Love is the perfection of a holy life and includes such great gifts as faith and hope (13:4-7; for faith and hope see 13:7). Love never ends and is, among the eternal triplet of faith, hope and love, the greatest gift (13:8-13).

It is in this context of the eternal superiority of love that Paul speaks of gifts which will end (prophecies, speaking in tongues and knowledge, see 13:8-10). But the question is when do the gifts of prophecy, tongues and knowledge cease to exist? The answer is given in 13:10-12:

- a. When the perfect comes (13:10).
- b. When I know fully as I am fully known (13:12).

Paul compares the "partial knowledge" and the "full knowledge" with childhood and adulthood (13:11) and with looking at something through a mirror or looking directly at the real thing, seeing face to face (13:12). I think the passive in the last part of 13:12 is a divine passive:

... then I shall know fully, even as I have been fully known.

Paul has been fully known by God. God knows him fully and totally, everything about him. And God loves him even with

this full knowledge. When the perfect comes, then Paul will know God as fully as God knows him today. This is not the completion of the Canon of the New Testament. This can only be the coming of Christ when we will be transformed into our eternal state of blessedness (Phil 3:20-21; 1 Jn 3:1-2).

Till Christ comes back, we will need all the gifts God is willing to give us. We will need all the help we can get from Him and we should despise no true gift of God. It is in this attitude that Paul gives rules to use the gift of prophecy, the gift of tongues and other gifts in 1 Cor 14:26-32:

26 What then, brothers? When you come together, each one has a hymn, a lesson, a revelation, a tongue, or an interpretation. Let all things be done for building up. 27 If any speak in a tongue, let there be only two or at most three, and each in turn, and let someone interpret. 28 But if there is no one to interpret, let each of them keep silent in church and speak to himself and to God. 29 Let two or three prophets speak, and let the others weigh what is said. 30 If a revelation is made to another sitting there, let the first be silent. 31 For you can all prophesy one by one, so that all may learn and all be encouraged, 32 and the spirits of prophets are subject to prophets. 33 For God is not a God of confusion but of peace.

The rules for speaking in tongues include:

1. No public speaking of tongues in church is allowed without interpretation (14:28).

2. Only two or at most three are allowed to speak in tongues publicly in one service and not at the same time but one after the other (14:27).

Similar rules apply to the prophets: "Let two or three prophets speak." The prophets speak in the local language so they do not need an interpretation, but they must be understood as well: "Let the others weigh what is said." Paul puts a great deal of emphasis on the fact that using the spiritual gifts must make sense to the church. The gift of revelation seems to get an immediate green light in comparison to the speaking of the prophets showing that the revelation is more urgent. The speaking prophet can stop and let God give his revelation to the church (14:30).

In 1 Cor 14:1-25 Paul also compares the gift of prophecy and the gift of speaking in tongues with regard to their usefulness for the church. The bottom line of his argument is that it must make sense. Therefore he prefers the gift of prophecy to the speaking in tongues in the public service (14:19), and he encourages the person who speaks in tongues to pray for the gift of interpretation (14:11-13). As a result he will profit personally in his spiritual life (14:14-15) and be able to let the church participate in the blessings of this gift through understanding (14:16-17, 27).

1 Cor 14:14 tells us something important about the nature of the gift of tongues:

For if I pray in a tongue, my spirit prays but my mind is unfruitful.¹⁸⁷

187. ἐὰν γὰρ προσεύχωμαι γλώσσει, τὸ πνεῦμά μου προσεύχεται, ὁ δὲ νοῦς μου ἄκαρπός ἐστιν.

Please note that it is "my spirit" who prays, not the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit only provides the language to pray in, but it is "my spirit" who does the prayer. Sometimes people say that speaking in tongues is so good because it is the prayer language of the Holy Spirit, and they combine it with the "groanings which cannot be uttered" (stēnagmōis alalētōis)¹⁸⁸ from Rom 8:26¹⁸⁹. But this does not fit,¹⁹⁰ because here in 1 Cor 14 the speaking in tongues is a kind of "uttering" (lalēin)¹⁹¹, and there in Rom 8:26 the praying is without uttering (alalētōis).

Interpretation of speaking in a foreign language ("in tongues").

When Paul says (1 Cor 14:14),

For if I pray in a tongue, my spirit prays but my mind is unfruitful.

he shows us that these prayers of the human spirit are happening in an area of the person which is "deeper" or "higher" than what is going on in the conscious mind of the person. Only if the person receives the gift of interpretation of the praying in tongues, the two areas get connected and his conscious mind starts to be fruitful (14:13):

Therefore one who speaks in a tongue should pray for the power to interpret (hina dihermēneuē).¹⁹²

188. στεναγμοῖς ἀλαλήτοις

189. KJV, The Holy Bible - King James Version

190. Compare Grudem, Systematic Theology. An Introduction to Biblical Doctrine who also argues that Rom 8:26-27 do not speak about the gift of tongues.

191. λαλεῖν

192. Διὸ ὁ λαλῶν γλώσση προσευχέσθω ἵνα διερμηνεύῃ.

As we have seen above, this gift of interpretation is important for the personal life of the believer and even more so for the public services of the church (1 Cor 14:26-28):

26 What then, brothers? When you come together, each one has a hymn, a lesson, a revelation, a tongue, or an interpretation (hěrmēñēian)¹⁹³. Let all things be done for building up. 27 If any speak in a tongue, let there be only two or at most three, and each in turn, and let someone interpret (diěrmēñeuētō)¹⁹⁴. 28 But if there is no one to interpret (diěrmēñeutēs)¹⁹⁵, let each of them keep silent in church and speak to himself and to God.

The interpretation of the speaking in tongues is so important for Paul that he does not allow any speaking in tongues in public without interpretation. Positively the interpretation makes the speaking in tongues edifying for the church (14:5):

Now I want you all to speak in tongues, but even more to prophesy. The one who prophesies is greater than the one who speaks in tongues, unless someone interprets, so that the church may be built up.

That will be the reason why Paul mentions "the interpretation of tongues" (hěrmēñēia glōssōn)¹⁹⁶ straight after the "various kinds of tongues" in 12:10 and that he also pairs the two gifts in 12:30:

193. ἑρμηνείαν

194. διερμηνευέτω

195. διερμηνευτής

196. ἑρμηνεία γλωσσῶν

Do all speak with tongues? Do all interpret (diër-mēnēuōusin)¹⁹⁷?

This last verb "interpret" is used twice in the New Testament without the context of speaking in tongues. In the first passage the risen Christ explains the Old Testament prophecies about himself to two disciples on their way to Emmaus (Luke 24:27):

And beginning with Moses and all the Prophets, he interpreted to them in all the Scriptures the things concerning himself.¹⁹⁸

In the second it is about the translation of a name from one language to another (Acts 9:36):

Now there was in Joppa a disciple named Tabitha, which, translated, means Dorcas.¹⁹⁹

This verse in Acts 9:36 shows that this verb can be used for the translation from one human language into another. I think that this is what Paul also means with the gift of interpretation of tongues: It is the ability to translate the unknown language of the speaker into the normal local language of the church service. In many churches the normal language of the church service would have been Greek.

Nowadays it is possible to record spoken language on a voice recorder, for example an mp3 player. If somebody is speaking in tongues, his speech can be recorded. Then it is

197. διερμηνεύουσιν

198. καὶ ἀρξάμενος ἀπὸ Μωϋσέως καὶ ἀπὸ πάντων τῶν προφητῶν διερμήνευσεν αὐτοῖς ἐν πάσαις ταῖς γραφαῖς τὰ περὶ ἑαυτοῦ.

199. Ἐν Ἰόππῃ δέ τις ἦν μαθήτρια ὀνόματι Ταβιθά, ἣ διερμηνευομένη λέγεται Δορκάς•

possible to play this recorded speech to two or three people who claim to have the gift of interpretation. They can give their interpretation which also can be recorded. When the interpretation of the two or three interpreters agrees (Dt 19:15) with regard to the content of the message, we can really know the content of what was said. If we know the content of the speech in tongues, then we can evaluate whether it honors God and Jesus Christ and is spiritual or not (1 Cor 12:3).

Dreams from God On the day of Pentecost Peter tries to explain the outpouring of the Holy Spirit in his sermon and he says (Acts 2:16-17):

16 But this is what was uttered through the prophet

Joel:

17 “And in the last days it shall be, God declares,
that I will pour out my Spirit on all flesh,
and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy,
and your young men shall see visions,
and your old men shall dream dreams
(*enypniōis enypniasthēsōntai*).”²⁰⁰

According to the prophecy of Joel and its fulfillment "in the last days" we may expect that God will use dreams to speak to people. It seems that this is especially happening to bring the Gospel to unreached people. The same is true with regard to the next gift.

200. καὶ οἱ πρεσβύτεροι ὑμῶν ἐνυπνίοις ἐνυπνιασθήσονται•

Visions The same text as before is important for this gift as well (Acts 2:17 *horasēis ōpsōntai*)²⁰¹. The difference between an inspired dream and a vision is that the dream happens while somebody is sleeping while this is not necessarily the case with a vision. A vision can happen while somebody is awake (compare Acts 9:10.12; 10:3; 11:5; 12:9; 16:9; 18:9). God uses visions in Acts to lead his people again and again as these texts show.

Revelations Paul mentions in 1 Cor 14:30 the gift of revelation in this way:

If a revelation is made to another sitting there, let
the first be silent.²⁰²

The verb used for "a revelation is made" is in the passive voice (*apōkalyphthē*). This seems to be a divine passive meaning the hidden subject, the revealer is God himself. When God wants to reveal something to somebody, this is more urgent than the practicing of the other gifts like prophecy, speaking in tongues or interpreting tongues.

To understand this gift we must look at the use of the relevant words in the New Testament. When the verb "to reveal" is used in the active voice, sometimes "God" is the subject, the revealer (1 Cor 2:10; Phil 3:15), sometimes "God the Father" (Mt 11:25; 16:17; Lk 10:21; Gal 1:16), and sometimes "the Son" (Mt 11:27; Lk 10:22). When this verb is used in the passive voice (something is revealed), it seems that this is always a divine passive meaning that the hidden agent, the revealer, is divine.

201. καὶ οἱ νεανίσκοι ὑμῶν ὁράσεις ὄψονται

202. ἐὰν δὲ ἄλλω ἀποκαλυφθῇ καθημένῳ, ὁ πρῶτος σιγάτω.

The things which are revealed are the thoughts of many hearts (Lk 2:35), all covered things (Mt 10:26; Lk 12:2), Christ (Lk 17:30), the arm of the Lord (John 12:38), the righteousness of God (Rom 1:17), the wrath of God (Rom 1:18), the future glory (Rom 8:18; 1 Pt 5:1), every man's work (1 Cor 3:13), anything (1 Cor 14:30), faith (Gal 3:23), the mystery of Christ (Eph 3:5), the man of lawlessness, the lawless one (2 Thes 2:3.6.8), salvation (1 Pt 1:5), and that the fulfillment of the Messianic prophecies will happen after the lifetime of the prophets (1 Pt 1:12).

The opposite of revealing is "to hide" something, "to cover" it. To reveal is to uncover something which was hidden before, to show it in its true significance, to reveal the true nature of something.

In the following verses the noun "revelation" (apōkalypsis) is used in the Greek. The idea is that there is an act of revelation where someone reveals something. Christ is the means of revelation in Lk 2:32, a light for revelation to the Gentiles²⁰³. In Rom 2:5 God's righteous judgment is revealed, in Rom 8:19 the children of God and in Rom 16:25 a divine mystery. In I Cor 14:6 Paul speaks through the gift of revelation and in I Cor 14:26 somebody with the gift may speak like this in a church service. In 2 Cor 12:1 Paul speaks of revelations he has received in third heaven and in paradise. In Gal 1:12 and Eph 3:3 he claims that he received his gospel through a special revelation of Jesus Christ. In Gal 2:2 a revelation guided him to go with Barnabas and Titus to Jerusalem to talk about his gospel. In Eph 1:17 the Holy Spirit is called "a spirit of wisdom and of revelation". The "revelation of Jesus Christ" in 1 Pt 1:7.13 and 1 Cor 1:7 means

203. ὥς εἰς ἀποκάλυψιν ἔθνων

his revelation at the time of his coming back again.

If the phrase "the revelation of Jesus Christ" in Rv 1:1 is a subjective genitive then it means that Jesus is revealing everything in this book, he is the revealer behind the book. If it is an objective genitive then it means that this book is revealing Jesus Christ, his glory, his divinity, his divine power. Both would fit the content of the book. Perhaps both are intended. In the light of the content of Rv 1:1 I would prefer the subjective genitive.

Gifts of ministry or service Paul speaks in Rom 12:6-7 of different gifts:

6 Having gifts that differ according to the grace given to us, let us use them: if prophecy, in proportion to our faith; 7 if service, in our serving,²⁰⁴ the one who teaches, in his teaching.

His idea seems to be that every gift belongs to an area where it should be used. The gift of service leads the person who receives it into a life of serving others. The word service (*diakōnia*) is used for a whole range of activities in the New Testament. Some passages speak of a gift of serving without specifying it: Rom 12:7; 1 Cor 12:5; Ephesians 4:12; Col 4:17 (Archippus); 2 Tm 4:11 (Mark); Rv 2:19 (the angel of the church in Thyatira) . Sometimes it is a service to provide the things needed for life, for eating and drinking. Therefore it can also be a collection of money to help the needy: Luke 10:40; Acts 6:1; 11:29; 12:25; Rom 15:31; 2 Cor 8:4; 9:1.12.13.

The service of an apostle is spoken of in Acts 1:17.25; 21:19; Rom 11:13; 2 Cor 11:8. The gift of an evangelist is also a ser-

204. εἴτε διακονίαν ἐν τῇ διακονίᾳ

vice in 2 Tm 4:5 (Timothy) as is the teaching of the word of God (Acts 6:4; 20:24; 1 Cor 16:15). The service of Moses as a lawgiver which was leading to condemnation (2 Cor 3:7.9) is compared to the service of Paul as a gospel preacher leading to life (2 Cor 3:8.9; 4:1; 6:3; see also 1 Tm 1:12) and to reconciliation with God (2 Cor 5:18). In Heb 1:14 there is even a special service of the angels mentioned:

Are they not all ministering spirits sent out to serve
for the sake of those who are to inherit salvation?

Gift of mentoring, encouragement, motivation, exhortation Paul continues his list of gifts in Rom 12:8 and says: "the one who exhorts" should use his gift "in his exhortation".²⁰⁵ The Greek verb "parakalēō" translated here with "exhort" has a much wider range of meanings than "exhort". We have seen before (section 6.2.2) that it can also mean "to comfort"²⁰⁶ and to "challenge" or "motivate" to do something.²⁰⁷ Sometimes it means "to ask" or "to request".²⁰⁸ This gift is related to mentoring, encouragement, motivation, exhortation, and comfort. It is what counselors need.

Gift of giving Paul says about this gift in Rom 12:8:

... the one who contributes, in generosity ...²⁰⁹

205. εἴτε ὁ παρακαλῶν ἐν τῇ παρακλήσει

206. Mt 2:18; 5:4

207. Rom 12:1; Lk 3:18

208. Mt 8:5; 26:53

209. ὁ μεταδιδούς ἐν ἀπλότητι

The word for "the one who contributes" is "hō mētadidōus". This verb is also used in Eph 4:28:

Let the thief no longer steal, but rather let him labor, doing honest work with his own hands, so that he may have something to share with anyone in need.²¹⁰

It is used as well in the LXX translation of Proverbs 11:26.²¹¹ The ESV translates the Hebrew text of this verse:

The people curse him who holds back grain, but a blessing is on the head of him who sells it.

The verb used in these three verses is used for giving material help in the context of need. The word for "in generosity" is "ēn haplōtēti" which is more literally translated "in simplicity" (KJV). It is also used in 2 Cor 1:12; 8:2; 9:11.13; 11:3; Eph 6:5; Col 3:22. Looking at the word usage in these contexts one gets the impression that it is used for a pure motivation of the heart either with regard to the style of living or especially in the context of giving. Somebody who gives like this has no hidden agenda, no double motive. This is especially interesting in the context of church and missions. We are encouraged to give without strings attached to the gifts. Perhaps we are told to act like this to reflect God's character (Luke 6:30-36).

210. ὁ κλέπτων μηκέτι κλεπτέτω, μάλλον δὲ κοπιάτω ἐργαζόμενος ταῖς ἰδίαις χερσὶν τὸ ἀγαθόν, ἵνα ἔχῃ μεταδιδόναι τῷ χρεῖαν ἔχοντι.

211. ὁ συνεχὼν σίτον υπολιπτοῖτο αὐτὸν τοῖς ἐθνεσὶν εὐλογία δὲ εἰς κεφαλὴν τοῦ μεταδιδόντος

Gift of mercy It is interesting that there is a special gift of mercy (Rom 12:8):

... the one who does acts of mercy, with cheerfulness.²¹²

The verb used here for doing acts of mercy is most often used in the New Testament with God²¹³ or Jesus Christ²¹⁴ as subject. When Jesus is the subject he is normally asked to have mercy, to help and heal somebody. When it is used in the passive voice it is a divine passive, meaning that the logical subject is God who has mercy on somebody.²¹⁵ Once father Abraham is asked for mercy (Lk 16:24). A few times the subject is ordinary men (Mt 5:7; 18:33; Rom 12:8; Jude 22.23). When someone has the gift of mercy, he reflects in his acts of mercy the character of God who has compassion on mankind. According to Rom 12:8 he should do this "with cheerfulness", "with joy".

The given passages show us that mercy is a kind of love for people in need. Often God's mercy has resulted in saving people from their illnesses or even more importantly in granting them salvation. The person with the gift of mercy points to God as a God of compassion.

Gift of helping The next gift from 1 Cor 12:28 may overlap with the previous gift:

28 And God has appointed in the church first apostles, second prophets, third teachers, then miracles,

212. ὁ ἐλεῶν ἐν ἰλαρότητι.

213. Mk 5:19; Rom 9:15.16.18; 11:32; Phil 2:27

214. Mt 9:27; 15:22; 17:15; 20:30.31; Mk 10:47.48; Lk 17:13; 18:38.39

215. Mt 5:7; Rom 11:30.31; 1 Cor 7:25; 2 Cor 4:1; 1 Tm 1:13.16; 1 Pt 2:10

then gifts of healing, helping, administrating, and various kinds of tongues.

The word for "helping" (ESV) or "helps" (KJV) is used in the plural (antilēmpsēis)²¹⁶ pointing to the different actions of helping others. It is only used here in the New Testament. A related verb (antilambanōmai)²¹⁷ is used in the sense of "to help" in Lk 1:54; Acts 20:35 and 1 Tm 6:2. This gift might be similar to the gift of mercy because in both cases you help needy people. The name of the gift of mercy gives the motive (compassionate love) while the gift of helping just points to the result that you help people. In Mary's praise in Lk 1:54 we find both nicely put together:

He has helped his servant Israel, in remembrance of his mercy.²¹⁸

Another related verb (synantilambanōmai)²¹⁹ also points to actions of helping in Lk 10:40 and Rom 8:26. In the first text Martha requests Jesus to command her sister Mary to help her with the service for the guests. And in the second text the Holy Spirit helps us in our prayer life because we are so weak and even incapable of praying as we should.

Discernment of spirits The gift of the discernment of spirits is only mentioned in 1 Cor 12:10:

216. ἀντιλήψεις

217. ἀντιλαμβάνομαι

218. ἀντελάβετο Ἰσραὴλ παιδὸς αὐτοῦ, μνησθῆναι ἐλέους

219. συναντιλαμβάνομαι

... to another the working of miracles, to another prophecy, to another the ability to distinguish between spirits (*diakrisēis pnēumatōn*),²²⁰ to another various kinds of tongues, to another the interpretation of tongues.

The noun used for "the ability to distinguish" (*diakrisēis*) is also used in Heb 5:14 and Rom 14:1 within in the New Testament. The related verb (*diakrinēin*)²²¹ is used in the sense of "to discern, distinguish" in Mt 16:3; 1 Cor 4:7; 6:5; 11:29; 14:29. The use of the noun in Heb 5:14 can help us to illustrate the usage:

But solid food is for the mature, for those who have their powers of discernment trained by constant practice to distinguish good from evil.²²²

The parable is taken from eating and drinking. A baby can only drink milk. Later man grows to eating solid food and learns to "distinguish good from evil". This means, he learns what food is good for him and what is not really edible. To distinguish between spirits would help to recognize what comes from the Holy Spirit and is good and profitable for spiritual life, and what comes from evil spirits who only try to imitate the Holy Spirit and to lead believers astray. When we look at certain texts in the New Testament (e. g. Mt 7:15-21; 2 Tm 2:16-19; 2 Pt 2:1-2; 1 Jn 4:1-6) it becomes immediately clear that it was very necessary to distinguish between spirits. All true believers had basic guidance through the anointing of God's Spirit in this area

220. ἄλλω διακρίσεις πνευμάτων

221. διακρίνειν

222. τελείων δέ ἐστιν ἡ στερεὰ τροφή, τῶν διὰ τὴν ἔξιν τὰ αἰσθητήρια γεγυμνασμένα ἔχόντων πρὸς διάκρισιν καλοῦ τε καὶ κακοῦ.

(1 Jn 2:18-27), but of course a believer with a special gift to distinguish between spirits would come in handy many times. If this was true for the first century, it surely is true for today as well.

Word of wisdom In Paul's listing of gifts we also have the word of wisdom (1 Cor 12:7-8):

7 To each is given the manifestation of the Spirit for the common good. 8 To one is given through the Spirit the utterance of wisdom, and to another the utterance of knowledge according to the same Spirit...

Let us note that when Paul starts his listing of various gifts in 1 Cor 12 he begins with "the utterance of wisdom" (*lōgōs sōphias*).²²³ Within the Old Testament there was already a rich literature of wisdom, as for example in Proverbs, teaching the believers of the church how important wisdom is for practical life. James points more than once to the importance of true wisdom for our Christian life (1:5; 3:13-18). We can easily imagine what a great blessing a word of wisdom can be in a difficult church situation when there is a clash between brothers (1 Cor 6:5-6):

5 I say this to your shame. Can it be that there is no one among you wise enough to settle a dispute between the brothers, 6 but brother goes to law against brother, and that before unbelievers?

223. λόγος σοφίας

There is also an enormous need for wisdom in times of persecution (Lk 21:15-16:

12 But before all this they will lay their hands on you and persecute you, delivering you up to the synagogues and prisons, and you will be brought before kings and governors for my name's sake. 13 This will be your opportunity to bear witness. 14 Settle it therefore in your minds not to meditate beforehand how to answer, 15 for I will give you a mouth and wisdom, which none of your adversaries will be able to withstand or contradict.

In his prayer for the Ephesians Paul speaks of God's Spirit as "a spirit of wisdom and of revelation" (Eph 1:16-17):

16 I do not cease to give thanks for you, remembering you in my prayers, 17 that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give you a spirit of wisdom and of revelation in the knowledge of him...²²⁴

Wisdom and revelation and God's Spirit go together: When the Spirit reveals something, he does it with wisdom. When he grants wisdom, it is a revealed wisdom which surpasses the wisdom of this world (compare Jas 3:17). God's wisdom is life changing through the knowledge of God (Eph 1:17-19).

Word of knowledge Paul mentions another gift 1 Cor 12:8:

224. ἵνα ὁ θεὸς τοῦ κυρίου ἡμῶν Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ, ὁ πατὴρ τῆς δόξης, δώῃ ὑμῖν πνεῦμα σοφίας καὶ ἀποκαλύψῃ ἐν ἐπιγνώσει αὐτοῦ

8 To one is given through the Spirit the utterance of wisdom, and to another the utterance of knowledge (lōgōs gnōsēōs)²²⁵ according to the same Spirit...

Because Paul talks here of an utterance or a word of knowledge, he means that someone has a gift to speak in such a way that the believing listeners will receive knowledge of something or someone. He talks about a spiritual gift. So the main focus of this knowledge will be God and spiritual truths: knowing God and knowing the true nature of man and salvation. We may have a look at chapter 2 of the same letter to get an impression of the areas of knowledge Paul means:

10 these things God has revealed to us through the Spirit. For the Spirit searches everything, even the depths of God. 11 For who knows a person's thoughts except the spirit of that person, which is in him? So also no one comprehends the thoughts of God except the Spirit of God.²²⁶ 12 Now we have received not the spirit of the world, but the Spirit who is from God, that we might understand the things freely given us by God. 13 And we impart this in words not taught by human wisdom but taught by the Spirit, interpreting spiritual truths to those who are spiritual. 14 The natural person does not accept the things of the Spirit of God, for they are folly to him, and he is not able to understand

225. ἄλλω δὲ λόγος γνώσεως κατὰ τὸ αὐτὸ πνεῦμα

226. τίς γὰρ οἶδεν ἀνθρώπων τὰ τοῦ ἀνθρώπου εἰ μὴ τὸ πνεῦμα τοῦ ἀνθρώπου τὸ ἐν αὐτῷ; οὕτως καὶ τὰ τοῦ θεοῦ οὐδεὶς ἔγνωκεν εἰ μὴ τὸ πνεῦμα τοῦ θεοῦ.

them because they are spiritually discerned.²²⁷ 15
 The spiritual person judges all things, but is himself
 to be judged by no one. 16 “For who has under-
 stood the mind of the Lord so as to instruct him?”
 But we have the mind of Christ.²²⁸

To know God, his character, his virtues, his holiness will be central to the knowledge Paul is speaking about. From there all other knowledge gains its foundation and framework. That Paul very much means this becomes clear when we look at 1 Cor 14:6:

Now, brothers, if I come to you speaking in tongues,
 how will I benefit you unless I bring you some rev-
 elation or knowledge or prophecy or teaching?²²⁹

Paul's oral teaching and preaching in the churches is described here as bringing "some revelation or knowledge (gnōsēi) or prophecy or teaching". We do not know Paul's oral preaching, but we do have his letters. They are God- and Christ-centered. The knowledge of God and Christ is the focus. Even ethics and all kind of practical issues are handled on this foundation. The word of knowledge was surely a precious gift to him. Nowadays people who teach Systematic Theology would have a good use for this gift.

227. Ψυχικός δὲ ἄνθρωπος οὐ δέχεται τὰ τοῦ πνεύματος τοῦ θεοῦ, μωρία γὰρ αὐτῷ ἐστίν, καὶ οὐ δύναται γινῶναι, ὅτι πνευματικῶς ἀνακρίνεται•

228. τίς γὰρ ἔγνω νοῦν κυρίου, ὃς συμβιάσει αὐτόν; ἡμεῖς δὲ νοῦν Χριστοῦ ἔχομεν.

229. Νῦν δέ, ἀδελφοί, ἐὰν ἔλθω πρὸς ὑμᾶς γλώσσαις λαλῶν, τί ὑμᾶς ὠφελίσω, ἐὰν μὴ ὑμῖν λαλήσω ἢ ἐν ἀποκαλύψει ἢ ἐν γνώσει ἢ ἐν προφητείᾳ ἢ ἐν διδαχῇ;

Being transported miraculously from one place to another We have seen in the Old Testament above (section 6.3.2) that Elijah and Ezekiel experienced that God would move them through his Spirit from one place to another. Within the New Testament the Evangelist Philip and the apostle John had similar experiences. After Philip had explained to the treasurer of the Ethiopian queen that Jesus had fulfilled the prophecy of Isaiah 53 and so become the Saviour of the world, the Ethiopian was baptized. And then there is a surprise move from God (Acts 8:39-40):

39 And when they came up out of the water, the Spirit of the Lord carried Philip away, and the eunuch saw him no more, and went on his way rejoicing.²³⁰ 40 But Philip found himself at Azotus, and as he passed through he preached the gospel to all the towns until he came to Caesarea.

The apostle John receives the book of Revelation by being twice "in the Spirit" (1:10; 4:2). The first time he remains on the island Patmos where he was (1:9). The second time he is called up to heaven²³¹ (4:1-2):

1 After this I looked, and behold, a door standing open in heaven! And the first voice, which I had heard speaking to me like a trumpet, said, "Come up here, and I will show you what must take place

230. ὅτε δὲ ἀνέβησαν ἐκ τοῦ ὕδατος, πνεῦμα κυρίου ἤρπασεν τὸν Φίλιππον, καὶ οὐκ εἶδεν αὐτὸν οὐκέτι ὁ εὐνοῦχος, ἐπορεύετο γὰρ τὴν ὁδὸν αὐτοῦ χαίρων.

231. Perhaps John would have used similar language as Paul in 2 Cor 12:2-3 to reflect on the question whether he went in the body or out of the body to heaven.

after this.” 2 At once I was in the Spirit, and behold, a throne stood in heaven, with one seated on the throne.²³²

After this experience there are two more when the Spirit transports John to two places to see and describe two cities which are opposed to each other and are both presented as females in contrast to each other: one the "great prostitute Babylon" (17:1.5) and the other the "bride of the lamb, the New Jerusalem" (21:9-10). The downfall of the one is the start of the visible rule of the other (19:1-10). Revelation 17:1-3:

1 Then one of the seven angels who had the seven bowls came and said to me, “Come, I will show you the judgment of the great prostitute who is seated on many waters, 2 with whom the kings of the earth have committed sexual immorality, and with the wine of whose sexual immorality the dwellers on earth have become drunk.” 3 And he carried me away in the Spirit into a wilderness, and I saw a woman sitting on a scarlet beast that was full of blasphemous names, and it had seven heads and ten horns.²³³

Revelation 21:10:

9 Then came one of the seven angels who had the seven bowls full of the seven last plagues and spoke

232. εὐθέως ἐγενόμην ἐν πνεύματι• καὶ ἰδοὺ θρόνος ἔκειτο ἐν τῷ οὐρανῷ, καὶ ἐπὶ τὸν θρόνον καθημένος,

233. καὶ ἀπήνεγκέν με εἰς ἔρημον ἐν πνεύματι. καὶ εἶδον γυναῖκα καθημένην ἐπὶ θηρίον κόκκινον, γέμοντα ὀνόματα βλασφημίας, ἔχων κεφαλὰς ἑπτὰ καὶ κέρατα δέκα.

to me, saying, "Come, I will show you the Bride, the wife of the Lamb." 10 And he carried me away in the Spirit to a great, high mountain, and showed me the holy city Jerusalem coming down out of heaven from God, 11 having the glory of God, its radiance like a most rare jewel, like a jasper, clear as crystal.²³⁴

In both cases John is guided by "one of the seven angels who had the seven bowls" (17:1; 21:9). Both experiences were so overwhelming and full of heavenly glory that John was at the end of them tempted to fall down before his guiding angel. He was told not to do such a thing but to worship only God (19:10; 22:8-9). These experiences of John remind us of the above mentioned experiences of Ezekiel. In fact the last vision of both is the vision of the New Jerusalem with the living water coming forth, giving growth to the tree whose leaves "were for the healing of the nations" (Rv 21:9-22:9, especially 22:1-2; Ez 40-48, especially 47:1-6.12).

A sound mind, self-discipline When the times got tougher, Paul wanted to encourage his spiritual child Timothy (2 Tm 1:6-7):

6 For this reason I remind you to fan into flame the gift of God, which is in you through the laying on

234. 10 καὶ ἀπήνεγκέν με ἐν πνεύματι ἐπὶ ὄρος μέγα καὶ ὑψηλόν, καὶ ἔδειξέν μοι τὴν πόλιν τὴν ἁγίαν Ἱερουσαλὴμ καταβαίνουσαν ἐκ τοῦ οὐρανοῦ ἀπὸ τοῦ θεοῦ, 11 ἔχουσαν τὴν δόξαν τοῦ θεοῦ· ὁ φωστὴρ αὐτῆς ὁμοίος λίθῳ τιμιωτάτῳ, ὡς λίθῳ ἰάσπιδι κρυσταλλίζοντι·

of my hands, 7 for God gave us a spirit not of fear
but of power and love and self-control.²³⁵

Paul encourages Timothy to use his spiritual gift of being an Evangelist (2 Tm 4:5) even if this would mean suffering (2 Tm 2:3). The reason for this is the nature of the Holy Spirit who does not generate fear in Timothy but gives him strength, love, and self-control (sōphrōnismōs)²³⁶. Sōphrōnismōs is the state of a sound mind where you have control over yourself or you discipline yourself. This you will need in times of temptation. The problem here is to remain quiet in persecution and troubles and not to fulfill the duty of an Evangelist any more: Waiting till the storm is over. Paul admonishes him, "Let not the fire of this gift burn down and be quenched by fear. " We can imagine that this gift of "self-control" or "self-discipline" is useful in the life of the church of God in any time period.

Grace In Hebrew 10 the believers are encouraged to cling to Christ and to remain faithful to him. They should not in the slightest way move in the direction of apostasy. The language used is very serious, to shock them away from any such danger. We read in Heb 10:29:

How much worse punishment, do you think, will
be deserved by the one who has spurned the Son
of God, and has profaned the blood of the covenant
by which he was sanctified, and has outraged the
Spirit of grace?²³⁷

235. οὐ γὰρ ἔδωκεν ἡμῖν ὁ θεὸς πνεῦμα δειλίας, ἀλλὰ δυνάμεως καὶ ἀγάπης καὶ σωφρονισμοῦ.

236. σωφρονισμός

237. καὶ τὸ πνεῦμα τῆς χάριτος ἐνυβρίσας

With our subject in mind we are interested in the phrase "the Spirit of grace". This genitive here will mean that the Spirit gives grace, that the Spirit is the source of grace. If I behave in a way towards this Spirit of God such that he is no longer willing to grant me any further grace, I am in trouble indeed (see the context in Heb 10:26-31).

On the positive side this phrase "the Spirit of grace" teaches us a very deep and important truth: All the grace we receive from the triune God is somehow related to the work of the Holy Spirit. He is the Spirit of grace. His gifts are "charismata", gifts of grace. His indwelling in us unites us with Christ and with God the Father so that all blessings and gifts of grace from them to us are channeled through the Spirit.

Fruit of the Spirit Paul uses the enlightening picture of the fruit of the Spirit²³⁸ to show us what kind of life a Spirit guided believer (Gal 5:18) has (5:22-23):

22 But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace,
patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, 23 gen-
tleness, self-control; against such things there is no
law.²³⁹

This fruit of the Spirit stands in contrast to "the works of the flesh" of 5:19-21 which give a summary of human sins and sinful nature. The fruit of the Spirit reflects the holiness of God in the life of his sanctified people. In a way we can say it shows us

238. ἡ καρπὸς τοῦ πνεύματος

239. 22 Ὁ δὲ καρπὸς τοῦ πνεύματος ἐστὶν ἀγάπη, χαρά, εἰρήνη, μακροθυμία, χρηστότης, ἀγαθωσύνη, πίστις, 23 πραΰτης, ἐγκράτεια κατὰ τῶν τοιούτων οὐκ ἐστὶν νόμος.

the nature of Jesus Christ (see Gal 6:2 and 2:19-20). The word "fruit" is used in the singular pointing perhaps to the unity of the different aspects (love, joy, etc.) of the one fruit. But in Rom 6:20-23 Paul uses the word fruit in a very similar context²⁴⁰ to contrast the fruit resulting from a life governed by sin with the fruit resulting from a life governed by righteousness:

20 When you were slaves of sin, you were free in regard to righteousness. 21 But what fruit were you getting at that time from the things of which you are now ashamed? The end of those things is death. 22 But now that you have been set free from sin and have become slaves of God, the fruit you get leads to sanctification and its end, eternal life.²⁴¹ 23 For the wages of sin is death, but the free gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.

In Rom 6 you do not have the contrast between "the works of the flesh" in the plural and the "fruit of the Spirit" in the singular form. In Rom 6:21-22 you have the singular fruit used for both the bad fruit leading to death (in Gal 5: the works of the flesh) and the good fruit (in Gal 5:22-23 the fruit of the Spirit) related to sanctification and eternal life. The idea of bearing fruit is carried on into Rom 7 where we have it contrasted again in 7:4-6:

240. The section in Gal 5:16-6:10 is in short what we have in Rom 6-8 in a longer exposition.

241. 21 τίνα οὖν καρπὸν εἶχετε τότε ἐφ' οἷς νῦν ἐπαισχύνεσθε; τὸ γὰρ τέλος ἐκείνων θάνατος• 22 νυνὶ δέ, ἐλευθερωθέντες ἀπὸ τῆς ἁμαρτίας δουλωθέντες δὲ τῷ θεῷ, ἔχετε τὸν καρπὸν ὑμῶν εἰς ἁγιασμόν, τὸ δὲ τέλος ζωὴν αἰώνιον.

4 Likewise, my brothers, you also have died to the law through the body of Christ, so that you may belong to another, to him who has been raised from the dead, in order that we may bear fruit for God. 5 For while we were living in the flesh, our sinful passions, aroused by the law, were at work in our members to bear fruit for death. 6 But now we are released from the law, having died to that which held us captive, so that we serve not under the old written code but in the new life of the Spirit.

The contrast here is to "bear fruit for God"²⁴² or to "bear fruit for death"²⁴³. To bear fruit for God, to bear the fruit of the Spirit, is possible by having died to sin (Rom 6:11; Gal 5:24) and the law (Rom 7:4; Gal 2:19) and by being united with Christ in his life and Spirit (Rom 6:11; 8:2.9; Gal 2:20; 4:6) and by being guided by the Spirit on an everyday basis (Rom 8:14; Gal 5:18).

The fruit of the Spirit is the best way to determine whether somebody is a real Christian. It is even better than the gifts of the Spirit. Because the gifts can be imitated (Mt 7:21-23), but the tree is recognized by its fruit (Mt 7:16-20). So what is the fruit of the Spirit according to Gal 5:22-23? Let us have a walk in God's garden appreciating the beauty of the trees he has planted (Mt 15:13). Let us enjoy the fragrance and the taste of the fruit of the Spirit: love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control.

242. ἵνα καρποφορήσωμεν τῷ θεῷ.

243. εἰς τὸ καρποφορῆσαι τῷ θανάτῳ•

Love (agapē)²⁴⁴ starts this list of the fruit of the Spirit and has to. It is the summary of all the commandments of God as Jesus has taught us (Mt 22:37-39):

37 ... “You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind. 38 This is the great and first commandment. 39 And a second is like it: You shall love your neighbor as yourself. 40 On these two commandments depend all the Law and the Prophets.”

Paul, having learned it from Jesus, can say (Rom 13:8-10):

8 Owe no one anything, except to love each other, for the one who loves another has fulfilled the law. 9 The commandments, “You shall not commit adultery, You shall not murder, You shall not steal, You shall not covet,” and any other commandment, are summed up in this word: “You shall love your neighbor as yourself.” 10 Love does no wrong to a neighbor; therefore love is the fulfilling of the law.

Paul quotes here only the human-related commandment of love and not the love of God as the fulfillment of the law. Saying this he presupposes that this is only possible if somebody is loved by God and loves him in return, as we can see in Rom 5:5:

... and hope does not put us to shame, because God's love has been poured into our hearts through the Holy Spirit who has been given to us.

244. ἀγάπη

With the gift of the Spirit God's love is in our hearts all the time. In Gal 5:22-23 love is part of the fruit of this Spirit. Our love to God and our neighbor has its root and origin in God's love for us. As John puts it (1 John 4:7-13):

7 Beloved, let us love one another, for love is from God, and whoever loves has been born of God and knows God. 8 Anyone who does not love does not know God, because God is love. 9 In this the love of God was made manifest among us, that God sent his only Son into the world, so that we might live through him. 10 In this is love, not that we have loved God but that he loved us and sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins. 11 Beloved, if God so loved us, we also ought to love one another. 12 No one has ever seen God; if we love one another, God abides in us and his love is perfected in us. 13 By this we know that we abide in him and he in us, because he has given us of his Spirit.

For John the love of the triune God is the foundation of all our loving: God the Father sent his son to die in our place (4:9-10). The son was obedient and actually died for us (4:10) and we are born again through the Holy Spirit (1 Jn 4:7.13; John 3:5). Sometimes it is taught that there are different kinds of love and that the word *agapē* stands for the divine kind of love which loves unconditionally even if there is no "paying back" of the love. This *agape*-love then is put in contrast to *eros* and *philadelphia*. *Eros* is the love of desire where somebody loves somebody or something for his own profit because the object of his love is so desirable, perhaps so beautiful. *Philadelphia* is the love between friends where of course the friends profit from

each other because they like each other and have helped each other over the years. This contrasting of agapē as unselfish love on the one side and with eros and philadelphia as more selfish love on the other side goes back to Anders Nygren²⁴⁵. I do not want to deny that there are different kinds of love in this world. There is something like divine unconditional love. And there is a selfish love which uses the other only for one's own profit. But the Greek words agapē, eros and philadelphia are not used in the New Testament or the Old Testament Septuagint in the way as this theory suggests. The words partly overlap in their meaning and agapē can be used for a selfish and sinful kind of love. Eros is not found in the New Testament. So we will have a look at agapē and philadelphia.

The noun agapē and the verb agapaō can both be used for all kinds of love, for good, holy and spiritual love and for selfish and sinful love. They are simply the most general words for love with a great variety of usages. Only the context can show us whether it means a pure love or a sinful love. Let me give a few examples where these words are used for a sinful kind of love. In all the following quoted sections when there is love or to love in the English we have agapē or agapaō in the Greek. From Old Testament the most dramatic example for this is how Amnon the son of David "loved" his half-sister (2 Sm 13:1-2):

1 Now Absalom, David's son, had a beautiful sister, whose name was Tamar. And after a time Amnon, David's son, loved her. 2 And Amnon was so tormented that he made himself ill because of his

245. Anders Nygren, *Agape and eros*, Watson, Philip S. <trans> (New York: Harper / Row, 1969), 764 pp.

sister Tamar, for she was a virgin, and it seemed impossible to Amnon to do anything to her.

The story goes on and we are told how Amnon raped Tamar and how he hated her afterwards (2 Sm 13:15:

15 Then Amnon hated her with very great hatred, so that the hatred with which he hated her was greater than the love with which he had loved her. And Amnon said to her, “Get up! Go!”

The context makes it clear that Amnon's love of Tamar was totally selfish and a great violation of God's holy law. Very soon it turned into bitter hatred. The Septuagint has used both the noun *agapē* and the verb *agapaō* to describe Amnon's love.²⁴⁶ In the New Testament Jesus teaches us to love even our enemies in imitation of God's divine love for all and gives this reason in Mt 5:46:

For if you love those who love you, what reward do you have? Do not even the tax collectors do the same?²⁴⁷

The verb *agapaō* is used here to describe a love which is selfish and is even common with tax collectors. The word in itself does not qualify what kind of love is meant. Only the context shows

246. 1 και εγενηθη μετα ταυτα και τω αβεσσαλωμ υιω δαυιδ αδελφη καλη τω ειδει σφοδρα και ονομα αυτη θημαρ και ηγαπησεν αυτην αμνων υιος δαυιδ... 15 και εμισησεν αυτην αμνων μισος μεγα σφοδρα οτι μεγα το μισος ο εμισησεν αυτην υπερ την αγαπην ην ηγαπησεν αυτην και ειπεν αυτη αμνων αναστηθι και πορευου

247. ἐὰν γὰρ ἀγαπήσητε τοὺς ἀγαπῶντας ὑμᾶς, τίνα μισθὸν ἔχετε; οὐχὶ καὶ οἱ τελῶναι τὸ αὐτὸ ποιοῦσιν;

us whether it is good and holy or whether it is common and sinful. In Mt 6:24 Jesus teaches us to love God wholeheartedly and not to try to get rich:

No one can serve two masters, for either he will hate the one and love the other, or he will be devoted to the one and despise the other. You cannot serve God and money.

If we love God, then it is good and holy love. But if we love money, then it is sinful. John 3:19 is very similar:

And this is the judgment: the light has come into the world, and people loved the darkness rather than the light because their deeds were evil.²⁴⁸

To love the light, is good. To love the darkness more, is evil. I think, this is enough to show that the noun *agapē* and the verb *agapaō* can both be used for a sinful kind of love. Now I want to show with two verses that these two words and the Greek *philadēphía* can be used synonymously (1 Thes 4:9):

Now concerning brotherly love you have no need for anyone to write to you, for you yourselves have been taught by God to love one another.²⁴⁹

For "brotherly love" Paul uses *philadēphía* and for "to love one another" he uses *agapaō*. Here both words are used synonymously and mean to love the brothers and sisters. The same is true for 1 Pt 1:22:

248. αὕτη δέ ἐστιν ἡ κρίσις ὅτι τὸ φῶς ἐλήλυθεν εἰς τὸν κόσμον καὶ ἠγάπησαν οἱ ἄνθρωποι μᾶλλον τὸ σκότος ἢ τὸ φῶς, ἦν γὰρ αὐτῶν πονηρὰ τὰ ἔργα.

249. Περὶ δὲ τῆς φιλαδεφίας οὐ χρειαν ἔχετε γράφειν ὑμῖν, αὐτοὶ γὰρ ὑμεῖς θεοδίδακτοὶ ἐστε εἰς τὸ ἀγαπᾶν ἀλλήλους•

Having purified your souls by your obedience to the truth for a sincere brotherly love, love one another earnestly from a pure heart.²⁵⁰

Sometimes the context can show us a distinction between the words where one word points to a greater and more mature love than the other. This seems to be the case in 2 Pt 1:5-7:

5 For this very reason, make every effort to supplement your faith with virtue, and virtue with knowledge, 6 and knowledge with self-control, and self-control with steadfastness, and steadfastness with godliness, 7 and godliness with brotherly affection, and brotherly affection with love.²⁵¹

This list of Christian virtues starts with faith and ascends to agapē which crowns the list being greater than philadelphia: not only a love for brothers and sisters but for all mankind.

Paul writes to his beloved spiritual son Timothy about the true source of this great love (2 Tm 1:7):

6 For this reason I remind you to fan into flame the gift of God, which is in you through the laying on of my hands, 7 for God gave us a spirit not of fear but of power and love and self-control.

250. Τὰς ψυχὰς ὑμῶν ἡγνικότες ἐν τῇ ὑπακοῇ τῆς ἀληθείας εἰς φιλαδελφίαν ἀνυπόκριτον ἐκ καρδίας ἀλλήλους ἀγαπήσατε ἐκτενῶς,

251. 5 καὶ αὐτὸ τοῦτο δὲ σπουδὴν πᾶσαν παρεισενέγκαντες ἐπιχορηγήσατε ἐν τῇ πίστει ὑμῶν τὴν ἀρετὴν, ἐν δὲ τῇ ἀρετῇ τὴν γνῶσιν, 6 ἐν δὲ τῇ γνῶσει τὴν ἐγκράτειαν, ἐν δὲ τῇ ἐγκρατείᾳ τὴν ὑπομονήν, ἐν δὲ τῇ ὑπομονῇ τὴν εὐσεβείαν, 7 ἐν δὲ τῇ εὐσεβείᾳ τὴν φιλαδελφίαν, ἐν δὲ τῇ φιλαδελφίᾳ τὴν ἀγάπην•

The spirit God gave us is the Holy Spirit which is also called here "a spirit ... of love". The genitive points to the fact that the Spirit generates love (and power and self-control) in us. The context here makes it clear that Timothy should use his gift of being an evangelist (2 Tm 4:5) even if it meant suffering for Christ's sake (2 Tm 2:3). Paul wants to encourage Timothy to overcome all fear through the power and love and self-control the Spirit generates in him. The love here for example would be a love for lost souls who can be saved by his preaching the Gospel in the power of the Spirit. This can lead into suffering and even into becoming a martyr.

Let us close this section about love as part of the fruit of the Spirit with Jesus pointing to the greatest love, the ultimate love (John 15:12-13):

12 This is my commandment, that you love one another as I have loved you. 13 Greater love has no one than this, that someone lays down his life for his friends.²⁵²

Jesus is the measure of true love. His ultimate sacrifice out of love has not only saved us but given us the road ahead: ultimate love for each other. It is no coincidence that this highest commandment is found in John 15 where Jesus is the true vine (15:1) and we are the branches (15:5): We can practise this love because we are united with him. This love in John 15:1-17 is the fruit of the vine (15:8-10) as it is in Galatians 5:22 the fruit of the Spirit.

252. μείζονα ταύτης ἀγάπην οὐδεὶς ἔχει, ἵνα τις τὴν ψυχὴν αὐτοῦ θῇ ὑπὲρ τῶν φίλων αὐτοῦ.

Joy (chara)²⁵³ is not only one aspect of the fruit of the Spirit but also part of the characteristics of the kingdom of God (Rom 14:17):

For the kingdom of God is not a matter of eating and drinking but of righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Spirit.

The Thessalonians became an example for others, partly because of this joy (1 Thes 1:6-7):

6 And you became imitators of us and of the Lord, for you received the word in much affliction, with the joy of the Holy Spirit, 7 so that you became an example to all the believers in Macedonia and in Achaia.

This joy is so strong that it can be there all the time, even in times of sorrow (2 Cor 6:10):

... as sorrowful, yet always rejoicing,²⁵⁴ as poor, yet making many rich; as having nothing, yet possessing everything.

This joy is perpetual because its root source is the Lord himself (Phil 4:4):

Rejoice in the Lord always; again I will say, Rejoice.²⁵⁵

253. χαρά

254. ὡς λυπούμενοι ἀεὶ δὲ χαίροντες

255. Χαίρετε ἐν κυρίῳ πάντοτε• πάλιν ἐρῶ, χαίρετε.

Therefore in the Gospels this joy is especially related to the birth of the Lord Jesus in Bethlehem (Mt 2:10; Lk 2:10) and his resurrection proving him to be the Saviour and Lord of all (Mt 28:8,18-20; Lk 24:41,45-47,52; Jn 16:20-21; 20:20). One aspect of the teaching of Jesus in John is that the joy of Jesus may be fully present in his disciples as well (Jn 15:11; 16:24; 17:13; compare 1 Jn 1:4). At the beginning of eternity the good servants are invited into God's joy (Mt 25:21,23):

His master said to him, 'Well done, good and faithful servant. You have been faithful over a little; I will set you over much. Enter into the joy of your master.'

Joy as part of the fruit of the Spirit is a gift of God to the members of his church so that they may always enjoy this joy of the Lord in the midst of troubles and difficulties, thus preparing them for the eternal joy in His presence. Peter marvels at this fact seeing believers from the Gentiles who had never seen Jesus in his lifetime but who are having wonderful joy in the midst of persecutions (2 Pt 1:8-9):

8 Though you have not seen him, you love him. Though you do not now see him, you believe in him and rejoice with joy that is inexpressible and filled with glory, 9 obtaining the outcome of your faith, the salvation of your souls.

Peace (ēirēnē)²⁵⁶ is for Paul a key blessing from God which he combines with grace in the greetings at the beginning of his

256. εἰρήνη

letters.²⁵⁷ This reflects of course the Hebrew greeting "Shalom!" (Lk 10:5; John 20:19,21; Gen 43:23). For Paul God is a "God of peace" (Rom 15:33; 16:20; 2 Cor 13:11; Phil 4:9; 1 Thes 5:23) who can give a peace which surpasses all understanding (Phil 4:7). If somebody has peace with God through his faith in Jesus Christ (Rom 5:1; 8:6-7), he is encouraged to have peace with all men if possible (Rom 12:18). Paul describes the kingdom of God like this (Rom 14:17):

For the kingdom of God is not a matter of eating and drinking but of righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Spirit.

Paul can sum up his ideas about peace in the short statement that Christ himself is our peace (Eph 2:14). Again we can see that what we should have is something that reflects God's character, peace. It is given to us by being united with Christ in the Holy Spirit. It is a peace so strong that it wishes even in death the best for the enemies (Acts 7:59-60; Lk 23:34).

Patience is here *makrōthymia*.²⁵⁸ When the New Testament speaks of God's patience (ESV) or longsuffering (KJV), it is his giving the sinner time for repentance (Rom 2:4; 1 Tm 1:16; 1 Pt 3:20; 2 Pt 3:15) or it is his waiting for the sinner's sin to grow and reach the point of judgment (Rom 9:22). Patience here has a time aspect: God waits and holds his wrath back. It is similar with the cognate verb for "to be patient" (*makrōthymēō*)²⁵⁹

257. Rom 1:7; 1 Cor 1:3; 2 Cor 1:2; Gal 1:3; Eph 1:2; Phil 1:2; Col 1:2; 1 Thes 1:1; 2 Thes 1:2; 1 Tm 1:2; 2 Tm 1:2; Ti 1:4; Phlm 1:3.

258. μακροθυμία

259. μακροθυμέω

in 2 Pt 3:9. But in Lk 18:7-8 we have a case where God will never be patient:

7 And will not God give justice to his elect, who cry to him day and night? , Will he delay long over them?²⁶⁰ 8 I tell you, he will give justice to them speedily. Nevertheless, when the Son of Man comes, will he find faith on earth?”

When his elect cry out to him in incessant prayer in their distress, God's love for them will overcome any patience he might have with their enemies who persecute the elect.

The time aspect of *makrōthymia* (patience) and *makrōthymēō* (to be patient) is also present when it is used for human beings.²⁶¹ See for example Jas 5:7-10:

7 Be patient, therefore, brothers, until the coming of the Lord. See how the farmer waits for the precious fruit of the earth, being patient about it, until it receives the early and the late rains. 8 You also, be patient. Establish your hearts, for the coming of the Lord is at hand. 9 Do not grumble against one another, brothers, so that you may not be judged; behold, the Judge is standing at the door. 10 As an example of suffering and patience, brothers, take the prophets who spoke in the name of the Lord.

260. ὁ δὲ θεὸς οὐ μὴ ποιήσῃ τὴν ἐκδίκησιν τῶν ἐκλεκτῶν αὐτοῦ τῶν βοῶντων αὐτῷ ἡμέρας καὶ νυκτός, καὶ μακροθυμεῖ ἐπ' αὐτοῖς;

261. For the noun see 2 Cor 6:6; Gal 5:22; Eph 4:2; Col 1:11; 3:12; 2 Tm 3:10; 4:2; Heb 6:12; Jas 5:10. For the verb see Mt 18:26.29; 1 Cor 13:4; 1 Thes 5:14; Heb 6:15; Jas 5:7-8.

Believers get the strength to be patient out of their trust in God's faithfulness. He has promised and he will do it in his time. The patience of Christians reflects God's patience, and their faith reflects God's faithfulness.

Kindness (chrēstōtēs)²⁶² Paul speaks in several passages of the kindness of God. In Rom 2:4 Paul says to a stubborn sinner who is judging others but not repenting himself of his sins:

Or do you presume on the riches of his kindness and forbearance and patience, not knowing that God's kindness is meant to lead you to repentance?

Similarly he warns the believing Gentiles that they should not boast to the unbelieving Jews. They should not abuse God's kindness towards them by being proud but should continue humbly and grateful in God's kindness (Rom 11:22):

Note then the kindness and the severity of God: severity toward those who have fallen, but God's kindness to you, provided you continue in his kindness. Otherwise you too will be cut off.

In Eph 2:6-7 Paul says that God has placed the people, who belong to Christ, in heaven for a future purpose:

6 ... and raised us up with him and seated us with him in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus, 7 so that in the coming ages he might show the immeasurable riches of his grace in kindness toward us in Christ Jesus.

262. χρηστότης

God's future purpose is to make the members of the body of Christ an eternal showcase of the riches of his grace by being kind to them for ever and ever! In Ti 3:4-5 we are told by Paul that Christ is in his person the revelation of God's kindness and love towards the human race to our salvation:

4 But when the goodness and loving kindness of God our Savior appeared, 5 he saved us, not because of works done by us in righteousness, but according to his own mercy, by the washing of regeneration and renewal of the Holy Spirit.

All these passages speak of God's kindness towards men. Now, Rom 3:10-12 makes it abundantly clear that you can not hope for kindness in a normal human being:

10 ... "None is righteous, no, not one; 11 no one understands; no one seeks for God. 12 All have turned aside; together they have become worthless; no one does good, not even one."

But then we see in 2 Cor 6:4,6 that part of the life style of a true servant of God is kindness:

... 4 but as servants of God we commend ourselves in every way: ... 6 by purity, knowledge, patience, kindness, the Holy Spirit, genuine love ...

How is this possible? It seems that God's character of being kind is again reflected in the servants of God. Especially when we combine this idea with Gal 5:22 that the whole fruit of the Spirit including kindness can only grow as a fruit of the holy tree which is the Holy Spirit. Without the Holy Spirit there is

no real kindness and therefore no fruit of the Holy Spirit. In Col 3:12 Paul has a similar list to Gal 5:22-23 but the parable is a different one. In Col 3 he does not speak of fruit to be grown (that is in Col 1:10) but of clothes to be put on (3:12):

Put on then, as God's chosen ones, holy and beloved,
compassion, kindness, humility, meekness, and pa-
tience.

As in Gal 5:22-23 the fruit is in the singular and points to the unity of all the virtues in the list, so in Col 3:8-15 the picture is one of taking off the old clothes and putting on the new. The old clothes are the old mankind or Adam and the new clothes point to the new mankind which is Christ (Col 3:10-11).

Goodness (agathōsynē)²⁶³ encounters us several times in the New Testament as a quality men have because God is working in their lives through his grace. In addition to Gal 5:22 Paul uses this word "goodness" in Rom 15:14. The fact that he has written his letter to them, does not mean that he thinks they are not capable themselves:

I myself am satisfied about you, my brothers, that
you yourselves are full of goodness, filled with all
knowledge and able to instruct one another.

As Paul presents goodness in Gal 5:22 as part of the fruit of the Spirit, so he teaches that goodness is part of the fruit of light in Eph 5:8-10:

263. ἀγαθωσύνη

... 8 for at one time you were darkness, but now you are light in the Lord. Walk as children of light 9 (for the fruit of light is found in all that is good and right and true), 10 and try to discern what is pleasing to the Lord.²⁶⁴

The phrase "in all that is good" is literally "in all goodness". Paul shares this prayer request for the Thessalonians in 2 Thes 1:11-12:

11 To this end we always pray for you, that our God may make you worthy of his calling and may fulfill every resolve for good and every work of faith by his power,²⁶⁵ 12 so that the name of our Lord Jesus may be glorified in you, and you in him, according to the grace of our God and the Lord Jesus Christ.

In the phrase "every resolve for good" Paul uses literally the word "goodness" instead of "good". These passages show that "goodness" is a virtue that can be used to sum up Christian ethics. It is found as a fruit of God's saving grace in Christian lives.

Faithfulness or Faith (pistis)²⁶⁶ is the next part of the fruit of the Spirit in Gal 5:22-23. In the New Testament "pistis" means on the one hand "faith" or "trust" (in God or Christ) and

264. ὁ γὰρ καρπὸς τοῦ φωτὸς ἐν πάσῃ ἀγαθωσύνῃ καὶ δικαιοσύνῃ καὶ ἀληθείᾳ,

265. εἰς ὃ καὶ προσευχόμεθα πάντοτε περὶ ὑμῶν, ἵνα ὑμᾶς ἀξιώσῃ τῆς κλήσεως ὃ θεὸς ἡμῶν καὶ πληρῶσῃ πᾶσαν εὐδοκίαν ἀγαθωσύνης καὶ ἔργον πίστεως ἐν δυνάμει,

266. πίστις

on the other "faithfulness" or "loyalty". In Gal 5:22 *pistis* is often translated with "faithfulness" but it could also be rendered with "faith" as in the KJV. Of course, faith and faithfulness are related to each other. If I have faith in God, if I trust him, I want to be faithful to him. But both things can be distinguished. If I have faith in God, I trust him to speak the truth and to be reliable. If I am faithful, then I prove myself to be reliable and trustworthy. To combine the two qualities, we can say: Believers trust in God, in his faithfulness. They have faith in God. And by doing this, they themselves become firm, reliable, faithful.

Gentleness (*praytēs*)²⁶⁷ points to gentle and non-violent behavior. It is a characteristic of Christ in 2 Cor 10:1-2:

1 I, Paul, myself entreat you, by the meekness and gentleness of Christ—I who am humble when face to face with you, but bold toward you when I am away! — 2 I beg of you that when I am present I may not have to show boldness with such confidence as I count on showing against some who suspect us of walking according to the flesh.²⁶⁸

Paul had trouble with a part of the church of Corinth who were despising him (see 2 Cor 10:10). The bigger problem was that some of his adversaries were false apostles (2 Cor 11:3-5.13-15). In 2 Cor 10-12 he tackles these problems. It is interesting that he starts this passage with pointing to the "the meekness

267. *πραΰτης*

268. Αὐτὸς δὲ ἐγὼ Παῦλος παρακαλῶ ὑμᾶς διὰ τῆς πραΰτητος καὶ ἐπιεικειᾶς τοῦ Χριστοῦ, ὃς κατὰ πρόσωπον μὲν ταπεινὸς ἐν ὑμῖν, ἀπὸν δὲ θαρρῶ εἰς ὑμᾶς.

and gentleness of Christ".²⁶⁹ He does not want to fight those who reject his apostleship but wants to be humble and gentle. But if the false teachers in Corinth continue to cause trouble, Paul is ready to fight a spiritual war (10:3-8). It is clear from the context that meekness and gentleness is in contrast to violent behavior and fighting. Gentleness is preferred, but there might be a time when spiritual force must be used to beat the enemy.

In a very similar context and touching the same problems of Corinth Paul says in 1 Cor 4:18-21:

18 Some are arrogant, as though I were not coming to you. 19 But I will come to you soon, if the Lord wills, and I will find out not the talk of these arrogant people but their power. 20 For the kingdom of God does not consist in talk but in power. 21 What do you wish? Shall I come to you with a rod, or with love in a spirit of gentleness?²⁷⁰

The "spirit of gentleness" points again to non-violent behavior solving problems by talking peacefully together. The rod represents the last resort of a father who wants to educate his son who is rebellious (1 Cor 4:14-15). It stands for a measured forceful action. Within Galatians we have in addition to our verse 5:22 the section in Gal 6:1:

1 Brothers, if anyone is caught in any transgression, you who are spiritual should restore him in a spirit

269. The cognate adjective πραῦς praus = "gentle" is used for Christ in Mt 11:29 and 21:5, for the believers in Mt 5:5, and for a virtuous house wife in 1 Pt 3:4.

270. τί θέλετε; ἐν ῥάβδῳ ἔλθω πρὸς ὑμᾶς, ἢ ἐν ἀγάπῃ πνεύματί τε πραύτητος;

of gentleness. Keep watch on yourself, lest you too be tempted.²⁷¹ 2 Bear one another's burdens, and so fulfill the law of Christ.

Here we get a very nice picture of handling problems within the church. People who are truly spiritual have gained "a spirit of gentleness" and can tackle the problems in every day church life by bearing one another's burdens. We can easily understand that this part of the fruit of the Spirit is very useful for building up the church²⁷² or family life²⁷³.

Self-control (egkratēia)²⁷⁴ designates the virtue that somebody is master of himself and has the strength to practice abstinence if he likes. For Paul this was so important a virtue that he talked about this to the Roman governor of Judea. He was shocked (Acts 24:24-25):

24 After some days Felix came with his wife Drusilla, who was Jewish, and he sent for Paul and heard him speak about faith in Christ Jesus. 25 And as he reasoned about righteousness and self-control and the coming judgment, Felix was alarmed and said, "Go away for the present. When I get an opportunity I will summon you."

That this was also a key virtue for Peter, becomes clear from the beginning of his second letter (2 Pt 1:5-7:

271. Ἀδελφοί, ἐὰν καὶ προλημψῇ ἄνθρωπος ἐν τινι παραπτώματι, ὑμεῖς οἱ πνευματικοὶ καταρτίζετε τὸν τοιοῦτον ἐν πνεύματι πραΰτητος, σκοπῶν σεαυτὸν, μὴ καὶ σὺ πειρασθῆς.

272. See Eph 4:2; Col 3:12; 2 Tim 2:25; Ti 3:2; Jas 1:21; 3:13; 1 Pt 3:16.

273. See 1 Pt 3:4.

274. ἐγκράτεια

5 For this very reason, make every effort to supplement your faith with virtue, and virtue with knowledge, 6 and knowledge with self-control, and self-control with steadfastness, and steadfastness with godliness, 7 and godliness with brotherly affection, and brotherly affection with love.²⁷⁵

We can compare the list of virtues Peter presents here with the fruit of the Spirit in Gal 5:22-23. There are some similarities. Both reckon self-control to be an important part of a good Christian character. Both see the root of every virtue in God's grace granting us divine gifts (2 Pt 1:3-4). For Paul every elder should be self-controlled (Ti 1:7-8):

7 For an overseer, as God's steward, must be above reproach. He must not be arrogant or quick-tempered or a drunkard or violent or greedy for gain, 8 but hospitable, a lover of good, self-controlled (ἐγκρατῆ),²⁷⁶ upright, holy, and disciplined.

As Paul loves now and then to speak in pictures of sports, he puts an emphasis on the need for self-control to gain the highest prize possible which is better than any sports award (1 Cor 9:24-27):

24 Do you not know that in a race all the runners compete, but only one receives the prize? So run

275. 5 καὶ αὐτὸ τοῦτο δὲ σπουδὴν πᾶσαν παρεισενέγκαντες ἐπιχορηγήσατε ἐν τῇ πίστει ὑμῶν τὴν ἀρετὴν, ἐν δὲ τῇ ἀρετῇ τὴν γνῶσιν, 6 ἐν δὲ τῇ γνώσει τὴν ἐγκράτειαν, ἐν δὲ τῇ ἐγκρατεῖα τὴν ὑπομονήν, ἐν δὲ τῇ ὑπομονῇ τὴν εὐσέβειαν, 7 ἐν δὲ τῇ εὐσεβείᾳ τὴν φιλαδεφίαν, ἐν δὲ τῇ φιλαδεφίᾳ τὴν ἀγάπην•

276. ἐγκρατῇ

that you may obtain it. 25 Every athlete exercises self-control in all things. They do it to receive a perishable wreath, but we an imperishable.²⁷⁷ 26 So I do not run aimlessly; I do not box as one beating the air. 27 But I discipline my body and keep it under control, lest after preaching to others I myself should be disqualified.

Knowing the limits of human ability of self-control Paul gives this piece of advice with regard to the question of marrying or staying single (1 Cor 7:9):

But if they cannot exercise self-control, they should marry. For it is better to marry than to be aflame with passion.²⁷⁸

We have now walked through the garden of God, watching and appreciating the fruit which is produced by the Spirit of God in the trees he has planted. The fruit of the Spirit is pleasant to see, enjoyable to eat, and has a magnificent fragrance. This all happens to glorify God as Jesus has taught us (John 15:8):

By this my Father is glorified, that you bear much fruit and so prove to be my disciples.

That this is only possible by abiding in Christ, is the teaching of Jesus Christ (John 15:5), the emphasis of the apostle Paul (Gal 5:22-25) and the knowledge of the apostle Peter (2 Pt 1:3-11).

277. πᾶς δὲ ὁ ἀγωνιζόμενος πάντα ἐγκρατεύεται, ἐκεῖνοι μὲν οὖν ἵνα φθαρτὸν στέφανον λάβωσιν, ἡμεῖς δὲ ἄφθαρτον.

278. εἰ δὲ οὐκ ἐγκρατεύονται, γαμήσάτωσαν, κρεῖττον γάρ ἐστιν γαῆσαι ἢ πυροῦσθαι.

We can only thank God and praise him for this marvelous gift he has given us by sending the Spirit of his Son into our hearts, crying, “Abba! Father!”

6.4.6 Some Remaining Passages

There are some passages where one could argue whether it is the human spirit or the Holy Spirit. In Acts 18:25 we learn about Apollos:

And being fervent in spirit, he spoke and taught accurately the things concerning Jesus, though he knew only the baptism of John.

Does this verse talk about the spirit of Apollos or the Holy Spirit? See also Rom 12:11. Paul made a plan "in the Spirit" (his own or God's Spirit? Acts 19:21). Paul says in Acts 20:22:

And now, behold, I am going to Jerusalem, constrained by the Spirit, not knowing what will happen to me there.²⁷⁹

The ESV has interpreted the spirit here as God's Spirit and therefore capitalized it, but others might understand Paul's spirit here, and that he is spiritually or inwardly bound to go to Jerusalem. It is similar in Col 1:7-8 (ESV):

... 7 just as you learned it from Epaphras our beloved fellow servant. He is a faithful minister of Christ on your behalf 8 and has made known to us your love in the Spirit.²⁸⁰

279. καὶ νῦν ἰδοὺ δεδεμένος ἐγὼ τῷ πνεύματι πορεύομαι εἰς Ἱερουσαλήμ, τὰ ἐν αὐτῇ συναντήσοντά μοι μὴ εἰδώς

280. ὁ καὶ δηλώσας ἡμῖν τὴν ὑμῶν ἀγάπην ἐν πνεύματι.

In this translation Epaphras informed Paul and the team of the love of the Colossians by the help of God's Spirit. When we seek information about the relationship of the Holy Spirit and the world, we learn that the world can not receive the Holy Spirit, because the world does not see nor know the spirit (John 14:17; 1 Cor 2:14; Jude 19). The unbelieving Israelites always resisted the Holy Spirit (Acts 7:51). The spirit of the world tries to imitate the Spirit of God to lead believers astray (2 Cor 11:4; 1 Cor 2:12; 1 John 4:1.2.3.6).

Chapter 7

Ecclesiology - about God's People

7.1 Words for the Church

7.1.1 In the Old Testament

קָהָל qāhāl

The Hebrew m. noun qāhāl is used for a gathering of people and can be translated with "assembly, convocation, congregation".¹ The LXX quite often translates this word with *ekklēsia*.² The "as-

1. Brown, Driver, and Briggs, Hebrew and English Lexicon of the Old Testament, p. 874. It is found 122 times in the OT according to Even-Shoshan, A New Concordance of the Bible, p. 1006.

2. *ekklēsia* is used about 74 times in the LXX. It translates qāhāl in the following verses Dt 9:10; 18:16; 23:1; 23:2; 23:3; 23:8; 31:30; Jo 8:35; Jgs 20:2; 21:5.8; 1 Sm 17:47; 1 Kgs 8:14.22.55.65; 1 Chr 13:2.4; 28:8; 29:1.10.20; 2 Chr 1:3.5; 6:3.12.13; 7:8; 20:5.14; 23:3; 28:14; 29:23.28.31.32; 30:2.4.13.17; 30:23.24.25.25; Ezra 2:64; 10:1.8.12.14; Neh 5:13; 7:66; 8:2.17; 13:1; Job 30:28;

sembly of the Lord"³ is an important theological concept in the Old Testament and denotes God's people as a holy and privileged body of salvation (see e.g. Dt 23:1-8; Ps 89:5; 149:1).

The words *qāhāl* or *ēkklēsia* can sometimes denote something negative if the people which form the assembly are wicked. Therefore it is possible that Ps 26:5 can speak of "the assembly of evil-doers".

The phrase "the assembly of the Lord" is clearly something very positive and glorious. This should be a holy congregation because the Lord is holy (Lv 19:2). There are certain conditions to be part of this assembly (Dt 23:1-2):

- 1 No one whose testicles are crushed or whose male organ is cut off shall enter the assembly of the Lord.
- 2 No one born of a forbidden union may enter the assembly of the Lord. Even to the tenth generation, none of his descendants may enter the assembly of the Lord.

Certain nations are not allowed to enter (Ammonites or Moabites, Dt 23:3-6)⁴, but children born to Edomites or Egyptians "in the third generation may enter the assembly of the Lord" (Dt 23:7-8).

This whole passage shows that the "assembly of the Lord" is not congruent with Israel according to the flesh. Some Israelites

Ps 22:22.25; 26:5; 35:18; 40:9; 89:5; 107:32; 149:1; Prv 5:14; Lam 1:10; Jl 2:16; Mi 2:5. *ēkklēsia* is used for *qāhillāh* in Neh 5:7, for *maqḥēlīm* in Ps 26:12, for *maqḥēlōt* in Ps 68:26 and for *lahāqat* in 1 Sm 19:20. In the following verses it is used without corresponding word in the Hebrew text (Dt 4:10; 1 Sm 28:2; 2 Chr 10:3).

3. Found in Nm 16:3; 20:4; Dt 23:1.2.3.8; 1 Chr 28:8; Mi 2:5.

4. But see Ruth 1:4; 4:13-20; Mt 1:5!

are excluded, if they have been sterilized and are not able to produce children.⁵ Some children of Gentile families may enter in the third generation if they have come to faith in the Lord. The door of Israel's faith was open to Gentiles even in the Old Testament (cf. 1 Kgs 8:41-43).

עֲדָה 'ēḏāh

The Hebrew f. noun 'ēḏāh means "congregation" or "company".⁶ It is used about 149 times in the OT⁷, often for the "congregation of Israel" and is a synonym of qāhāl. The standard translation of the LXX for 'ēḏāh is *synagōgē*⁸ which is also used in the NT for the local place of worship of the Jews, for the synagogue.

7.1.2 In the New Testament

The most important Greek word for the church in the New Testament is *ēkklēsia*⁹ which is not a new word but had already been

5. In Mi 2:5 such Israelites are left out who are wicked.

6. Brown, Driver, and Briggs, *Hebrew and English Lexicon of the Old Testament*, p. 417.

7. According to Even-Shoshan, *A New Concordance of the Bible*, p. 834. See Ex 12:3.6.19.47; 16:1.2.9.10.22; 17:1; 34:31; 35:1.4.20; 38:25; Lv 4:13.15; 8:3.4.5; 9:5; 10:6.17; 16:5; 19:2; 24:14.16; Nm 1:2.16.18.53; 3:7; 4:34; 8:9.20; 10:2.3; 13:26; 14:1.2.5.7.10; 14:27.35.36; 15:24.25.26; 15:33.35.36; 16:2.3.5.6; 16:9.11.16.19; 16:21.22.24.26; 17:5.6.7.10.11; 19:9; 20:1.2.8.11; 20:22.27.29; 25:6.7; 26:2.9.10; 27:2.3.14.16; 27:17.19.20.21.22; 31:12.13.16.26.27; 31:43; 32:2.4; 35:12.24.25; Jo 9:15.18.19; 9:21.27; 18:1; 20:6.9; 22:12.16.17.18; 22:20.30; Jgs 14:8; 20:1; 21:10.13.16; 1 Kgs 8:5; 12:20; 2 Chr 5:6; Job 15:34; 16:7; Ps 1:5; 7:8; 22:17; 68:31; 74:2; 82:1; 86:14; 106:17.18; 111:1; Prv 5:14; Jer 6:18; 30:20; Hos 7:12.

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9. *ἐκκλησία* is found about 111 times in the NT: Mt 16:18; 18:17; Acts 5:11; 7:38; 8:1.3; 9:31; 11:22.26; 12:1.5; 13:1; 14:23.27; 15:3.4.22.41;

present in the LXX as a translation for the Hebrew word *qāhāl*, assembly. If the word is not new, what then is new in the New Testament? It is the importance of Jesus Christ for the church of God. This becomes evident when we look at the images which are used for the church in the New Testament.

In Acts 19:39 the word is used in the legal and secular sense of a "regularly convened assembly" of the city of Ephesus. In the NT it normally means "the church whether as a congregation gathered for worship or as local Christian community or as the universal church".¹⁰

7.2 Images of the Church

7.2.1 God's Temple and Building

In this section we look at the church as God's temple under construction. In Mt 16:18 Jesus says to Peter:

And I tell you, you are Peter, and on this rock I will
build my church, and the gates of hell shall not prevail
against it.¹¹

16:5; 18:22; 19:32.39.41; 20:17.28; Rom 16:1.4.5; 16.16.23; 1 Cor 1:2; 4:17; 6:4; 7:17; 10:32; 11:16.18.22; 12:28; 14:4.5.12.19.23; 14:28.33.34.35; 15:9; 16:1.19; 2 Cor 1:1; 8:1.18.19; 8:23.24; 11:8.28; 12:13; Gal 1:2.13.22; Eph 1:22; 3:10.21; 5:23.24.25; 5:27.29.32; Phil 3:6; 4:15; Col 1:18.24; 4:15.16; 1 Thes 1:1; 2:14; 2 Thes 1:1.4; 1 Tm 3:5.15; 5:16; Phlm 1:2; Heb 2:12; 12:23; Jas 5:14; 3 Jn 1:6.9.10; Rv 1:4.11.20; 2:1.7.8.11.12; 2:17.18.23.29; 3:1.6.7; 3:13.14.22; 22:16.

10. Zerwick and Grosvenor, *An Analysis of the Greek New Testament*, p.52 under Mt 16:18.

11. *καὶ γὰρ* δέ σοι λέγω ὅτι σὺ εἶ Πέτρος, καὶ ἐπὶ ταύτῃ τῇ πέτρᾳ οἰκοδομήσω μου τὴν ἐκκλησίαν, καὶ πύλαι ᾗδου οὐ κατισχύουσιν αὐτῆς•

The confession of Peter that Jesus is "the Christ, the Son of the living God" is the foundational rock on which Jesus builds his own church (Mt 16:16). The church of God is the church of Jesus Christ, the Lord. Without Jesus there is no church.

For the Roman Catholic Church this is one of the most important verses for their understanding of the office of the Pope. The Pope as the bishop of Rome is seen as the successor of Peter who is understood to have been the first bishop of Rome. Peter's name Pětrřs means rock. He is seen as the rock on which the church is built and "the keys of the kingdom of heaven" are given to him to bind and to loose on earth what shall be bound in heaven (Mt 16:19).

But there are some difficulties in this Roman Catholic construction of the sense of this passage. The first is their identification of the bishop of Rome with Peter. Even if the apostle Peter were the rock on which the church is built, why should the bishop of Rome be his successor? There is no hint in the New Testament for this line which has been drawn by later Roman Catholic power politics and not by sound exegesis of the New Testament.

The second difficulty is the difference between the name of Peter which is masculine in Greek (pětrřs) and the rock on which the church is built which is feminine (pětra). If Jesus wanted to say that Peter is the rock on which the church is built, then Matthew could have used the masculine form both times, for the name of Peter and the foundational rock of the church. But he makes this difference. Therefore it is better to understand "this rock" as the confession of Peter: "You are the Christ, the Son of the living God." To belong to the church means to believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God.

As far as Peter remains true to his confession, he is one of the first stones used in building the church (cf. 1 Pt 2:4-5) together

with the other apostles and prophets (Eph 2:19-22) but Christ is the most decisive stone, the cornerstone, giving the building its layout or he is the foundation (1 Cor 3:11) for the whole structure.

The third difficulty is that not only Peter receives the power to bind and loose, but any group of at least two or three believers who gather in the name of Jesus and agree in prayer shall have this same power because they represent the power given to the church (Mt 18:16-19).

After Jesus told in the parable of the tenants that the tenants killed the son of the owner of the vineyard to get his inheritance, Jesus explains that the murder of the son reflects a great change in salvation history (Mt 21:42-44):

42 Jesus said to them, "Have you never read in the Scriptures: "'The stone that the builders rejected has become the cornerstone; this was the Lord's doing, and it is marvelous in our eyes'? 43 Therefore I tell you, the kingdom of God will be taken away from you and given to a people producing its fruits. 44 And the one who falls on this stone will be broken to pieces; and when it falls on anyone, it will crush him."

These verses point back to certain Old Testament passages with stone and building imagery (Ps 118:22-23; Is 8:14-15; 28:16). Following Jesus the apostles in the New Testament understand the rejected stone to be Christ crucified who became the cornerstone of a new building in his resurrection (Rom 9:32.33; 1 Pet. 2:4-10).

Jesus Christ is the Word of God that "became flesh and dwelt among us, and we have seen his glory, glory as of the only Son from the Father, full of grace and truth" (Jn 1:14; 1:1-3; 1 Jn 1:1-4). When the tabernacle was erected, it was filled with God's glory (Ex 40:33-35). When the temple was completed, it was filled with

God's glory (1 Kgs 8:10-11). With these passages in mind John 1:14 presents the body of Jesus Christ as the temple of the living God with "glory as of the only Son from the Father, full of grace and truth" (cf. Jn 2:19-21). "For in him the whole fullness of deity dwells bodily" (Col 2:9).

The teaching that the church is the temple of the Holy Spirit is based on the fact that the body of Jesus Christ was and is the temple. All members of the church are united with Christ in his death and resurrection and so one spirit with him and the temple of God (Rom 6:3-4; Eph 2:4-7; 1 Cor 6:17-19).

In 2 Sm 7:13 God had promised David that his son would build the temple for the Lord which was fulfilled in Solomon. But after the destruction of Solomon's temple this promise was renewed and connected to the coming Christ, the "Branch" in Zec 6:12-13; 3:8-9. Therefore the Old Testament predictions of the building of a new temple through the coming Christ are taken up in the New Testament and understood of the church as the temple of God. The church as the body of Christ with Christ as the head of his body is the dwelling place of God, the holy temple of the new world (1 Cor 3:9-17):

9 For we are God's fellow workers. You are God's field, God's building. 10 According to the grace of God given to me, like a skilled master builder I laid a foundation, and someone else is building upon it. Let each one take care how he builds upon it. 11 For no one can lay a foundation other than that which is laid, which is Jesus Christ. 12 Now if anyone builds on the foundation with gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay, straw - 13 each one's work will become manifest, for the Day will disclose it, because it will

be revealed by fire, and the fire will test what sort of work each one has done. 14 If the work that anyone has built on the foundation survives, he will receive a reward. 15 If anyone's work is burned up, he will suffer loss, though he himself will be saved, but only as through fire. 16 Do you not know that you are God's temple and that God's Spirit dwells in you? 17 If anyone destroys God's temple, God will destroy him. For God's temple is holy, and you are that temple.

Throughout church history this magnificent temple of God is built on the foundation of Jesus Christ. The completion is the second coming of Christ on "the Day" which will come with fire and destroy all which is not worthy of eternity. This is a great parable. This is the most important building project ever. It is built for eternity. We worship God now in weakness and in short lives with problems and temptations (1 Cor 6:17-20). After that Day we shall worship Him joyfully, free from pain and eternally (Rv 21:3-4):

3 And I heard a loud voice from the throne saying, "Behold, the dwelling place of God is with man. He will dwell with them, and they will be his people, and God himself will be with them as their God. 4 He will wipe away every tear from their eyes, and death shall be no more, neither shall there be mourning nor crying nor pain anymore, for the former things have passed away."

There will be no temple in the New Jerusalem which would limit God's presence to one part or one building (Rv 21:22):

And I saw no temple in the city, for its temple is the Lord God the Almighty and the Lamb.

On this earth, the old earth, the tabernacle and the temple of Solomon and the second temple after the Babylonian exile had all the function to give Israel and all people fearing God an address where God could be found, a direction towards to pray to (Dn 6:10; 1 Kgs 8:41-43).

But in the New Jerusalem there is no mediating building put between God and man. The presence of God the Father and Jesus Christ is "the temple" of this city. The real thing, no shadow. God himself present. Between the tabernacle and the temples of the Old Testament and God's visible presence in eternity we have nowadays the church as the temple of God with the indwelling of the Holy Spirit in every believer.

It is a building under construction or a body under growth (Eph 4:11-16). On that Day, the day of completion we shall recognize the full extent of the glory the church always had (Rom 8:30). But the glory to come is even greater and more marvelous (1 Jn 3:1-3).

7.2.2 A Living Unity

In the NT several different word pictures are used to present the living unity of Christ and all believers. They are taken either from the area of plant life or the human body and have their origin either in the teaching of Jesus Christ or of the apostle Paul.

True Vine and Branches

We start with the teaching of our Lord in Jn 15:1.5-8:¹²

1 I am the true vine, and my Father is the vinedresser...

5 I am the vine; you are the branches. Whoever abides

12. As an OT predecessor Is 5:1-7 can be compared. In the NT see also Mt 20:1-16; 21:28; 21:33-45; Mk 12:1-12; Lk 20:9-18; 1 Cor 9:7.

in me and I in him, he it is that bears much fruit, for apart from me you can do nothing. 6 If anyone does not abide in me he is thrown away like a branch and withers; and the branches are gathered, thrown into the fire, and burned. 7 If you abide in me, and my words abide in you, ask whatever you wish, and it will be done for you. 8 By this my Father is glorified, that you bear much fruit and so prove to be my disciples.

This is the last of the "I am ..." words of Jesus as said towards his disciples (cf. 18:37) and is placed in the center of his Farewell Discourses (Jn 13-17). In these talks Jesus prepares his disciples for his going away to the Father and the future without his bodily presence. It is highly significant that Jn 15:1-8 is found in the center of these discourses: We have to abide in Christ and Christ in us or his words in us to bring fruit and glorify the Father. Christ and the disciples are one in a spiritual way. The unity with Christ is the spiritual source of their life and of their ability to produce fruit.

To loose contact with Christ would be to be cut off the source of life and the power to bear fruit (15:6). Judas Iscariot is an example for this (Jn 13:2.11.18.19; 17:12). The secret of a fruitful life is to abide in Christ. The unity with Christ results automatically in a changed life which glorifies God. To abide in Christ is to hear his word and obey it (Jn 15:3.7.10.14).

If we ask for the primary cause of our unity with Christ, we are pointed to our election through Christ (Jn 15:16):

You did not choose me, but I chose you and appointed you that you should go and bear fruit¹³ and that your

13. οὐχ ὑμεῖς με ἐξελέξασθε, ἀλλ' ἐγὼ ἐξελέξαμην ὑμᾶς, καὶ ἔθηκα ὑμᾶς ἵνα ὑμεῖς ὑπάγητε καὶ καρπὸν φέρητε

fruit should abide, so that whatever you ask the Father in my name, he may give it to you.

Olive Tree and Branches

In Rom 11:11-33 Paul speaks of the temporary hardening of a part of Israel and asks the question:

11 So I ask, did they stumble in order that they might fall? By no means! Rather through their trespass salvation has come to the Gentiles, so as to make Israel jealous. 12 Now if their trespass means riches for the world, and if their failure means riches for the Gentiles, how much more will their full inclusion mean!¹⁴

The fact that a part of the Israelites have been hardened in their hearts and not accepted Christ, has opened the door for missions amongst the Gentiles. Now the Gentiles can be saved. The purpose of God in this was not that the hardened Israelites remain excluded from salvation. They may see saved Gentiles, become jealous, repent, accept Christ and thus gain salvation.

This implies that the partial hardening of Israel is not eternal, but temporary. The time will come when this partial hardening of Israel will stop and the fullness of the Israel of that time will come to faith in Jesus Christ and enter the house of salvation. This will bring even greater blessings to the world than their partial being set aside before (11:15-16):

15 For if their rejection means the reconciliation of the world, what will their acceptance mean but life from

14. εἰ δὲ τὸ παράπτωμα αὐτῶν πλοῦτος κόσμος καὶ τὸ ἥτημα αὐτῶν πλοῦτος ἐθνῶν, πόσω μᾶλλον τὸ πλήρωμα αὐτῶν.

the dead? 16 If the dough offered as firstfruits is holy, so is the whole lump, and if the root is holy, so are the branches.¹⁵

The partial rejection of Israel reconciled the world with God. The acceptance of all of Israel will coincide with the resurrection from the dead. In Rom 11:16 Paul starts to use the figure of a good olive tree with its root and branches to illustrate this truth. The "root" of this olive tree¹⁶ is God's source of salvation starting with his gifts to the forefathers Abraham, Isaac, Jacob and David (11:28). These gifts were all related to the coming Christ and dependent on him (Gn 12:3; 22:18; Gal 3:8.16; 2 Sm 7:11-16; 23:5).¹⁷

Those Israelites who did not accept Jesus are like branches of this good olive tree that have been broken off (Rom 11:17-20). A Gentile who accepts Christ is like a wild olive shoot which is grafted in the good olive tree (11:17.20). Having faith or lacking faith is decisive. God can cut a Gentile off if he becomes proud and does not continue in God's kindness (11:22). And God can surely graft the fallen Israelites in again if they come to faith in Christ (11:23-24).

The partial hardening has come upon Israel only for a limited time, that is "until the fullness of the Gentiles has come in" (11:25). Then this partial hardening will cease and the whole nation of Israel, living at that time, will recognize Jesus as the Christ and be saved at the coming of Christ (11:26-27; cf. Is 59:20-21; Jer 31:33):

15. 15 εἰ γὰρ ἡ ἀποβολὴ αὐτῶν καταλλαγὴ κόσμου, τίς ἡ πρόσλημις εἰ μὴ ζωὴ ἐκ νεκρῶν; 16 εἰ δὲ ἡ ἀπαρχὴ ἁγία, καὶ τὸ φύραμα• καὶ εἰ ἡ ῥίζα ἁγία, καὶ οἱ κλάδοι.

16. The figure of the olive tree is already used in the OT for God's people; cf. Jer 11:16; Ps 52:8).

17. Cf. also Paul's use of the word "root" for the coming Christ in Rom 15:12 taken from Is 11:1.10; cf. Rv 5:5; 22:16.

26 And in this way all Israel will be saved,
 as it is written,
 "The Deliverer will come from Zion,
 he will banish ungodliness from Jacob";
 27 "and this will be my covenant with them
 when I take away their sins."¹⁸

The words "in this way" and "as" it is written correspond to each other: Israel will be exactly saved in the way it has been predicted. The "and ... Israel will be saved" can be understood in the sense of "and then ... Israel will be saved" as in the translation of Martin Luther of 1956.¹⁹ First the "fullness of the Gentiles" has to come in and "then" the whole of Israel will be saved.

When Paul speaks of the Deliverer coming "from Zion"²⁰, he may think of the heavenly Zion and the coming of Christ on the last day (Gal 4:26; cf. Heb 12:22). Christ then will forgive the sins of the Israelites, banish ungodliness from them and make them holy. This is seen as related to certain gifts given to the forefathers (11:28-29). That Paul really speaks of the future conversion of Israelites is proved by his phrase: "As regards the gospel, they are enemies of God for your sake" (11:28).

By using this figure of the olive tree Paul puts an emphasis on the unity of the body of salvation. Jews and Gentiles who believe in Christ are part of the same living organism. There are not two olive

18. καὶ οὕτως πᾶς Ἰσραὴλ σωθήσεται• καθὼς γέγραπται• Ἡξει ἐκ Σιών ὁ ῥυόμενος, ἀποστρέψει ἀσεβείας ἀπὸ Ἰακώβ.

19. Die Bibel oder die ganze Heilige Schrift des Alten und des Neuen Testaments - Nach der deutschen Übersetzung Martin Luthers (Wien, 1972) . Kai, the Greek word for "and", plus a verb in the future tense can be understood in certain contexts as "and then...", cf. Mt 7:7: "Ask, and (then) it will be given to you."

20. In Is 59:20 it is "to Zion" or "for Zion".

trees of salvation, but one. Whoever believes in Christ, becomes part of this good olive tree. The Israelites who do not acknowledge Jesus as the Christ, are set aside for a while. When the whole nation of Israel will turn to Christ, they will "be grafted back into their own olive tree" (Rom 11:24). This should make us grateful for God's grace towards us Gentiles and humble with regard to God's dealings with Israel. We have no permission to be proud when we see some of them not acknowledging Jesus as the Christ.

Body of Christ

In 1 Cor 12:12-13²¹ Paul wants to illustrate the unity of the church as the one body of Christ while it is made up of people with a great diversity of gifts:

12 For just as the body is one and has many members, and all the members of the body, though many, are one body, so it is with Christ. 13 For in one Spirit we were all baptized into one body - Jews or Greeks, slaves or free - and all were made to drink of one Spirit.

Every single member of the church is incorporated into the body of Christ by being baptized with the Holy Spirit. God's Spirit gives every member the gifts as he wills (12:7-11). Believers should avoid to feel inferior because they only see and value the gifts in the others and so neglect practicing their own gift (12:15-19). They equally should not pose as superior downplaying the gifts of the others (12:21). "God has so composed the body" that all "may have the same care for one another... suffer together... rejoice together" (12:24-25). This already prepares the way for God's intention with

21. The idea in Rom 12:4-6 is very similar.

this unity in diversity (12:27-31) which is the "more excellent way", the way of love (12:31; 13:1-13).

In Eph 4 we have the same idea of the unity of the body (4:4) and the diversity of the gifts (4:11) and love as the way of the body of Christ (4:15-16), but there is an extra element of the growth of the whole body and the single members (4:12.15.16). The astonishing vision for the growth of the church as the body of Christ is to be like Christ when grown up to full maturity (4:13).

7.2.3 Holy Family and Holy Nation

The church is like a family of brothers and sisters who should care for one another and even admonish each other (Mt 18:14-17). Believers form a nation producing fruits for God's glory (Mt 21:42-43). Gentile believers have joined believers from Israel to form the united people of God (1 Pt 2:9-10; cf. Ex 19:5-6):

9 But you are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people for his own possession, that you may proclaim the excellencies of him who called you out of darkness into his marvelous light. 10 Once you were not a people, but now you are God's people; once you had not received mercy, but now you have received mercy.

All who receive Jesus Christ as their Savior and Lord become children of God (Jn 1:12-13), born again of water and the Spirit (Jn 3:3-5). God foreknew them and predestined them "to be conformed to the image of his Son, in order that he might be the firstborn among many brothers" (Rom 8:29). The people of God are God's family, his sons and daughters (2 Cor 6:16.18). They are called to live a

holy life (2 Cor 6:17-7:1), to be as holy as God their father is (Lv 19:2; 1 Pt 1:14-16; Mt 5:44-48).

7.2.4 **Wife or Bride of the Lord**

The closest family ties are used to illustrate God's relationship with his people, with his church: Father and children, husband and wife. The idea of God as loving husband and his people as his beloved wife or his bride are found in the Old and New Testaments.

In the Old Testament

In the ten commandments we learn about God that he is 'a jealous God' who forbids to have other gods before him or to make an idol to worship it (Ex 20:3-5). In Ex 34:13-17 idolatry is further explained as a kind of adultery and unfaithfulness. The implied idea is that God is the husband of Israel and to have any other god besides him would be a breach of faithfulness (cf. Lv 17:7; 20:5-6; Nm 15:39; Dt 31:16; Jgs 2:17; 8:27.33; 1 Chr 5:25; 2 Chr 21:11-13; Ps 73:27; 106:39).

God commands the prophet Hosea in his calling:

“Go, take to yourself a wife of whoredom and have children of whoredom, for the land commits great whoredom by forsaking the Lord.”

Hosea's family life became one of the most drastic sermons to call Israel to repentance and faithfulness. In Hosea God's love fights for the faithfulness and love of his people. God punishes Israel and leads her into the desert to regain her love and restore their loving relationship for ever (Hos 2:5-20; 3:3; cf. 4:10-18; 5:3-5; 9:1).

Isaiah uses the same figure of marital unfaithfulness for Jerusalem's sins (Is 1:21; cf. 57:3), but has also a strong emphasis

on God's grace and love winning back Zion, his estranged wife, and making her a beautiful bride again, a glorious New Jerusalem (1:26; 2:1-5; 49:14-50:3; 51:17-23; 52:1-2; 54:1-17; 60:1-22; 62:1-12; 65:17-19; 60:1-22; 62:1-12; 65:17-19; 60:1-22; 62:1-12; 65:17-19; 60:1-22; 62:1-12; 65:17-19; 60:1-22; 62:1-12; 65:17-19; 60:1-22; 62:1-12; 65:17-19; 60:1-22; 62:1-12; 65:17-19; 66:8-13).

Jeremiah speaks of Israel's and Judah's sins and unfaithfulness as adultery and so continues this prophetic tradition (Jer 2:20; 3:1.3; 3:6.8) as does Ezekiel (6:9; 16:1-58). Both prophecy the restoration of God's loving covenant relationship with his people as well (Jer 3:11-25; 31:31-34; Ez 16:59-63).

In the New Testament

The New Testament continues the OT prophetic tradition of God's people being God's wife or bride. When the disciples of John the Baptist told him that now all people were going to Jesus, John answered without any jealousy (Jn 3:28-30):

28 You yourselves bear me witness, that I said, 'I am not the Christ, but I have been sent before him.' 29 The one who has the bride is the bridegroom. The friend of the bridegroom, who stands and hears him, rejoices greatly at the bridegroom's voice. Therefore this joy of mine is now complete. 30 He must increase, but I must decrease.

Jesus as the Christ is the bridegroom. The bride are all those who repent, are born again and so become his people (Jn 1:33; 3:3.5), first out of Israel (Jn 1:31; Mt 3:9) and then also out of all nations (Jn 10:16). It is highly significant that the first miracle of Christ

happened at a wedding revealing the glory of Jesus who has come as the bridegroom to win his bride (Jn 2:11; Mt 9:15).

To this fits what Paul wrote to the church in Corinth (2 Cor 11:2):

2 I feel a divine jealousy for you, for I betrothed you to one husband, to present you as a pure virgin to Christ.
3 But I am afraid that as the serpent deceived Eve by his cunning, your thoughts will be led astray from a sincere and pure devotion to Christ. 4 For if someone comes and proclaims another Jesus than the one we proclaimed, or if you receive a different spirit from the one you received, or if you accept a different gospel from the one you accepted, you put up with it readily enough.

Paul speaking here as prophet (Acts 13:1) and apostle, fights the influence of false apostles in Corinth who disguise themselves as apostles of Christ but are really servants of Satan (2 Cor 11:13-15). Paul stands very much in the tradition of the Old Testament prophets who warned Israel not to commit "adultery" under the influence of false prophets. They seem to preach Jesus, but this is another Jesus. They help believers in Corinth to receive a spirit, but this is a different spirit and not God's Spirit. The whole situation in Corinth is a crisis of deception aimed at seducing the church, the bride of Christ as Eve was led astray by the serpent in Paradise.

In 1 Cor 6:16-17 warns the Corinthians not to commit sexual immorality with prostitutes:

16 Or do you not know that he who is joined to a prostitute becomes one body with her? For, as it is written, "The two will become one flesh." 17 But he who is joined to the Lord becomes one spirit with him.

The unity of the sexual immoral person with the prostitute is called "one flesh". The unity of a believer with the Lord Jesus is called "one spirit". If a believer unites with a prostitute, then the "members of Christ" are made "members of a prostitute" (6:15). That is a capital offense against the temple of God (6:18-20; 3:16-17).

Often the problems in the churches gave Paul the opportunity for some deep teaching about Jesus Christ. For him the therapy of all kinds of illnesses and sins is always one: Jesus Christ. This statement is very deep and very precious:

But he who is joined to the Lord becomes one spirit
with him.²²

In the spiritual realm the church is united with Christ, one with him. Every single believer is one spirit with Jesus Christ. That is a marvelous truth. It is also the foundation of salvation and eternal happiness. Paul also uses the loving relationship between Christ and his church as a pattern for the relationship of husband and wife in Eph 5:25-33.

The last of the four Hallelujahs in Rv 19 is found in Rv 19:6-8 and mentions the marriage of the Lamb with his Bride:

Hallelujah!

For the Lord our God the Almighty reigns.

7 Let us rejoice and exult and give him the glory,
for the marriage of the Lamb has come,
and his Bride has made herself ready;

8 it was granted her to clothe herself
with fine linen, bright and pure.

22. ὁ δὲ κολλώμενος τῷ κυρίῳ ἐν πνεύμα ἔστιν.

The identity of the Bride of the Lamb is revealed in Rv 21:2.9-11 as "the holy city, new Jerusalem". This agrees with certain passages in the OT where Jerusalem or Zion is the Bride or the Wife of the Lord. The new Jerusalem is the final destiny of all believers of all times and all nations, out of Israel and the Gentiles. It is "the dwelling place of God ... with man" (Rv 21:3). The facts that "on the gates the names of the twelve tribes of the sons of Israel were inscribed" and that "the wall of the city had twelve foundations, and on them were the twelve names of the twelve apostles of the Lamb" (21:12.14) point to the unity of the people of God of the Old and the New Testaments (cf. Jn 10:16; Mt 8:11).

7.2.5 **The Church's Citizenship is in Heaven**

The new Jerusalem is not only coming down out of heaven in the future (Rv 21:2.9-14; 19:7-8), but already exists now in heaven. Paul calls it "our mother" (Gal 4:26; cf. Ps 87:3-7). Therefore every believer is a foreigner on earth and at home in heaven (Phil 3:20-21):

20 But our citizenship is in heaven, and from it we await a Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ,²³ 21 who will transform our lowly body to be like his glorious body, by the power that enables him even to subject all things to himself.

Our real home is with the Lord Jesus in heaven: "While we are at home in the body we are away from the Lord... we would rather be away from the body and at home with the Lord" (2 Cor 5:6-9). That

23. ἡμῶν γὰρ τὸ πολίτευμα ἐν οὐρανοῖς ὑπάρχει, ἐξ οὗ καὶ σωτῆρα ἀπεκδεχόμεθα κύριον Ἰησοῦν Χριστόν

means after death believers enter their home to stay with the Lord for ever as "the spirits of the righteous made perfect" (Heb 12:22-24). In comparison to one's own personal death as an entrance door to heaven an even better option would be to experience the second coming of Christ alive and to have one's body be transformed "so that what is mortal may be swallowed up by life" (2 Cor 5:4).

7.2.6 Flock of God

In the Old or the New Testaments there is the idea that God is the shepherd of his people, either himself or through his appointed leaders, especially through the anointed king or Messiah. The people are seen as sheep of God's flock. If the leaders are corrupt and selfish and neglect the sheep, the people are like sheep without a shepherd. God as the good shepherd using his good shepherd, the coming Messiah, grants the ultimate salvation of the people of his flock.

In the Old Testament

Jacob blesses the children of Joseph in the name of "the God who has been my shepherd all my life long to this day" (Gn 48:15; cf. Gn 49:24). David also sees God as his and Israel's shepherd (Ps 23:1; 28:9), as do Asaph (Ps 80:1), Isaiah (40:11, Jeremiah (31:10, Ezekiel (34:12.15, Amos (3:12), Micah (7:14) and Zecariah (11:4.7.8.9). God is the "one Shepherd" who gives the wise men their words of wisdom (Eccl 12:11).

God appoints "shepherds" for his people like Moses and his team (Is 63:11), Joshua (Nm 27:17), the judges (2 Sm 7:7; 1 Chr 17:6), David (2 Sm 5:2; 1 Chr 11:2), Ps 78:71-72 and even Cyrus (Is 44:28).

God condemns and punishes corrupt and selfish leaders who are evil shepherds (Jer 2:8; 10:21; 12:10; 23:1-2; 25:34-36; 50:6; Ez 34:2.5.7; 34:8.9.10; Zec 10:2-3; 11:3.5; 11:15.16.17). When God punishes such leaders as for example king Ahab, Israel may be scattered like sheep without shepherd (1 Kgs 22:17; 2 Chr 18:16).

Part of God's salvation for the last days is his giving good shepherds to his people, especially the Messiah (Jer 3:15; 23:3-6; Ez 34:23; 37:24; Mic 5:4-6; Zec 11:4.7.8.9; 13:7).

In the New Testament

Jesus is the good shepherd of Israel who had to be born in Bethlehem as prophesied by Micah (5:2.4) and pointed out by Matthew (2:6). Jesus felt the compassion of a shepherd to gather the lost and scattered sheep of Israel and care for them (Mt 9:36; 10:6; Mk 6:34).

As predicted (Zec 13:7) his death would temporarily scatter his disciples but having risen he would meet them again in Galilee (Mt 26:31-32; Mk 14:27-28). He is the good shepherd that lays down his life for the sheep (Jn 10:2.11.12). He knows his sheep by name, calls them, they follow him and he gives them eternal life (Jn 10:3.14.27-28). He has some sheep from Israel and others from the Gentiles and unites them under his leadership (Jn 10:16):

And I have other sheep that are not of this fold. I must bring them also, and they will listen to my voice. So there will be one flock, one shepherd.

Jesus is the Shepherd of our souls (1 Pt 2:25) and as the chief Shepherd the example for elders who have to shepherd the church of God (1 Pt 5:2.4; Heb 13:20). On judgment day Jesus "will separate people one from another as a shepherd separates the sheep from

the goats" (Mt 25:32). He will rule the nations with a rod of iron whereby the word "rule" means literally "shepherd" (Rv 2:27; 12:5; 19:15). Jesus will continue to care for his sheep in all eternity (Rv 7:17).

Because Peter says "Yes" to the question whether he loves Jesus, Jesus restores him to his calling: "Tend my sheep" (Jn 21:16). Later Peter can encourage his fellow elders "to shepherd the flock of God" with the right motivation (1 Pt 5:1-4). Although to care for the sheep implies the right to receive salary, Paul did not use this right (1 Cor 9:6-7). Elders or overseers or shepherds (pastors) are appointed by the Holy Spirit to shepherd "the church of God, which he obtained with his own blood" (Acts 20:28).

7.2.7 God's Field

The church is also compared to God's field where people can work in (1 Cor 3:9). Some sow and others may reap when it is time to harvest (Jn 4:35). When the harvest is plentiful, we are commanded to "pray earnestly to the Lord of the harvest to send out laborers into his harvest" (Mt 9:37-38).

7.2.8 God's Army

In Mt 16:18 Jesus combines the figures of building and fighting:

And I tell you, you are Peter, and on this rock I will build my church, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it.²⁴

Jesus builds his church in such a way that it is more powerful than the "gates of Hades". In the NT Hades is the realm of the dead,

24. καὶ πύλαι ᾗδου οὐ κατισχύσουσιν αὐτῆς•

corresponding to Sheol in the OT. In the OT believers like Jacob reckoned to go down to Sheol at the time of their death (Gn 37:35). With the death and resurrection of Christ things have changed in the New Covenant.

Now believers have the hope to enter Paradise at the time of their death (Lk 23:43) which seems to be located in the third heaven (2 Cor 12:2-3) in the new Jerusalem (Rv 2:7; 22:2). Through his death Jesus destroyed the one who had "the power of death, that is, the devil" (Heb 2:14). The Risen One has "the keys of Death and Hades" (Rv 1:18; cf. Eph 4:8-10).

Therefore the church prevails against "the gates of Hades". This phrase seems to present Hades as a city with walls surrounding and protecting it. The gates are also the place where the leaders sit, the elders. The phrase could point to the leadership of Hades. Whoever conquers the gates of a city has conquered the city and is now lord of it (Gn 22:17). Christ's divine power is present in the church and overcomes even the last enemy, that is death (1 Cor 15:26.54-55).

If the church is strong "in the Lord and in the strength of his might" it can stand firm wrestling "against the rulers, against the authorities, against the cosmic powers over this present darkness, against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly places" (Eph 6:10-12).

Jesus Christ has overcome the devil (Lk 11:20-22) and the world (Jn 16:33). He "has conquered, so that he can open the scroll and its seven seals" (Rv 5:5). Christ will overcome the armies of the enemy in the last great battle of this world (Rv 17:14; 16:16; 19:11-21).

The goal of the church's struggle is to see all things in subjection under Christ (2 Cor 10:3-6):

3 For though we walk in the flesh, we are not wag-

ing war according to the flesh. 4 For the weapons of our warfare are not of the flesh but have divine power to destroy strongholds. 5 We destroy arguments and every lofty opinion raised against the knowledge of God, and take every thought captive to obey Christ, 6 being ready to punish every disobedience, when your obedience is complete.

Sometimes it seems that the enemy prevails against the saints (Rv 6:2; 11:7; 13:7), but this is only temporarily and in this world (Rv 12:11):

And they have conquered him by the blood of the Lamb and by the word of their testimony, for they loved not their lives even unto death.

It looked as if they were defeated in their death, but in reality they "conquered the beast and its image and the number of its name" and celebrated their victory on the other side of the sea as Israel did after God's victory over Pharaoh and his army (Rv 15:2).

In all her troubles the church can say that "we are more than conquerors through him who loved us" (Rom 8:37). Our faith is "the victory that has overcome the world" (1 Jn 5:4), the evil one (1 Jn 2:13-14) and the false prophets and antichrists (1 Jn 4:4). Those who overcome, have great promises (Rv 2:7.11.17.26; 3:5.12.21; 21:7). To overcome is to have faith in Jesus Christ (1 Jn 5:5).

7.2.9 A New Creation

When the risen Christ "breathed on" the disciples and said to them, "Receive the Holy Spirit" (Jn 20:22)²⁵, he acted as God did when

25. καὶ τοῦτο εἰπὼν ἐνεφύσησεν καὶ λέγει αὐτοῖς• Λάβετε πνεῦμα ἅγιον•

he created Adam in the beginning (Gn 2:7):

Then the Lord God formed the man of dust from the ground and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life, and the man became a living creature.²⁶

The risen Christ thus proves that he has divine creative power, that the disciples are spiritually made alive by receiving the Holy Spirit and become a new creation. Thomas first rejected the testimony of his fellow disciples for one whole week, but when Christ revealed himself to Thomas on the next Sunday, he immediately confessed Jesus as his Lord and his God (20:28). It seems that Thomas had understood very well the relevance of the acted parable of Jesus, but rejected the disciples' testimony as false. But when he could see with his own eyes that their report was correct, he came to the deepest faith in Jesus Christ.

The same word of 'breathing into' is also used in Ez 37:9: "Come from the four winds, O breath, and breathe on these slain, that they may live."²⁷ Ez 37:1-14 thus presents the resurrection of the people of God under the figure of their recreation according to Gn 2:7. The acted parable of Jesus in John 20:22 combines both OT texts: The Risen One is the Creator who can resurrect spiritually dead people and make them a new creation.

Paul develops similar ideas in 1 Cor 15:45-49 also using Gn 2:7 as a starting point:

45 Thus it is written, "The first man Adam became a living being"; the last Adam became a life-giving

26. LXX: καὶ ἔπλασεν ὁ θεὸς τὸν ἄνθρωπον χοῦν ἀπὸ τῆς γῆς καὶ ἐνεφύσησεν εἰς τὸ πρόσωπον αὐτοῦ πνοὴν ζωῆς, καὶ ἐγένετο ὁ ἄνθρωπος εἰς ψυχὴν ζῶσαν.

27. LXX: Ἐκ τῶν τεσσάρων πνευμάτων ἔλθὲ καὶ ἐμφύσησον εἰς τοὺς νεκροὺς τούτους, καὶ ζήσάτωσαν.

spirit. 46 But it is not the spiritual that is first but the natural, and then the spiritual. 47 The first man was from the earth, a man of dust; the second man is from heaven. 48 As was the man of dust, so also are those who are of the dust, and as is the man of heaven, so also are those who are of heaven.

The above is related to the resurrection body, but even on earth and before his resurrection, anyone in Christ "is a new creation" according to Paul (2 Cor 5:17). He has died to the world by the cross of Jesus Christ and been made alive through his resurrection (Gal 6:14-15; 3:26-29; Eph 2:5.14-16). He is to be renewed in an ongoing process of transformation into the image of Christ who is the prototype of the new mankind (Eph 4:20-24; Col 3:9-11; 2 Cor 3:18; 4:16-18).

7.3 **Fundamental Characteristics of Church**

Going through the above images used for the church we have already come across certain characteristics of God's church, for example that it is one church and that it is holy. Let us look at the united, holy, apostolic and catholic church of God.

7.3.1 **One**

Again and again we are told that the church is 'one' and cannot really be divided even if there are human divisions and quarrels (1 Cor 1:11-13). The church is the one body of Christ (1 Cor 12:12-13; Eph 2:14-22; 4:4; Rom 12:4-5). We can assume that the spiritual unity Jesus Christ was praying for was granted (Jn 17:20-23).

The life of the church should, of course, reflect this unity in practice (Eph 4:3). In the holy communion we celebrate this unity, "for we all partake of the one bread" (1 Cor 10:17).

7.3.2 Holy

The church is holy and consists of people who are holy. Jesus Christ, the head of the church, is holy (Mk 1:24; Lk 4:34; 1:35; Jn 6:69; Acts 3:14; 4:27.30; 1 Jn 2:20; Rv 3:7; Acts 2:27; 13:35; Heb 7:26). In general God's prophets are holy (Lk 1:70; Acts 3:21; 2 Pt 3:2), as is especially John the Baptist (Mk 6:20). The apostles are holy (Eph 3:5). According to Mt 27:52-53 many OT saints were made alive after Christ's resurrection: "Many bodies of the saints who had fallen asleep were raised and coming out of the tombs after his resurrection they went into the holy city and appeared to many".

The normal members of the NT church are very often called "saints"²⁸. They are a holy priesthood (1 Pt 2:5) and a holy nation (1 Pt 2:9). They all have received the Holy Spirit (Rom 8:9; 15:16) and so are the temple of the Holy Spirit (1 Cor 3:17; Eph 2:21) or their body is (1 Cor 6:19).

The church is the temple of the Holy Spirit (1 Cor 3:17; 1 Pt 2:4-5). Jesus Christ loved the church so much that he gave himself as a sacrifice "that he might sanctify her, having cleansed her by the washing of water with the word,²⁷ so that he might present the church to himself in splendor, without spot or wrinkle or any such

28. Acts 9:13.32.41; 26:10; Rom 1:7; 8:27; 12:1.13; 15:25.26.31; 16:2.15; 1 Cor 1:2; 6:1-2; 7:34; 14:33; 16:1.15; 2 Cor 1:1; 8:4; 9:1.12; 13:13; Eph 1:1.4.15.18; 2:19; 3:8.18; 4:12; 5:3; 6:18; Phil 1:1; 4:21.22; Col 1:2.4.12; 1:22.26; 3:12; 1 Thes 3:13; 2 Thes 1:10; 1 Tm 5:10; Phlm 1:5.7; Heb 3:1; 6:10; 13:24; 1 Pt 1:15.16; 3:5; Jude 1:3; Rv 5:8; 8:3-4; 11:18; 13:7.10; 14:12; 16:6; 17:6; 18:20.24; 19:8; 20:6.9; 22:11.

thing, that she might be holy and without blemish (Eph 5:26-27).

7.3.3 **Apostolic**

There are several indicators in the New Testament, that the apostles of Jesus Christ have a special importance for the church so that it can be called "apostolic". We have seen under the figure of the temple that the apostles are part of the foundation of the church (Eph 2:20; Rv 21:14). In the book of Acts the apostles Peter and Paul play a very important role in the progress of the gospel from Jerusalem to Rome. One of the most important questions of the time was whether Gentiles had to be circumcised to be saved (Acts 15:1.5). This question was answered by a gathering of apostles and elders (Acts 15:6.28-29).

According to the witness of the church of the first centuries most of the New Testament was written by apostles: Matthew (Mt), John (John, 1-3 John, Revelation), Paul (Rom - Philemon, perhaps Hebrews as well), Peter (1-2 Peter; Mark was viewed by the early church as the gospel of Peter written down by his interpreter John Mark). Paul understood James to be an apostle (Gal 1:19). This James the Lord's brother is probably the author of the epistle of James. Luke was not an apostle, but he claims to do the work of a historian based on the account of eyewitnesses among which the apostles were some of the most important.

7.3.4 **Catholic**

The word "catholic" has its origin in the Greek language and means together with church "universal" or "worldwide" church.²⁹ It is

29. καθολικός, ἡ, ὄν

related to the idea that there is only *one* true church (see above). In the so-called "Apostles' Creed" we find the words: "And I believe in ... the holy catholic Church".³⁰ In modern times, when people hear the word "catholic" they often think of the Roman Catholic Church. If we want to make a distinction, we can use the word "Roman" together with Catholic to make it clear that we mean this specific church.

Belief in one united universal church is a wonderful part of Biblical faith. Believers may come from many nations, social backgrounds and cultures, but they are all united in Christ (Gal 3:26-28).³¹

26 For in Christ Jesus you are all sons of God, through faith. 27 For as many of you as were baptized into Christ have put on Christ. 28 There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free, there is neither male nor female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus.

7.4 Activities of the Church

If we ask, what happens in the life of the church, what kind of activities are visible in the New Testament, then several things stand out: worship, fellowship, service, witness and mission.

7.4.1 Worship

The idea that the assembly or the church is the temple of the Holy Spirit is related to the idea that God is worshiped in the assembly

30. ἁγίαν καθολικὴν ἐκκλησίαν

31. See also 1 Cor 12:12-13; Rv 7:9-14.

of his saints. As Israel was serving God in tabernacle and temple (Rom 9:4; Heb 9:1.6), Paul challenges us in Rom 12:1: "Present your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God, which is your spiritual worship."

"God is spirit, and those who worship him must worship in spirit and truth" (Jn 4:24). Under the influence of the Holy Spirit people may fall down and worship God in the assembly (1 Cor 14:25). We should worship God with psalms (1 Cor 14:26; Eph 5:19; Col 3:16) and hymns (Eph 5:19; Col 3:16; Mt 26:30; Mk 14:26; Acts 16:25; Heb 2:12) and spiritual songs (Eph 5:19; Col 3:16). This is something which also happens in heaven (Rv 5:9; 14:3; 15:3).

To give thanks to God the Father and Jesus Christ is part of our worship in time and eternity (1 Cor 14:16; 2 Cor 4:15; 9:11-12; Eph 5:4; Phil 4:6; Col 2:7; 4:2; 1 Thes 3:9; 1 Tm 1:17; 2:1; 4:3-4; 6:16; Rv 4:9.11; 5:12-13; 7:12).

Jesus Christ revealed his glory to his disciples in his ministry on earth (Jn 2:11; 11:40). This also happens now in the assembly (2 Cor 3:18; 4:4-6) and will happen in an even more glorious way in the future (Jn 17:24).

In answer to all the promises or blessings they have received men give or should give glory to God and to Christ³².

32. Lk 17:18; 19:38; Rom 4:20; 9:4; 11:36; 15:7; 16:27; 1 Cor 10:31; 2 Cor 1:20; 4:15; 8:19; Gal 1:5; Eph 1:6.12.14; 3:21; Phil 1:11; 2:11; 4:20; 1 Tm 1:17; 6:16; 2 Tm 4:18; Heb 13:21; 1 Pt 4:11; 2 Pt 3:18; Jude 1:25; Rv 1:6; 4:9.11; 5:12.13; 7:12; Rv 11:13; 14:7; 19:1.7.

7.4.2 Fellowship

The word used for fellowship in the Greek NT is κοινωνία *koinō-nia*. It can mean 'sharing, association, fellowship'³³. To have fellowship was one of the characteristics of the early church in Jerusalem (Acts 2:42):

And they devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and fellowship, to the breaking of bread and the prayers.³⁴

Our fellowship is with God the Father (1 Jn 1:3.6), with Jesus Christ (1 Cor 1:9; 1 Jn 1:3.6), in the Holy Spirit (2 Cor 13:14; Phil 2:1) and with each other (1 Jn 1:3.7). The fellowship with God who is light, should exclude having a share in the darkness (2 Cor 6:14; 1 Jn 1:6). Paul desires to share the sufferings of Christ that he may also share his resurrection glory (Phil 3:10-11).

Paul explains that those who partake of the bread and wine of the Lord's supper, have a share in the fellowship of the blood and the body of Christ (1 Cor 10:16-17):

16 The cup of blessing that we bless, is it not a participation in the blood of Christ? The bread that we break, is it not a participation in the body of Christ?³⁵
17 Because there is one bread, we who are many are one body, for we all partake of the one bread.

33. Zerwick and Grosvenor, *An Analysis of the Greek New Testament*, p. 356 under Acts 2:42.

34. ἦσαν δὲ προσκαρτεροῦντες τῇ διδασκίᾳ τῶν ἀποστόλων καὶ τῇ κοινωνίᾳ, τῇ κλάσει τοῦ ἄρτου καὶ ταῖς προσευχαῖς.

35. τὸ ποτήριον τῆς εὐλογίας ὃ εὐλογοῦμεν, οὐχὶ κοινωνία ἐστὶν τοῦ αἵματος τοῦ Χριστοῦ ; τὸν ἄρτον ὃν κλῶμεν, οὐχὶ κοινωνία τοῦ σώματος τοῦ Χριστοῦ ἐστίν;

Because all partake of one bread, all are also one body of Christ. In the Lord's supper our fellowship is with our Lord and God Jesus Christ and with each other.

One part of Christian fellowship is to help those who are poor and needy (Rom 15:26; 2 Cor 8:4; 9:13; Acts 4:32-37; Phlm 1:6.16-18; Heb 13:16). *kōinōnia* can also be used in the more special sense of a partnership in spreading the gospel (Gal 2:9; Phil 1:5).

7.4.3 Service

One further activity of the church is that people serve each other. Here we shall look at "to serve" (*diakōnēō*) and "service" (*diakōnia*) and leave the related word "servant" (*diakōnōs*) to be studied when we come to the "deacons" (see section 7.6.1).

Words used. The verb *διακοέω* *diakōnēō* (to serve) is often used for serving at the table with food or drink or for helping in some other physical need like giving clothes to someone who has none or visiting someone who is ill or in prison (Mt 4:11; Mk 1:13; Mt 8:15; Mk 1:31; Lk 4:39; Mt 25:44; 27:55; Mk 15:41; Lk 8:3; 10:40; 12:37; 17:8; 22:26.27; Jn 12:2; Acts 6:2; Rom 15:25; 2 Cor 8:19.20).

Jesus Christ came "not to be served but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many" (Mt 20:28; Mk 10:45; Lk 22:26.27). Every one who wants to serve Christ, must follow him on the way of suffering. Then he will join him in his glory as well (Jn 12:26).

Timothy and Erastos helped Paul (Acts 19:22), as might Onesimus if Philemon lets him (Phlm 1:13). Onesiphorus helped a lot in Ephesus (2 Tm 1:18). The recipients of the letter to the Hebrews served the saints (Heb 6:10).

The OT prophets served the church predicting "the sufferings of Christ and the subsequent glories" (1 Pt 1:12). The word is also used in the context of the gospel ministry (2 Cor 3:3).

Peter encourages us (1 Pt 4:10-11):

10 As each has received a gift, use it to serve one another, as good stewards of God's varied grace: 11 whoever speaks, as one who speaks oracles of God; whoever serves, as one who serves by the strength that God supplies - in order that in everything God may be glorified through Jesus Christ. To him belong glory and dominion forever and ever. Amen.

When we look at the wide range of the use of the verb *diakōnēō* the special service of the deacons in 1 Tm 3:10.13 could mean that they serve people who have physical needs or also that they serve with spiritual gifts. Even if the noun *deacon* is not used in Acts 6:1-7, it seems to me that the seven men appointed to help the widows and "serve tables" (Acts 6:2) can be called "deacons". This would be in agreement with the fact that the word *diakōnēō* often means to help people who have physical needs, in this case poor widows.

The noun *διακονία diakōnia* (service, serving) is used for serving at the table with food or drink or helping people with other physical needs (Lk 10:40; Acts 6:1; 11:29; 12:25; Rom 15:31; 2 Cor 8:4; 2 Cor 9:1.12-13).

It can denote the service of an apostle: Judas lost his ministry and is supplanted Matthias (Acts 1:17.25). Paul's service as an apostle is mentioned in Acts 20:24; 21:19; Rom 11:13; 2 Cor 11:8 and 1 Tm 1:12.

Paul compares the service of Moses as a ministry of death and condemnation with his own ministry of the Spirit and of righteous-

ness and rejoices in the glory of his apostolic ministry (2 Cor 3:7-9; 4:1) which is a ministry of reconciliation (5:18; 6:3).

There is the ministry of the word (Acts 6:4) and the ministry of an evangelist (2 Tm 4:5). Sometimes the context is not very specific: "There are varieties of service, but the same Lord" (1 Cor 12:5). "If service, in our serving (Rom 12:7; cf. Eph 4:12; Col 4:17; Rv 2:19).

Paul requests that the service of the household of Stephanas is acknowledged as a ministry with authority (1 Cor 16:15-16). Paul wants Timothy to bring Mark with him "for he is very useful to me for ministry" (2 Tm 4:11).

Angels are "ministering spirits sent out *to serve* for the sake of those who are to inherit salvation" (Heb 1:14).

The survey of the use of the noun *diakōnia* reveals a similar wide range of meanings as we have seen in the use of the verb *diakōnēō*. In both cases the words can mean that people serve others in their physical needs or in their spiritual needs.

7.4.4 **Witness**

To bear witness to the truth is a key task of the church.³⁶ For bearing witness it is necessary to be an eye or ear or touch witness of what has happened (1 John 1:1). So not everybody can witness about everything. It must be based on true, personally perceived knowledge. The New Testament shows us a whole system of witnesses to the truth in which every single believer is just a part of God's organization to present the truth to the world.

1. God the Father bears witness about Jesus.

Therefore the witness of Jesus about himself does not stand

36. For evangelist and evangelisation see section 6.4.5.

alone (Jn 5:31-32; 8:18). One part of the Father's witness are the signs performed by Jesus or in the name of Jesus (Jn 5:36-37; 10:25; Acts 14:3). Jesus is God's eternal priest (Heb 7:17) and the Son of God (1 Jn 5:9-10).

2. God the Spirit bears witness about Jesus (Jn 15:26; Acts 5:32; 1 Jn 5:6-7), especially also that Jesus brings the New Covenant and forgiveness of sins (Heb 10:15).
3. Scripture bears witness about Jesus (Jn 5:39; Acts 10:43; Rom 3:21-22; Heb 2:6; 7:17; 10:15; 3:5).
4. Jesus was born to bear witness to the truth (Jn 18:37), knowing man (Jn 2:25), earthly and heavenly things (Jn 3:11; 3:32-33). A prophet has no honor in his own hometown (Jn 4:44). If Jesus were alone in bearing witness about himself, his witness would not be valid, but the Father agrees with his witness (Jn 5:31-32; 8:13-14; 8:17-18). The world hates Jesus because he testifies about it that its works are evil (Jn 7:7). His signs bear witness about him to be the Christ (Jn 10:25). Jesus knew his betrayer (Jn 13:21). In his testimony before Pontius Pilate Jesus made the good confession (1 Tm 6:13). He is the faithful and true witness (Rv 1:5; Rv 3:14). With his witness he protects the written word of God (Rv 22:18-20).
5. John the Baptist bears witness

- (a) about himself (Jn 1:19; Jn 3:28),
- (b) about Jesus (Jn 1:7-8,15; 3:26,28).

The Spirit descended from heaven like a dove, and remained on Jesus. This was God's sign for John to know

that Jesus is the Christ, the son of God (Jn 1:32.34). This witness of John can lead to the salvation of those who accept it (Jn 5:33.34.36).

6. The apostles bear witness about the gospel and Jesus:

- (a) The Twelve (Mt 10:18; Mk 6:11; Lk 9:5; Jn 15:27; Lk 24:48; Acts 1:8.22; 2:32.40; 4:33; 5:32; 10:39.41.42; 13:31),
- (b) Peter (Acts 3:15; 8:25; 1 Pt 5:1),
- (c) John (Jn 21:24; Acts 3:15; 8:25; 1 Jn 1:1-2; 4:14; Rv 1:2.9),
- (d) Paul (Acts 18:5; 20:21.24.26; 22:15.18; 23:11; 26:16; 26:22-23; 28:23; 1 Cor 1:6; 15:15; 2 Cor 13:1; Gal 5:3; Eph 4:17; 1 Thes 2:12; 4:6; 2 Thes 1:10; 1 Tm 2:6-7; 5:21; 2 Tim 4:1).

7. The testimony of other believers

- (a) A great cloud of witnesses of Old Testament believers surrounds the New Testament believers who press forward to reach the finish line of their race (Heb 12:1).
- (b) The request of the rich dead man in Hades that Lazarus may bear witness and warn his five brothers to repent, was rejected (Lk 16:28).
- (c) Jesus sends the healed leper to the priests as a witness to them (Mt 8:4; Mk 1:44; Lk 5:14).
- (d) Many Samaritans from that town believed in Jesus because of the woman's testimony, "He told me all that I ever did" (Jn 4:39).

- (e) The crowd that had been with Jesus when he called Lazarus out of the tomb and raised him from the dead bore witness to this sign at his entrance in Jerusalem (Jn 12:17).
- (f) The testimony of the eye-witness that Jesus was really dead is true that the readers of the gospel also may believe (Jn 19:35).
- (g) Timothy has confessed his faith before many witnesses (1 Tm 6:12). He has heard the gospel from Paul in the presence of many witnesses and should entrust it to faithful men who will be able to teach others (2 Tm 2:2,14). He should not be ashamed of the testimony about our Lord, but share in suffering for the gospel (2 Tm 1:8).
- (h) A special group of witnesses (Greek: martyrs) sealed the truth of their testimony with their own blood. The modern English word "martyr" goes back to this special context of blood witnesses: Stephen (Acts 22:20); Antipas (Rv 2:13); the two prophetic witnesses (Rv 11:3,7); souls of martyrs under the altar in heaven (Rv 6:9); those who have conquered the devil by the blood of the Lamb and by the word of their testimony and not loved their lives even unto death (Rv 12:11); John sees Babylon the great, mother of prostitutes and of earth's abominations drunk with the blood of the saints, the blood of the martyrs of Jesus (Rv 17:6). John saw the souls of those who had been beheaded for the testimony of Jesus and for the word of God, and who had not worshiped the beast or its image and had not received its mark on their foreheads or their hands. They

came to life and reigned with Christ for a thousand years (Rv 20:4).

- (i) Every single believer is a witness because he has the witness of God that is eternal life in himself (1 Jn 5:9-11). He has the testimony of Jesus (Rv 12:17) which is the spirit of prophecy (Rv 19:10).
- (j) The worldwide proclamation of the gospel by believers even in persecution is a testimony to all nations before the coming of the end (Mt 24:14; Mk 13:9; Lk 21:12-13).

8. The witness through angels (Rv 22:16).

9. Against God's system of testimony stands false testimony

- (a) about Jesus and the use of his testimony against him.
It is clear from the OT commandments that it is sin to give false testimony (Mt 15:19; 18:16; 19:18; Mk 10:19; Lk 18:20). But in spite of this the enemies of Jesus tried to use false testimonies to destroy him (Mt 26:59-60; Mk 14:55.56.57.59) and when they not succeeded in doing this, they turned his true testimony against him (Mt 26:65; Mk 14:63; Lk 22:71), rejecting it.
- (b) against Stephen (Acts 6:13).

7.4.5 **Mission**

The English word mission goes back to a Latin word which means sending. We now look into the mission of God in the New Testament. The person who is send represents fully the authority of

the sender. To accept or reject the sent person means to accept or reject the sending person with all the consequences related to this (Mt 10:40; Lk 10:16; Jn 13:16.20). This is valid even for small believing children (Mt 18:5-6; Mk 9:37; Lk 9:48).

1. God the Father sends

(a) the Son at the end of time as the climax of salvation history (Mt 21:37; Mk 12:6; Lk 20:13). The fact that God sent his Son is stated very often (Lk 4:18; 4:43; Jn 3:34; 4:34; 5:23.24; 5:30; 5:37; 6:38.39.44; 7:16.18; 7:28.29.33; 8:16.18; 8:26.29; 8:42; 9:4; 10:36; 12:44; 12:45.49; 13:20; 14:24; 15:21; 16:5; Acts 10:36; Rom 8:3). He sends him first only to the lost sheep of the house of Israel (Mt 15:24; Acts 3:26), but then also as salvation to the Gentiles (Acts 28:28; cf. 13:47). He did not send his Son into the world to condemn the world, but in order that the world might be saved through him (Jn 3:17). The signs prove that Jesus is sent by God (Jn 5:36.38; Jn 9:7; Jn 11:42). To do God's work is to believe in Jesus as sent by God (Jn 6:29) which brings life (Jn 6:57; Jn 17:3; 1 Jn 4:9). The disciples recognized that Jesus was sent by the Father (Jn 17:8.25). The perfect unity of the believers in the Son and in the Father causes the world to realize that the Father has sent the Son (Jn 17:21.23). It is God's love that he "sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins" and "the Savior of the world" (1 Jn 4:10.14). At the end of the end times the Father will send his Son again (Acts 3:20).

(b) the Holy Spirit from heaven (1 Pt 1:12; Jn 14:26).

- (c) angels. They are "ministering spirits sent out to serve for the sake of those who are to inherit salvation" (Heb 1:14). Gabriel was sent to Zechariah and Mary (Lk 1:19.26). God "has sent his angel to show his servants what must soon take place" (Rv 22:6).
- (d) Moses to liberate Israel from the slavery in Egypt (Acts 7:34.35).
- (e) Elijah was not sent to widows in Israel, but to the widow in Zarephath (Lk 4:26).
- (f) John the Baptist in fulfillment of Is 40:3 and Mal 3:1 (Mt 11:10; Mk 1:2-3; Lk 7:27; Jn 1:6; 1:33); to prepare the way for Christ (Jn 3:28).
- (g) his workers and servants into their allotted work (Mt 20:2). Without being sent by God, nobody can preach the gospel with authority (Rom 10:15). Often God's servants are rejected (Mt 21:34.36; Mk 12:2-5; Mt 22:3-4; Mt 23:37; Lk 13:34; 14:17; 20:10-12).
- (h) God sends punishment to those who reject his servants (Mt 22:7) and a strong delusion to those who do not believe the truth (2 Thes 2:11).

2. Jesus sends

- (a) the Twelve first only to the lost sheep of Israel, not to Gentiles and not to Samaritans (Mt 10:5-6). He sends them as sheep in the midst of wolves (Mt 10:16) to preach and heal and cast out demons after they have been with him (Mk 3:14; Mk 6:7; Lk 9:2; Lk 22:35). After his death and resurrection Jesus sends the Twelve to make disciples of all nations (Mt 28:18-20). This

great commission is also the task of the whole church (2 Tm 2:2).

- (b) the Seventy Two (Lk 10:1) as lambs in the midst of wolves (Lk 10:3);
- (c) his disciples to reap that for which they did not labor but others before them (Jn 4:38). Jesus sends the disciples as the Father had sent him (Jn 17:18; Jn 20:21).
- (d) certain disciples for special tasks (Lk 9:52; Mt 21:1-3; Mk 11:1-3; Lk 19:29.32; Mk 14:13; Lk 22:8; Acts 9:17);
- (e) certain healed people to certain places (Mk 8:26);
- (f) the Holy Spirit, the promise of his Father, upon the disciples. They should stay in the city until they are clothed with power from on high (Lk 24:49; Jn 15:26; 16:7). The seven eyes of the lamb are the seven spirits of God sent out into all the earth (Rv 5:6).
- (g) the apostle Paul to the Gentiles (Acts 26:17). Christ did not send Paul "to baptize but to preach the gospel, and not with words of eloquent wisdom, lest the cross of Christ be emptied of its power" (1 Cor 1:17).
- (h) his angels to remove the wicked on the day of judgment (Mt 13:41) and to gather his elect from the four winds (Mt 24:31; Mk 13:27). He sent an angel to bring the book of Revelation to John (Rv 1:1; 22:16).
- (i) prophets and wise men and scribes to Israel (Mt 23:34; cf. Lk 11:49);
- (j) Jesus, seated on a white cloud, sends his sickle to reap the harvest of the earth (Rv 14:15) while an angel sends

his sickle to gather the clusters from the vine of the earth into the great winepress of the wrath of God (Rv 14:18).

- (k) Demons ask Jesus not to send them out of the area (Mk 5:10), not to command them to depart into the abyss (Lk 8:31), but to send them into the swine (Mt 8:31; Mk 5:12).

3. The Holy Spirit sends

- (a) the servants of Cornelius to let Peter come to preach the gospel (Acts 10:19-20; cf. 11:13);
- (b) Barnabas and Paul (Acts 13:4).

4. The twelve Apostles send

- (a) Peter and John to the Samaritans (Acts 8:14).
- (b) Together with the elders they send Judas and Silas with the letter containing the decision of the Council in Jerusalem (Acts 15:22.25; 15:27.33; 21:25).
- (c) John had to send the book of Revelation to the seven churches (Rv 1:11).

5. The apostle Paul sends

- (a) Timothy to Thessalonica (1 Thes 3:2.5);
- (b) Timothy and Erastus into Macedonia (Acts 19:22);
- (c) to the elders of Ephesus to come to Milet (20:17);
- (d) people to Corinth, including Timothy (1 Cor 4:17), Titus (2 Cor 12:17) and others (2 Cor 9:3);

- (e) Tychicus to Ephesus (Eph 6:21-22; 2 Tm 4:12) and Colossae (Col 4:7-8);
 - (f) the appointed brothers of Corinth to Jerusalem (1 Cor 16:3;
 - (g) Timothy to Philippi (Phil 2:19.23) and Epaphroditus (Phil 2:25.28);
 - (h) Artemas or Tychicus to Titus in Crete (Tit 3:12).
6. Churches send help
- (a) Antiochia sends hunger relief to Judea through Barnabas and Saul (Acts 11:29.30);
 - (b) The churches of different areas send messengers to accompany the gift for the poor in Judea (2 Cor 8:23).
7. Lazarus was not sent to reduce the pain of the rich man in Hades nor to warn the rich man's five brothers to repent lest they also come into that place of torment (Lk 16:24.27).

7.5 Sacraments

The Latin translation of the Bible, the Vulgate, translated the NT Greek word "μυστήριον" *mystērion* (English "mystery") in many verses³⁷ with "mysterium" (English "mystery"), but in some places the word "sacramentum" (English: sacrament) is used (Eph 1:9; 3:3.9; 5:32; Col 1:27; 1 Tm 3:16; Rev 1:20; 17:7).³⁸ Sacraments

37. Mt 13:11; Mk 4:11; Lk 8:10; Rom 11:25; 16:25; 1 Cor 2:7; 4:1; 13:2; 14:2; 15:51; Eph 3:4; 6:19; Col 1:26; 2:2; 4:3; 2 Thes 2:7; 1 Tm 3:9; Rv 10:7; 17:5.

38. According to Daniel G. Van Slyke, "Sacramentum in Ancient Non-Christian Authors," accessed August 3, 2015, Antiphon 9, no. 2 (2005): 167–

can be understood as visible means of God's invisible grace for the church's growth.³⁹

206, http://liturgysociety.org/JOURNAL/Volume9/9_2/9.2VanSlyke.pdf sacrament was used in ancient non-Christian authors mainly in a military, a legal, and an analogous military context (p. 167). In the legal context which seems to have been first, sacramentum was a "sacred deposit" of money (from sacrum "sacred") which the plaintiff and the defendant each deposited and only the winner of the case would get his deposit back (p. 182). "The vast majority of non-Christian evidence for the meaning of sacramentum points more or less directly to the military oath of the Roman soldiery. Only by extension does that oath come to imply devoted service unto death, obligation, and fidelity - primarily in the military context, but analogously in other contexts, such as among thieves, gladiators, philosophers, and devotees of Isis" (p. 205). "The military sacrament put one into a new set of responsibilities occasioned by a new set of relationships: with the emperor, with one's fellow soldiers, with the citizens of Rome, and even with Rome's enemies. It obliged soldiers to serve exclusively the emperor in whose name they swore. The emperor in turn rewarded them for their service with land or money" (p. 205). "The military sacrament's rich set of implications was converted readily to a Latin Christian self-understanding. Through the Christian sacrament, one enters upon a new set of relations and responsibilities with Christ, with one's fellow Christians, and with the enemies of Christ. The very concept of sacrament provided a means of Romanizing or Latinizing the covenantal relationship that Christians perceived between themselves and their God, and likewise amongst themselves, enabling them to express it in the discourse of Roman culture. Entering into a sacrament with God entailed responsibilities on the part of the Christian, but it also entailed promises on the part of God, which are manifest in the typology of scripture and the rites of early Christian communities" (p. 205-206).

39. St. Augustine understood a sacrament as a holy sign (*sacrum signum*) and the elements of a sacrament as visible words (*verba visibilia*). "The word is added to the element, and there results the Sacrament, as if itself also a kind of visible word" (Philip Schaff, NPNF1-07. St. Augustin: Homilies on the Gospel of John; Homilies on the First Epistle of John; Soliloquies, Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers (Grand Rapids, MI: Christian Classics Ethereal Library, 1886), <http://www.ccel.org/ccel/schaff/npnf107.html>, p. 447 in his Tractate LXXX,3 about John 15:1-3). See for the Latine "Accedit verbum ad

It is customary within Protestantism to think of two sacraments: baptism and Holy Communion.⁴⁰ We shall now look at both of them.

7.5.1 Baptism

Words used

1. The m. noun ὁ βαπτιστής hō baptistēs "the Baptist"⁴¹ is used as part of the name of "John the Baptist", especially to distinguish him from John the apostle (Mt 3:1; 11:11.12; 14:2.8; 16:14; 17:13; Mk 6:25; 8:28; Lk 7:20; 7:33; 9:19).
2. The m. noun ὁ βαπτισμός hō baptisμός "immersion"⁴² denotes the ceremonial washing of dishes and dining couches in Mk 7:4 practised by the Pharisees, points to OT ceremonial washings in Heb 9:10 and perhaps also in Heb 6:2. In Col 2:12 Paul speaks of believers as "having been buried" with Christ "in baptism, in which you were also raised with him through faith in the powerful working of God".
3. The n. noun τὸ βάπτισμα tō baptisma "baptism"⁴³ is used

elementum, et fit sacramentum, etiam ipsum tanquam visibile verbum" Loofs, *Leitfaden zum Studium der Dogmengeschichte*, p. 373-374.

40. The number of seven sacraments in Roman Catholic tradition is already propagated in the "Four Books of Sentences" by Peter Lombard from the twelfth century (4, 1 to 42). They were baptism, confirmation, the sacrament of the body and blood of Christ, penitence, marriage and holy ordination ("baptismus, confirmatio, sacramentum corporis and sanguinis Christi, poenitentia, ... matrimonium" and "sacra ordinatio"; *ibid.*, p. 571-572.)

41. Bauer, *Wörterbuch zum Neuen Testament*, p. 263.

42. *ibid.*, p. 263.

43. *ibid.*, p. 263.

for the baptism of John, a baptism of suffering (of Jesus, and of James and John) and Christian baptism.

- (a) John's baptism (Mt 3:7) is at the beginning of every gospel and started the revival movement preparing the way for Jesus (Acts 1:22; 10:37; 18:25; 19:3.4). It was "a baptism of repentance for the forgiveness of sins" (Mk 1:4; Lk 3:3; Acts 13:24; 19:4) and should be acknowledged as ordained by God (Mt 21:25; Mk 11:30; Lk 7:29; Lk 20:4).
- (b) A baptism of suffering
 - i. of Jesus (Lk 12:50; Mk 10:38.39)
 - ii. of James and John (Mk 10:38.39).
- (c) Christian baptism of which there is only one (Eph 4:5). Believers are buried with Christ "by baptism into death, in order that, just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father", they too might walk in newness of life (Rom 6:4; cf. Col 2:12). God saved the eight people of Noah's family in the ark through the water of the flood which water now as an antitype saves believers with regard to baptism, "not as a removal of dirt from the body but as an appeal to God for a good conscience, through the resurrection of Jesus Christ" (1 Pt 3:21).

4. The verb βαπτίζω baptizō "to immerse, submerge, baptize"⁴⁴ is used for the water baptism of John, for Jesus baptizing through his disciples with water, for Christian water

44. *ibid.*, p. 261-263.

baptism, for Jesus baptizing with the Holy Spirit and fire and for a ceremonial ablution practiced by the Pharisees.

- (a) Baptism of John (Mt 3:6.11; Mt 3:13.16; Mk 1:4.5; Mk 1:8.9; 6:14.24; Lk 3:7.12; 3:16; 3:21; 7:29.30; Jn 1:25.26.28; 1:31.33; 3:23; 10:40; Acts 1:5; 11:16; 19:3.4).
- (b) Jesus baptizing through his disciples with water (John 3:22.26; 4:1.2).
- (c) A baptism of suffering
 - i. The suffering of Jesus (Mk 10:38.39; Lk 12:50).
 - ii. The suffering of James and John (Mk 10:38.39).
- (d) Jesus baptizing with the Holy Spirit and fire (Mt 3:11.14; Mk 1:8; Lk 3:16; John 1:33; Acts 1:5; Acts 11:16; 1 Cor 12:13).
- (e) Christian water baptism (Mt 28:19; Mk 16:16; Acts 2:38.41; 8:12.13.16; 8:36.38; 9:18; 10:47.48; 16:15.33; 18:8; 19:5; 22:16; Rom 6:3; 1 Cor 1:13.14.15; 1:16.17; 15:29; Gal 3:27).
- (f) All Israelites of the exodus were baptized into Moses in the cloud and in the sea (1 Cor 10:2).
- (g) A ceremonial ablution ("baptism") practiced by the Pharisees and many Jews before eating (Mk 7:4), but not by Jesus (Lk 11:38).

Significance and characteristics of the different main baptisms of the NT.

The main baptisms of the New Testament are the baptism of John, Jesus baptizing through his disciples with water, the baptism of suf-

fering, Jesus baptizing with the Holy Spirit and fire and Christian water baptism. They are all linked to each other and the main link is the person of Jesus Christ.

1. The baptism of John

- (a) An eschatological baptism. John preached: "Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand." The kingdom of heaven would end this world and remain forever. God the Lord would come and his judgment would hit those who would not repent from their sins. The person who gets baptized signals his eagerness to enter the new world and leave the old.
- (b) A baptism of repentance (Mk 1:4; Lk 1:3). The person who gets baptized shows that he wants to leave his old sinful life and start a new holy life under God's rule and guidance.
- (c) A baptism for the forgiveness of sins (Mk 1:4; Lk 1:3). The forgiveness of sins is related to repentance. The repenting sinner confesses his sins while getting baptized (Mk 1:5), that means that he agrees before God that these deeds were wrong and he wants to forsake them (Prv 28:13). God promises that he shall forgive the true repentant sinner and help him into his kingdom.
- (d) A baptism of purification (Jn 3:25). To enter the presence of God, man has to be pure. This of course also relates to the forgiveness of sins. But it is also a concept in its own right. God is holy and pure. And to encounter the coming Lord on his day, man has to be

pure and prepare the way for God's coming to him (Is 40:3-8; Mal 3:1-3; 4:5-6; Mk 1:2-3; cf. Tit 3:5).

- (e) A baptism of obedience. Jesus did not need water baptism from John for the forgiveness of any sins, because he was sinless. John realized that he himself needed to be baptized by Jesus with the Holy Spirit and with fire and John was astonished that Jesus would come to him for baptism (Mt 3:14). But because Jesus acknowledged John as a prophet of God, he also accepted his sermon about the near kingdom of God and his water baptism as a divine ordinance of righteousness to be fulfilled by every Israelite, including himself (Mt 3:15).
- (f) A baptism to become a disciple of the kingdom of God. The statement in Jn 4:1 "that Jesus was making and baptizing more disciples than John" implies that baptizing and disciple making go together (cf. Mt 28:19).
- (g) Only a water baptism in comparison to the immersion in the Holy Spirit and fire. When people started to think whether John might perhaps be the Christ, he answered with the following statement: "I baptize you with water, but he who is mightier than I is coming, the strap of whose sandals I am not worthy to untie. He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and with fire" (Lk 3:16). His own baptism is "only" with water, while the coming Christ shall immerse people in God's own Holy Spirit powerfully changing them in their inmost being as in purifying fire.
- (h) A baptism of the coming Elijah (Mal 3:1; 4:5-6; Mt 17:3.11-13) in the desert (Mk 1:2-3; Is 40:3; Hos 2:14-

20) and in the water of the Jordan (Mk 1:5.9; Mt 3:6.13). God had redeemed Israel from slavery in Egypt and brought them through the desert into the promised land. According to Is 40 and Hos 2 the salvation of the end times will again be related to the desert. Israel has to leave her comfort zone (Mt 3:5; Mk 1:5) and hear God the Lord in the desert again.

When the first Elijah was about to be taken up into heaven, his last stations were Gilgal, Bethel, Jericho and then the miraculous crossing of the Jordan. John the Baptist as the second Elijah appeared in the desert in the area of the river Jordan and baptized in that river. The special thing about the water of the Jordan river is that it flows into the "Salt Sea" (Gn 14:3) which is located in the Arabah east of Jerusalem (Ez 47:8) and is nowadays called "Dead Sea" because it is too salty for fish to live therein.

There is a special promise for the Salt Sea to be healed by the waters of the river which shall go forth from the Lord's Temple in Ez 47:8-9 "so everything will live where the river goes". When the book of Revelation takes up Ez 47:1-12 in Rv 22:1-2.17, it calls this river in the New Jerusalem "the river of the water of life" and invites all to drink of its waters without price (cf. Rv 7:17; Jn 7:37-39; 4:10-14; Is 49:10; 44:3; 55:1; Joel 3:18; Zec 14:8).

In these New Testament applications of the Old Testament texts the Holy Spirit is identified with the "water of life" or the "living water". So our spirit which is dead in sins (Eph 2:1) can be compared to the dead

water of the Salt Sea. As soon as the water of life coming from the presence of God enters the "dead water", the dead water is healed and comes alive and our spirit becomes "one spirit" with the Lord (1 Cor 6:17).

What makes the Salt Sea dead is all the salt being carried into it mainly by the water of the Jordan. Because the Salt Sea is way below the sea level of the Mediterranean Sea, there is no water way to transport the salt out again. When John the Baptist was baptizing the repentant sinners "for the forgiveness of sins" while they were confessing their sins, in the picture of this purification their sins were washed away into the water of the Jordan to be carried away towards the deathly area of the Salt Sea.

The deadly dirt was waiting there for the one pure and sinless man who would let himself be baptized by John not to be cleansed but to fulfill all righteousness, not to confess his sins, but to receive the declaration of his heavenly Father that he is the beloved Son with whom the Father is well pleased (Mt 3:13-17). Identified thus by the Father as the Christ of Ps 2:7 and the Servant of the Lord of Is 42:1, he would carry and take away the sins of Israel and all nations as the Lamb of God (Is 53:6; Jn 1:29).

- (i) A baptism towards the coming Christ and Lord. We have seen that John pointed to the mightier one who would come after him (Mt 3:11; Mk 1:7-8; Lk 3:16; Jn 1:27). The purpose of his baptism in water was to make this coming Christ known to Israel as the Son of God and the one who baptizes with the Holy Spirit (Jn

1:30-34). Consequently Jesus Christ gathered his first disciples from the disciples of John (Jn 1:35-51; Acts 1:21-22).

Even in the further development of Acts there were still some who first were baptized with the baptism of John and then would receive the baptism in the name of the Lord Jesus (Acts 19:3-5). Paul could say to them: "John baptized with the baptism of repentance, telling the people to believe in the one who was to come after him, that is, Jesus" (Acts 19:4). The baptism of John was Christ-centered in the sense that it prepared the way for Christ the Lord. As the friend of the bridegroom, John collected repentant sinners as the bride for Christ, willing to step back as soon as he would take over (Jn 3:27-30).

2. Jesus baptizing through his disciples with water (John 3:22,26; 4:1,2). This baptism in water is on one level with the baptism of John (see the characteristics there). It is important to realize that Jesus himself did not baptize in water, but let his disciples perform this act of immersion in water (Jn 4:1,2). Another interesting aspect is that those baptized by John became his disciples and those baptized by the disciples of Jesus became disciples of Jesus himself. The revival movement around Jesus was already becoming bigger than the revival movement around John, when Jesus left Judea where he had baptized and departed again for Galilee (Jn 4:3).
3. The baptism of suffering. When James and John wanted to sit at the right hand and left hand of Jesus in his glory, he asked them whether they would be able to drink the cup

that he would drink, or to be baptized with the baptism with which he would be baptized. When they affirmed, Jesus promised them that they would drink his cup and experience his baptism of suffering, but still the Father would decide where they sit (Mk 10:38-40).

In Lk 12:49-50 Jesus speaks of fire he came to cast on the earth, meaning the Holy Spirit coming down on Pentecost (Lk 3:16; Acts 2:3-4). But before this can happen, he has to undergo a baptism of suffering and his distress is great until it is accomplished. It is of the greatest significance that Jesus himself made the link of baptism to his sacrificial death at the cross! Paul would later take this up and speak of Christian baptism as being united with Christ in his death and resurrection (Rom 6:3-4; Col 2:12).

4. Jesus baptizing with the Holy Spirit and fire (Mt 3:11.14; Mk 1:8; Lk 3:16; John 1:33; Acts 1:5; Acts 11:16; 1 Cor 12:13). For a fuller discussion of this phrase see section 6.2.2. For our discussion here it is enough to present the results of the word study. The baptism in the Spirit belongs to the start of the Christian life. It is not a later experience or a "second blessing". It is a first blessing. All believers in Corinth had been baptized in the Holy Spirit (1 Cor 12:13), but at the same time Paul can say that most of them are still at the start of their spiritual development (1 Cor 3:1-4). When Jesus baptizes somebody with the Holy Spirit, this person is incorporated into the body of Christ (1 Cor 12:13), he is made one spirit with Christ (1 Cor 6:17). The baptism in the Spirit is the invisible reality granted by Christ to the believer, while Christian water baptism is the visible word presenting as a sacrament the invisible spiritual blessings of the unity with

Christ in front of the visible world.

5. Christian water baptism. The first six qualities are parallel to the corresponding qualities of the baptism of John. See there for the comments.

- (a) An eschatological baptism. Peter, a disciple of John and of Jesus, makes a link between the water of the flood at the time of Noah and the water of baptism (1 Pt 3:20-21). God saved the eight people of Noah's family in the ark through the water of the flood which water now as an antitype saves believers with regard to baptism, "not as a removal of dirt from the body but as an appeal to God for a good conscience, through the resurrection of Jesus Christ" (1 Pt 3:21). Perhaps the Holy Spirit descending on Jesus like a dove is related to the dove at the time of Noah, which was a sign that the judgment over the old world was over and Noah and his people could soon enter the new world and start living there (Gn 8:11-12; 2 Pt 3:5-7; 2:5).

When Paul says "For as many of you as were baptized into Christ have put on Christ" (Gal 3:27), he links baptism into Christ with being one with Christ (1 Cor 6:17). Being united with Christ, the believer has died with Christ (Rom 6:3-4; Col 2:12). Being crucified with Christ means also to be crucified and dead to the world. Being raised with Christ means being a new creation and part of the new world to come (Gal 6:14-15). In a picture baptism is the door out of this world and into the next. The person who gets baptized signals his eagerness to enter the new world and leave the

old.

- (b) A baptism of repentance. According to Acts 2:38 people repent and are baptized.
- (c) A baptism for the forgiveness of sins. People are baptized for the forgiveness of their sins (Acts 2:38) or "to wash away" their sins (Acts 22:16).
- (d) A baptism of purification. The washing away of sins implies the idea of purification (Acts 22:16). According to Peter baptism has not to be understood "as a removal of dirt from the body but as an appeal to God for a good conscience, through the resurrection of Jesus Christ" (1 Pt 3:21). So the saving power of baptism depends on the appeal of the believer to God to grant him a good conscience and the faithfulness of God to fulfill his promises and cleanse the believer from all sins through the blood of Jesus Christ.
- (e) A baptism of obedience. The church is commanded to baptize people. So baptism is also a question of obedience. Ananias requests Paul not to wait but to let himself be baptized (Acts 9:17-18; 22:12-16). Peter commands the water baptism of Cornelius and his house, after they have received the Holy Spirit (Acts 10:47.48).
- (f) A baptism to become a disciple of Jesus Christ and to learn and obey all his teaching (Mt 28:19-20; cf. Jn 4:1).
- (g) Only a water baptism in comparison to the baptism with the Holy Spirit. Christian water baptism visibly presents the invisible blessings of the baptism in the

Holy Spirit, but is not identical with it and has to be distinguished from it.

- i. The two baptisms do not have to happen at the same time. To receive the gift of the Spirit or the baptism with the Spirit may happen simultaneously with water baptism or after water baptism (Acts 2:38; 8:12-16) or it may happen before water baptism (Acts 10:47,48).
 - ii. The persons who baptize have to be distinguished. There are many and different human agents who administer the baptism in water (see e.g. 1 Cor 1:12-17) but there is only one who baptizes with the Holy Spirit, that is Jesus Christ (Mt 3:11,14; Mk 1:8; Lk 3:16; John 1:33; Acts 1:5; Acts 11:16; 1 Cor 12:13).
 - iii. In the context of the divisions in Corinth Paul can say that he is happy that he has not baptized more than a few people in Corinth and that "Christ did not send me to baptize but to preach the gospel" (1 Cor 1:10-17).
- (h) A baptism of faith in the gospel. It is often stated in the New Testament that the people first hear the gospel, believe in it and then are baptized (Mk 16:15-16; Acts 2:41; 8:12,13; 8:35-38; 16:14-15; 16:30-33; 18:8; 19:4-5).
- (i) A baptism into Christ the Lord. The core truth about Christian water baptism is that it is a baptism into Christ. It presents before the visible world the invisible reality of the union of the believer with Christ. All other things depend on this union.

- i. in the name of Christ (Acts 2:38; 8:16; 10:47.48; 19:5);
 - ii. one with Christ (Gal 3:27; Rom 6:3);
 - iii. one with Christ in his death and burial (Rom 6:3).
In Col 2:12 Paul speaks of believers as "having been buried" with Christ "in baptism, in which you were also raised with him through faith in the powerful working of God". Believers are buried with Christ "by baptism into death, in order that, just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father", they too might walk in newness of life (Rom 6:4; cf. Col 2:12).
 - iv. one with Christ in his resurrection (Col 2:12). Believers are buried with Christ "by baptism into death, in order that, just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father", they too might walk in newness of life (Rom 6:4; cf. Col 2:12).
- (j) A trinitarian baptism (Mt 28:19)
 - (k) A baptism of unity (Eph 4:5; Mt 28:19).
 - (l) A baptism as part of missionary work (Mt 28:19; Mk 16:16).
 - (m) A baptism related to salvation (Mk 16:16; Acts 16:30-33).
 - (n) A baptism related to the church (Acts 2:41).
 - (o) Sometimes a baptism of whole households (Acts 16:15; 16:33; 18:8; 1 Cor 1:16).
 - (p) Often an immediate baptism (Acts 8:35-38; 16:30-33).
 - (q) It seems that some people in Corinth were "being baptized on behalf of the dead". Paul does not recommend

or command this. He just points to the fact. We do not have enough information to fully understand this. The argument of Paul in favor of the reality of the resurrection is clear though: "If the dead are not raised at all, why are people baptized on their behalf?" (1 Cor 15:29). It would be self-contradictory.

Historical tendencies or discussions about the best time for baptism

Baptism as near to death as possible Because in the New Testament baptism is related to the forgiveness of sins (Acts 2:38), people wondered what would happen if they sin after baptism. In consequence some postponed baptism as far as possible. For example the emperor Constantine let himself only be baptized when he was dying (337 A.D.).⁴⁵

Baptism as fast as possible Because in the New Testament baptism is also related to salvation (Mk 16:16; Acts 16:30-33) and salvation from sin is a very important part of salvation (Mt 1:21) and sin was not only understood as certain deeds but also in the form of original sin as part of fallen human nature, infant baptism became more and more the norm. As any human being also a child could die any day. So worried Christian parents would welcome baptism for their child as early as possible to eradicate original sin and secure paradise for them in case they should die an early death.

Baptism only after having heard and accepted the gospel When in the 16th century during the time of the Reformation the Bible was

45. Heussi, *Kompndium der Kirchengeschichte*, p. 91 §23 h.

translated in vernacular languages and people could understand it, it almost immediately triggered a movement of people favoring believers' baptism. Because it is often stated in the New Testament that the people first hear the gospel, believe in it and then are baptized (Mk 16:15-16; Acts 2:41; 8:12,13; 8:35-38; 16:14-15; 16:30-33; 18:8; 19:4-5), they rejected the baptism of infants and promoted only to baptize believers.

They were called "Anabaptists" (those who baptize again) by their opponents, because they would baptize believers who wanted this, but had already received a baptism as infants. As proof for infant baptism their opponents pointed to the baptism of whole households claiming that probably there were children included (Acts 16:15; 16:33; 18:8; 1 Cor 1:16) and also to the fact that Jesus wanted children to come to him (Mt 19:13-15; 1 Cor 7:14) and to the Old Testament parallel of the circumcision on the eighth day as a sign of the covenant (Gn 17:12-14; Col 2:11-12).

The Baptists ("those who baptize" as they prefer to call themselves) answered that the household baptisms followed the preaching of the gospel and the acceptance of it by the whole household (16:32-33; 18:8), that the children should of course be brought to Jesus, but in Mt 19:13-15 they were not brought to be baptized, but to be prayed for with laying on of the hands. They also did not accept Col 2:11-12 as a proof of the parallel of infant baptism with OT circumcision, because they do not see the baptism mentioned in Col 2 as infant baptism, but as believers' baptism: Someone who has heard the gospel of Jesus Christ who died for him, has accepted it by faith and lets himself be baptized in Christ, being united with him in his death and resurrection.

The context of 1 Cor 7:14) is the context of the question of divorce, not of baptism which is not mentioned there:

12 To the rest I say (I, not the Lord) that if any brother has a wife who is an unbeliever, and she consents to live with him, he should not divorce her. 13 If any woman has a husband who is an unbeliever, and he consents to live with her, she should not divorce him. 14 For the unbelieving husband is made holy because of his wife, and the unbelieving wife is made holy because of her husband. Otherwise your children would be unclean, but as it is, they are holy. 15 But if the unbelieving partner separates, let it be so. In such cases the brother or sister is not enslaved. God has called you to peace. 16 Wife, how do you know whether you will save your husband? Husband, how do you know whether you will save your wife?

Paul wants to say that in a mixed marriage⁴⁶ where one is a believer and the other not, the believer should not take the initiative to divorce the other. This is not necessary because the power of sanctification in the life of the believer is greater than the power of defilement in the life of the unbelieving partner.

There is a certain power of making the others of the family holy, the unbelieving partner and the children. The making holy of the unbelieving partner does not imply his salvation (7:16!). In the same way the making holy of the children, does not imply their salvation. Both the unbelieving partner and the children need personal

46. Paul does not want to encourage mixed marriages here. He does not want believers to marry unbelieving partners. He is totally against that (2 Cor 6:14-16). "A wife is bound to her husband as long as he lives. But if her husband dies, she is free to be married to whom she wishes, only in the Lord." (1 Cor 7:39). To marry "in the Lord" will mean that both are believers in Jesus Christ the Lord. The mixed marriages Paul is speaking of here, are mixed because one of the two came to faith after the marriage and the other not (cf. Mt 10:35-39).

faith to be saved (Mt 18:5-6.10). But God views marriage as holy which should not be broken by divorce (Heb 13:4), therefore he wants to encourage the believing partner to uphold the sanctity of marriage with this promise: "For the unbelieving husband is made holy because of his wife, and the unbelieving wife is made holy because of her husband. Otherwise your children would be unclean, but as it is, they are holy" (7:14). God is at work in your family. Do not give up. He is able to change your husband and to lead your children to salvation.

It is interesting that baptism is not mentioned here. If Paul would have thought along the lines of the later historical development of saving infants for paradise by baptizing them, he could have mentioned that: "Try to save your children by getting the permission of your husband to baptize them." But he does not speak like this. He speaks of the power of making holy residing in the believing parent, probably because of the indwelling of the Holy Spirit (1 Cor 6:19-20).

7.5.2 Holy Communion

See also section 5.2.2 about the Lord's supper.

The words of the Lord about the Lord's supper

Jesus himself instituted the Holy Communion or Lord's supper in the night he was betrayed. His own words are the first and most important means to understand this holy tradition. They are given to us according to the gospels of Mt, Mk, Lk and in 1 Cor 11.

Mt 26:26-28

26 Now as they
were eating,
Jesus took
bread, and after
blessing it
broke it and
gave it to the
disciples, and
said,

Mk 14:22-24

22 And as they
were eating, he
took bread, and
after blessing it
broke it and
gave it to them,
and said,

Lk 22:19-20

19 And he took
bread, and
when he had
given thanks,
he broke it and
gave it to them,
saying,

1 Cor 11:25

23 ... the Lord
Jesus on the
night when he
was betrayed
took bread, 24
and when he
had given
thanks, he
broke it, and
said,

| | | | |
|---|--|---|--|
| “Take, eat; this is my body.” | “Take; this is my body.” | “This is my body, which is given for you. Do this in remembrance of me.” | “This is my body which is for you. Do this in remembrance of me.” |
| 27 And he took a cup, and when he had given thanks he gave it to them, saying, | 23 And he took a cup, and when he had given thanks he gave it to them, and they all drank of it. 24 And he said to them, | 20 And likewise the cup after they had eaten, saying, | 25 In the same way also he took the cup, after supper, saying, |
| “Drink of it, all of you, 28 for this is | This is | "This cup that is poured out for you is | This cup is |
| my blood of the covenant, | my blood of the covenant, | the new covenant in my blood." | the new covenant in my blood. |
| which is poured out for many for the forgiveness of sins. | which is poured out for many. | | Do this, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of me." |

John who wrote the last of the four canonical gospels presupposes

the knowledge of the Lord's supper within the church based on the first three gospels and Paul's letter and adds an important passage to the understanding of the eating of the flesh and the drinking of the blood of Jesus Christ in John 6:27-65, especially 6:51.53-58.63:

51 I am the living bread that came down from heaven. If anyone eats of this bread, he will live forever. And the bread that I will give for the life of the world is my flesh... 53 ... Truly, truly, I say to you, unless you eat the flesh of the Son of Man and drink his blood, you have no life in you. 54 Whoever feeds on my flesh and drinks my blood has eternal life, and I will raise him up on the last day. 55 For my flesh is true food, and my blood is true drink. 56 Whoever feeds on my flesh and drinks my blood abides in me, and I in him. 57 As the living Father sent me, and I live because of the Father, so whoever feeds on me, he also will live because of me. 58 This is the bread that came down from heaven, not as the fathers ate and died. Whoever feeds on this bread will live forever... 63 It is the Spirit who gives life; the flesh is of no avail. The words that I have spoken to you are spirit and life.

The Lord's supper is a meal ...

1. that can be called "Lord's supper" κυριακὸν δείπνον kyriakōn dēipnōn (1 Cor 11:20);
2. of participation in the body and blood of Jesus Christ the Lord (1 Cor 10:16-17; 11:23-25.27.-29; Mt 26:26-28; Mk 14:22-24; Lk 22:19-20; Jn 6:51.53-58.63). The word "holy communion" can be understood on the backdrop of 1 Cor

10:16. The Latin Vulgate has here "communicatio sanguinis Christi" and " participatio corporis Domini": "communication of the blood of Christ" and "participation in the body of the Lord".

3. of the table of the Lord and of the cup of the Lord (1 Cor 10:21);
4. of blessing with a blessed cup and a blessed bread (1 Cor 10:16; Mt 26:26; Mk 14:22);
5. of remembrance of the Lord Jesus (1 Cor 11:24-25; Lk 22:19);
6. to "proclaim the Lord's death" (1 Cor 11:26);
7. looking forward to the coming of the Lord Jesus: "until he comes" (1 Cor 11:26; Mt 26:29; Mk 14:25; Lk 22:18);
8. that is special and holy because it relates to the Lord and has to be distinguished from every secular or worldly meal (1 Cor 10:21; 11:27.29);
9. of the new covenant which is based on the shedding of the blood of Jesus Christ on the cross (1 Cor 11:25; Mt 26:28; Mk 14:24; Lk 22:20);
10. which is related to the forgiveness of the sins (Mt 26:28);
11. which is related to eternal life (Jn 6:51.53-58);
12. which is related to a spiritual way of eating by faith (Jn 6:52.60.63-64);
13. which proclaims God's love for the world (Jn 3:16; 1 Jn 4:9-10.16);

14. of the unity of the whole church as one body (1 Cor 10:17);
15. of fellowship of all believers with the Lord and among each other (1 Cor 10:16-17).

Because the Holy Communion is a communion with Jesus Christ the Lord, it is so special and holy. It is the "Lord's supper", we are at the Lord's table and drink from the Lord's blessed cup. At the Lord's table the family of the Lord gathers and celebrates his love, remembers the Lord Jesus who obeyed the father and loved us so much to give his life for us, his very blood and his very body. The family is gathered and united with the risen and exalted Lord and with each other.

The Lord's supper proclaims the death of the Lord Jesus as the foundation of the new covenant and so of salvation, forgiveness of sins and eternal life which will be fully received and enjoyed when he comes to raise all those from the dead who nourished themselves on his body and his blood by faith in a spiritual way, having fellowship with him all the time.

Whoever celebrates Holy Communion but does not distinguish it from a secular meal (1 Cor 11:20-22,27-29) or partakes in a way without acknowledging the unity of the whole church as the body of Christ (1 Cor 11:17-19), this is the one who partakes in it "in an unworthy manner" (1 Cor 11:27). It is not a meal for sinless people, because it celebrates that Jesus died for sinners to forgive their sins and save them. People who confess their sins and leave them, are welcome to the table which is prepared for their salvation. All believers should partake in it (Mt 26:27).

Different denominational understandings of the Lord's supper

In different denominations the relationship between the elements of the Lord's supper bread and wine on the one hand and the flesh and the blood of the Lord Jesus Christ on the other have been understood in different ways.

Roman Catholic understanding: Transubstantiation. Pope Innocent III made the teaching of the transubstantiation a dogma on the Fourth Council of the Lateran (1215 A.D.):

The body and the blood are truly contained in the sacrament of the altar under the outward appearances of bread and wine, after the transubstantiation of the bread into the body and the wine into the blood by the divine power ... And certainly nobody can perform this sacrament except the priest who has been ordained according to religious usage.⁴⁷

The idea is that the substance of the bread is transformed into the body of Christ and the substance of the wine transformed into the blood of Christ. What people see and taste is bread and wine in their outer appearance, but in the inmost reality, in the substance they are changed.

The phrase "sacrament of the altar" implies that "the offering of the Eucharist" is understood as a repeated sacrifice that is brought

47. R. Seeberg, *Grundriss der Dogmengeschichte* (Leipzig, 1910) gives the Latin text on p. 93: "corpus et sanguis in sacramento altaris sub speciebus panis et vini veraciter continentur, transsubstantiatis pane in corpus et vino in sanguinem potestate divina ... Et hoc utique sacramentum nemo potest conficere, nisi sacerdos quit rite fuerit ordinatus." The English translation given above was done by Lanz.

into the presence of God by the priest performing the sacrament. Because the whole presence of Christ is believed to be in every particle of the bread and also the wine, the Catholic church started to give only the bread to the laity and reserve the wine to the clergy. At the same time they prepared special bread, a piece for every believer, lest a fragment of bread might fall down and be eaten by a church mouse.

Lutheran understanding: Real presence.

About the Lord's supper they teach, that the body and blood of Christ are truly present and distributed with the elements in the Lord's supper. And they reject those who teach against this.⁴⁸

Luther combined the idea of the real presence of Christ in the Lord's supper with his ubiquity not only according to his divine nature but also to his human nature: Because divinity and humanity are one in the one person of Jesus Christ, the divine nature of Christ shares its ubiquity with the human nature of Christ and so the body of Christ can be everywhere at the same time.⁴⁹

John Calvin within reformed tradition: Symbolic understanding combined with a spiritual presence.

48. Hans Hinrich <ed> Wendt, *Die Augsburgische Konfession im deutschen und lateinischen Text mit Erklärung des Inhalts und Beifügung der Hauptquellen* (Halle, 1927), p. 51, gives the Latin and German text of the "Confessio Augustana" from 1530 A.D. The above translation was made by Lanz from the Latin: "De coena Domini docent, quod corpus et sanguis Christi vere adsint et distribuuntur vescentibus in coena Domini; et improbant secus docentes."

49. Seeberg, *Grundriss der Dogmengeschichte*, p. 134.

I say then, that in the mystery of the Supper, by the symbols of bread and wine, Christ, his body and his blood, are truly exhibited to us.⁵⁰

Calvin not only rejected the transubstantiation of the Roman Catholic church (IV, 17, 12-15), but also the idea of the ubiquity of the human nature of Christ (IV, 17, 16-17) which Luther affirmed. Calvin sees Christ's ability to be present in the Lord's supper connected to his sitting at the right hand of God and being able to access his people everywhere in a spiritual way:

Christ ... can always be present with his people, breathing into them his own life, can live in them, sustain, confirm, and invigorate them, and preserve them safe, just as if he were with them in the body; in fine, can feed them with his own body, communion with which he transfuses into them. After this manner, the body and blood of Christ are exhibited to us in the sacrament.⁵¹

50. Calvin, *The Institutes of the Christian Religion*, p. 962 (IV, 17, 11). The Latin text is found in Seeberg, *Grundriss der Dogmengeschichte*, p. 148: "dico in coenae mysterio per symbola panis et vini Christum vere nobis exhiberi, adeoque corpus et sanguinem eius".

51. Calvin, *The Institutes of the Christian Religion*, p. 968 (IV, 17, 18). The Latin text is found in Seeberg, *Grundriss der Dogmengeschichte*, p. 148: "suis semper adsit, vitam ipsis suam inspirans, in iis vivat, eos sustineat, confirmet, vegetet, conservet incolumes, non secus ac si corpore adesset; quin denique suo ipsius corpore eos pascit, cuius communionem spiritus sui virtute in eos transfundit. Secundum hanc rationem corpus et sanguis Christi in sacramento nobis exhibetur".

7.6 Authority and Leadership of the Church

7.6.1 In the New Testament

The authority of the church

Jesus calls his disciples "the salt of the earth" and "the light of the world" (Mt 5:13-16). Paul states that "the household of God ... is the church of the living God, a pillar and buttress of truth" (1 Tm 3:15). These are only two examples of NT texts which underline the importance and authority of the church of God according to the New Testament. Sitting at the right hand of God the Father the risen Lord Jesus rules over everything "in this age but also in the one to come". God the Father "put all things under his feet and gave him as head over all things to the church, which is his body, the fullness of him who fills all in all" (Eph 1:20-23). The glorious authority of Jesus the head implies also the wonderful authority of the church as his body.

The way of Jesus: servant leadership

Jesus Christ as the head is the best example for the way he wants his church to be led (Mt 20:25-28):

You know that the rulers of the Gentiles lord it over them, and their great ones exercise authority over them. 26 It shall not be so among you. But whoever would be great among you must be your servant, 27 and whoever would be first among you must be your slave, 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.

With his emphasis on servant leadership Jesus encourages his disciples to humble themselves and avoid certain titles (Mt 23:8-12):

8 But you are not to be called rabbi, for you have one teacher⁵², and you are all brothers. 9 And call no man your father on earth, for you have one Father, who is in heaven. 10 Neither be called instructors, for you have one instructor, the Christ. 11 The greatest among you shall be your servant. 12 Whoever exalts himself will be humbled, and whoever humbles himself will be exalted.

Now let us have a look at the leadership patterns and models that are found in the further development of the church in the New Testament.

The Leadership of the Church

After Christ's ascension to heaven we find apostles and elders leading the church with the help of the offices of deacons and selected widows.

Apostles While elders are leaders of the local church, apostles lead beyond that level. For the definition and the scope of the work of the apostles see section 6.4.5. For our subject two NT sections are of special interest, Gal 2 and Acts 15. Both relate to the same discussion. In Gal 1 Paul puts an emphasis on his being an apostle who has been called directly by Jesus Christ and who was entrusted

52. This one teacher is Jesus Christ. In the NT the title "teacher" is permitted to describe a gift of grace by the Holy Spirit (Acts 13:1; 1 Cor 12:28.29; Eph 4:11; 1 Tm 2:7).

with the gospel to the Gentiles (Gal 1:1.11-19). In Gal 2:7-10 Paul speaks of an agreement between James, Peter and John on the one hand and Barnabas and Paul on the other:

7 On the contrary, when they saw that I had been entrusted with the gospel to the uncircumcised, just as Peter had been entrusted with the gospel to the circumcised 8 (for he who worked through Peter for his apostolic ministry to the circumcised worked also through me for mine to the Gentiles), 9 and when James and Cephas and John, who seemed to be pillars, perceived the grace that was given to me, they gave the right hand of fellowship to Barnabas and me, that we should go to the Gentiles and they to the circumcised. 10 Only, they asked us to remember the poor, the very thing I was eager to do.

In this agreement the unity of the world wide church, the "catholic" or universal church is shown by the fact that Barnabas and Paul would remember the poor Christian Jews in Jerusalem and Judah and collect money for them in the churches that were planted by them in the Gentile world (Acts 6:1-7; 24:7; Rom 15:26-28; 2 Cor 8-9). At the same time Peter's special "apostolic ministry to the circumcised" is recognized and Paul's special apostolic ministry "to the Gentiles". This seems to imply that Peter would be the authority for doctrinal questions related to the Jewish Christians and Paul the authority for doctrinal questions related to the Gentile Christians.

In Acts 15 the question is whether Gentile Christians have to be circumcised to be saved (Acts 15:1.5). This question had been carried by Jews from Jerusalem and Judea into the mission field which had been reached by Barnabas and Paul so that the two of them had to go to Jerusalem to settle this important question (15:2). They

knew the answer which would please God, but they were compelled to come to an agreement with the apostles and elders in Jerusalem as well so that there would be no schism in the worldwide church and that they would have peace and no further trouble in the churches which they had planted.

The so-called *Council of Jerusalem* came together to give an answer to this doctrinal question. It consisted of apostles and elders (15:2.6.22.23). After "there had been much debate" (15:7 important statements were given by the apostles Peter (15:7-11), the apostles Barnabas and Paul (15:12; cf. 14:14) and the apostle James, the brother of the Lord (15:13-21; cf. Gal 1:19). The resolution of this council was written down and sent to Gentile churches and received with joy (15:23-31; 16:4-5).

The problem and the way it was solved shows the trans-regional and international influence of the apostles. Jerusalem was involved as the mother-church of Christianity. Antioch was important as the sending church of the missionary team of Paul and Barnabas (Acts 14:26-15:1; 13:1-4). God used the apostles who worked in different regions to solve the issue and maintain the world wide vision and the unity of the church.

It is interesting to note that the apostles and elders felt guided by the Holy Spirit to solve this difficult problem (Acts 15:28). The council of Jerusalem became an example for later councils to tackle difficult issues that became important for the church. But there are also differences in comparison to later times.

The apostles were eye-witnesses of the risen Jesus Christ (1 Cor 9:1; Acts 1:21-22). With the death of the last apostle, probably John the brother of James and son of Zebedee, the time of the apostles came to an end and the time of the post-apostolic church started. The foundation had been laid (1 Cor 3:11; Eph 2:20) and now others would build on it.

Knowing this it was of the greatest importance that the apostles had already put a structure of leadership in place that would be there and stand even after the apostles had left. This was the leadership of elders with the support of deacons and the help of the intercession of widows.

Elders. Because the ministry of the apostles was trans-regional, the local church needed elders from the start. Paul and Barnabas would first plant a church, let some time pass by and then appoint elders who had shown themselves as mature and worthy candidates (Acts 14:23; 1 Tm 3:6).

For the same group of leaders of the church four different terms are used in the New Testament: elders, overseers, shepherds and 'those who lead'.

πρεσβύτερος *prēsbytērōs* **elder.** Literally this word means "older" as in Lk 15:25 for the older son (cf. 1 Tm 5:1.2). This term was already used for Israel's leaders in the OT. In the NT it often denotes the members of the Great Sanhedrin, the religious Supreme Court of Israel in Jerusalem (Mt 16:21; 21:23; 26:3.47.57; 27:1.3.12.20; 27:41; 28:12; Acts 4:5.8.23; 6:12; 23:14; 24:1; 25:15). It can also point to "elders" on a local level: Perhaps in Lk 7:3 the elders are the elders of the synagogue in Capernaum.

'Elder' as a term for the leadership of the church is found from Acts onwards in the NT.⁵³ It denotes the elders of the church in

53. For whether or not the office 'elder' was borrowed from the synagogue see David W. Miller, "The Uniqueness of New Testament Church Eldership," [accessed November 26, 2014], *Grace Theological Journal* 6, no. 2 (1985): 315–327, http://www.biblicalstudies.org.uk/pdf/gtj/06-2_315.pdf

Jerusalem in Acts 15:2.4.6; 15:22.23; 16:4; 21:18, probably also in 11:30). Churches planted by Paul's team also had elders (Acts 14:23; 20:17; 1 Tm 5:17.19; Tit 1:5). James speaks of local elders who can be called by people who are ill (Jas 5:14). Peter exhorts the elders as a fellow elder (1 Pt 5:1.5). John uses the word 'elder' for himself in a special way (2 Jn 1:1; 3 Jn 1:1). Perhaps 'the elder' here is absolute if he was the last apostle alive and therefore the only left eyewitness of many things which the Lord had done.

A special case of eldership are the 24 heavenly elders in Revelation (Rv 4:4.10; 5:5.6.8; 5:11.14; Rv 7:11.13; 11:16; 14:3; 19:4). Who they are is for us today a matter of speculation. If they are human and not angels, they could represent the saints of the Old and New Testaments (12 + 12). Compare the names of the twelve tribes of the sons of Israel inscribed on the gates of the new Jerusalem and the twelve names of the twelve apostles of the Lamb on the twelve foundations of the wall of this city (Rv 21:12-14). The 24 heavenly elders seem to be a kind of Senate of God in heaven. Somehow it pleased God to include them in his divine rule and let them sit close to him on 24 thrones.

ἐπίσκοπος *ēpiskōpōs* **overseer**. The English word 'bishop' originates from this Greek word. But when people say or hear 'bishop' nowadays they think of an important leader of the church who is higher up in the hierarchy than the 'overseer' of the New Testament was. In the NT *ēpiskōpōs* designates an elder as in 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.⁵⁴

The group Paul was talking to were the elders of Ephesus (20:17). Their ministry was to be overseers, to care like a shepherd for the flock of God, His church. This means that we have here the concepts of the elders, overseers and shepherds (= pastors)⁵⁵ in one and the same text and for the same people and that in the plural. There was not one pastor / overseer / elder in Ephesus but a plurality of pastors / overseers / elders. These concepts developed apart further down in history. The bishop / overseer became the leader of the pastors, the pastor became the full-time worker of the church, distinguished from a plurality of elders / presbyters who became part of the church council and were lay people. As in Ephesus there was a plurality of elders in Philippi (Phil 1:1).

Any candidate for becoming an overseer needs certain qualities (1 Tm 3:1-7; Tit 1:5-9). These lists of qualities are given to help with the appointment of overseers. These lists were not intended in the first place for the removal of "unworthy" overseers. Paul's instructions to Titus imply that the words 'elders' (1:5) and 'overseers' (1:7) are just two different words for the same people who lead the church. Peter calls Jesus 'the Shepherd and Overseer of your souls' (1 Pt 2:25). Jesus is the ultimate example for being a pastor and overseer. He would leave the 99 sheep and go after that one which got lost (Mt 18:12-14).

ποιμήν pōimēn shepherd. The heart of Jesus was the heart of a shepherd. He could see the crowds and have compassion on

54. προσέχετε ἑαυτοῖς καὶ παντὶ τῷ ποιμνίῳ, ἐν ᾧ ὑμᾶς τὸ πνεῦμα τὸ ἅγιον ἔθετο ἐπισκόπους, ποιμαίνειν τὴν ἐκκλησίαν τοῦ θεοῦ, ἣν περιεποιήσατο διὰ τοῦ αἵματος τοῦ ἰδίου.

55. 'Pastor' is Latin and means shepherd. See the Vulgate of Eph 4:11.

them "because they were harassed and helpless, like sheep without a shepherd" (Mt 9:36; Mk 6:34). He is the key model for pastoring and he is "the" shepherd (Jn 10:2.11.12; 10:14.16; Heb 13:20; 1 Pt 2:25; Mt 2:6; Rv 7:17; 12:5; 19:15; cf. 2:27).⁵⁶ When God stroke him the sheep of the flock were scattered (Mt 26:31; Mk 14:27). At his second coming all nations will be gathered before him and he will separate the righteous from the evil as a shepherd separates the sheep from the goats (Mt 25:32).

In Eph 4:11-12 Paul speaks of four groups of gifted people whom Christ has given to the church:

11 And he gave the apostles, the prophets, the evangelists, the pastors and teachers,⁵⁷ 12 to equip the saints for the work of ministry, for building up the body of Christ.

The fourth group is "the pastors (= shepherds) and teachers". Whereas the apostles, prophets and evangelists may work transregional, the "shepherds and teachers" seem to be local ministers of the church (see Acts 20:28).

As a fellow elder and shepherd (Jn 21:16) Peter can admonish the elders (1 Pt 5:2-4):

2 Shepherd the flock of God that is among you, exercising oversight, not under compulsion, but willingly, as God would have you; not for shameful gain, but eagerly; 3 not domineering over those in your charge,

56. It is a curious detail of salvation history that Bethlehem was the city of David when he was still a shepherd and that Christ, the great and good shepherd, would be born there as Savior and Lord (Lk 2:11) witnessed by a group of shepherds (Lk 2:8.15.18.20).

57. καὶ αὐτὸς ἔδωκεν τοὺς μὲν ἀποστόλους, τοὺς δὲ προφήτας, τοὺς δὲ εὐαγγελιστάς, τοὺς δὲ ποιμένας καὶ διδασκάλους

but being examples to the flock. 4 And when the chief Shepherd appears, you will receive the unfading crown of glory.

It is right that shepherds feed themselves from the milk of the flock (1 Cor 9:7), that they get a certain salary (1 Tm 5:17-18). But 'shameful gain' should not be their motivation which is more a sign of false teachers (Jude 1:04.11-12).

προϊστάμενος *prōhistamēnōs* **one who leads.** This is another word for the same group of leaders. It is used for overseers (1 Tm 3:4-5) and elders (1 Tm 5:17). One who leads should do this 'with zeal' (Rom 12:8). If somebody wants to lead the church, he must first lead his family well (1 Tm 3:4-5).⁵⁸ The other members of the church should respect the leaders (1 Thes 5:12). If elders lead well, they should be considered worthy of 'double honor' or a 'double salary' (1 Tm 5:17-18).⁵⁹ Perhaps they will not get a double salary, but only a single, because the church is so poor or the people give so poorly. But the people should not think that the salary is too much. That should think that this work is so important that even a double salary would not be too much.

Qualifications of Elders. These are mostly found in 1 Tm 3:1-7 and Tit 1:5-9. In this table the order of the qualities follows 1 Tm 3:1-7 and the qualities of Tit 1:5-9 have been inserted where it fits.

58. According to 1 Tm 3:12 this is also a qualification for the deacons.

59. The word for 'honor' here, *timē*, is also used for the price of something (Acts 5:2) or the 'honor' shown in giving material things to somebody (Mt 15:4-6). That exactly this is the meaning is shown by the statements in the next verse (5:18).

| | | |
|---|--------------------|---|
| | 1 Tm 3:1-7 | Tit 1:5-9 |
| 1 | ἀνεπίλημπτον | ἀνέγκλητος, ἀνέγκλητον εἶναι ὡς θεοῦ οἰκονόμον |
| 2 | μῆς γυναικὸς ἄνδρα | μῆς γυναικὸς ἀνὴρ |
| 3 | νηφάλιον | |
| 4 | σώφρονα | σώφρονα |

| | | |
|----|---|---|
| 5 | κόσμιον | |
| 6 | φιλόξενον | φιλόξενον |
| 7 | διδασκικόν | ἀντεχόμενον τοῦ κατὰ τὴν διδασχὴν πιστοῦ λόγου, ἵνα δυνατὸς ᾖ καὶ παρακαλεῖν ἐν τῇ διδασκαλίᾳ τῇ ὑγιαίνουσῃ καὶ τοὺς ἀντιλέγοντας ἐλέγχειν. |
| 8 | μὴ πάροινον | μὴ πάροινον |
| 9 | μὴ πλήκτην | μὴ πλήκτην |
| 10 | ἀλλὰ ἐπιεικῇ | |
| 11 | ἄμαχον | μὴ ὀργίλον |
| 12 | ἀφιλάργυρον | μὴ αἰσχροκερδῇ |
| 13 | τοῦ ἰδίου οἴκου καλῶς προϊστάμενον τέκνα ἔχοντα ἐν ὑποταγῇ μετὰ πάσης σεμνότητος | τέκνα ἔχων πιστά, μὴ ἐν κατηγορίᾳ ἀσωτίας ἢ ἀνυπότακτα |
| 14 | μὴ νεόφυτον | |
| 15 | μαρτυρίαν καλὴν ἔχειν ἀπὸ τῶν ἔξωθεν | |
| 16 | | μὴ αὐθάδη |
| 17 | | φιλάγαθον |
| 18 | | δίκαιον |
| 19 | | ὅσιον |
| 20 | | ἐγκρατῇ |

| | | |
|----|---|---|
| | 1 Tm 3:1-7 | Tit 1:5-9 |
| 1 | above reproach | above reproach, must be above reproach as God's steward |
| 2 | the husband of one wife | the husband of one wife |
| 3 | sober-minded | |
| 4 | self-controlled | self-controlled |
| 5 | respectable | |
| 6 | hospitable | hospitable |
| 7 | able to teach | He must hold firm to the trustworthy word as taught, so that he may be able to give instruction in sound doctrine and also to rebuke those who contradict it. |
| 8 | not a drunkard | not a drunkard |
| 9 | not violent | not violent |
| 10 | but gentle | |
| 11 | not quarrelsome | not quick-tempered |
| 12 | not a lover of money | not greedy for gain |
| 13 | he must manage his own household well, with all dignity keeping his children submissive | his children are believers and not open to the charge of debauchery or insubordination |
| 14 | not a recent convert | |
| 15 | well thought of by outsiders | |
| 16 | | not arrogant |
| 17 | | a lover of good |
| 18 | | upright |
| 19 | | holy |
| 20 | | disciplined |

Responsibilities of Elders. If we look at all the titles of the elders / overseers / shepherds / those who lead and if we look at all the sections where these words are used, we get a pretty clear picture of the responsibilities of these leaders. They have to care for God's assembly, the sheep of His flock. Three key areas of the work of a shepherd are 1. leading, 2. protecting, 3. nourishing (Ps 23:1-

6; Jn 10:1-30). These three areas are also related to the teaching ministry of the elders who lead, protect and nourish through their teaching amongst other things they do.

1. Leading (1 Tm 5:17)

(a) Leading by example (1 Pt 5:3)

(b) Guiding (Jn 10:3-4.27)

2. Protecting

(a) from enemies without (persecution; 1 Pt 1:1-5:14)

(b) from enemies within (false doctrine; Act 20:28-31; Rv 2:2.6; 2:14-16; 2:20-15)

3. Nourishing (Jn 21:15.17; 1 Cor 3:2; Heb 5:12-14)

4. Teaching (1 Tm 3:2; 5:17; Tit 1:9)

(a) Training (Eph 4:11-12)

(b) Discipling (2 Tm 2:2; Phil 4:9)

Deacons The noun *διάκονος* diakōnōs means 'servant'.⁶⁰ If it is the designation of an office in the church it can be translated with 'deacon' (1 Tm 3:8.12; Phil 1:1) or 'deaconess' (Rom 16:1), but, of course, this still means 'servant'.

Christ became a servant to the circumcised to show God's truthfulness, in order to confirm the promises given to the patriarchs (Rom 15:8). God the Father will honor a servant of Jesus Christ

60. For the study of the related words "to serve, service" see subsection 7.4.3).

who follows Christ on the way of his suffering (Jn 12:26). Whoever wants to be great amongst the disciples should humble himself and become a servant of others (Mt 20:26; 23:11; Mk 9:35; 10:43).

'Servants' who spread the gospel are the apostle Paul (1 Cor 3:5; 2 Cor 3:6; 6:4; 11:23; Eph 3:7; Col 1:23.25), Apollos (1 Cor 3:5), Tychicus (Eph 6:21; Col 4:7), Epaphras (Col 1:7) and Timothy (1 Thes 3:2, 1 Tm 4:6).

The sections which speak of deacons as office bearers in the church are 1 Tm 3:8.12, Phil 1:1 and Rom 16:1. There were several 'overseers' in Philippi and several 'deacons' (Phil 1:1). Phoebe was a female deacon (or a deaconess; Rom 16:1).

Qualifications for Deacons. Of special importance is what Paul wrote to Timothy about the qualifications for deacons (1 Tm 3:8-13). Some of the qualifications are similar to those for the overseers in 3:1-7. Interesting is that the deacons should be tested first, "then let them serve as deacons if they prove themselves blameless" (3:10).

| | | |
|----|---|--|
| | 1 Tm 3:8-13 | |
| 8 | σεμνούς μὴ διλόγους μὴ οἶνω πολλῶ προσ- έχοντας | dignified not double-tongued not addicted to much wine |
| 9 | μὴ αἰσχροκερδεῖς ἔχοντας τὸ μυστήριον τῆς πίστεως ἐν καθαρᾷ συνειδήσει | not greedy for dishonest gain hold the mystery of the faith with a clear conscience |
| 10 | καὶ οὗτοι δὲ δοκιμα- ζέσθωσαν πρώτον, εἴτα διακονεῖτωσαν ἀνέγκλητοι ὄντες | And let them also be tested first; then let them serve as deacons if they prove themselves blameless. |
| 11 | γυναῖκας ὡσαύτως σεμνάς, μὴ διαβόλους, νηφαλίους, πιστὰς ἐν πάντα | (Their) wives likewise must be dig- nified, not slanderers, but sober- minded, faithful in all things. |
| 12 | διάκονοι ἕστωσαν μιᾷς γυναικὸς ἄνδρες τέκνων καλῶς προϊσ- τάμενοι καὶ τῶν ἰδίων οἴκων | Let deacons each be the husband of one wife managing their children and their own households well |

The women Paul is talking about in 3:11 could be either the wives of the deacons or female deacons or deaconesses (cf. Rom 16:1). Both is possible.

Services of Deacons. If we ask ourselves what kind of services the deacons rendered, we can look at our word studies of diakōnēō, diakōnia and diakōnōs. If the local church was engaged in helping widows or the poor (Acts 6:1-7; 1 Tm 5:9-16), then the deacons would very much 'serve tables' and help people in physical needs. This was probably one important area. But at the same time we see Stephen and Philipp also as serving with the word (Acts 6:8-10; 7:1-53; 8:5-40).

This means that the service of the deacons may have been mixed. Part of it was helping with food and drink and in other physical

needs. Another part was serving people in the area of spiritual needs. Their service in the area of spiritual needs would depend on their gifts. Philipp for example was an evangelist (Acts 21:8) and did signs (Acts 8:6). Stephen did wonders and signs and had great wisdom to convince people (Acts 6:8-10).

Widows. A widow (χήρα *chēra*) in the NT is often an example of somebody who is poor and belongs to the weakest in society. A queen living in luxury is the opposite of being a widow (Rv 18:7). To care for widows and orphans is part of the essence of serving God (Jas 1:27). To oppress widows and rob them is the essence of being evil (Mk 12:40; Lk 20:47). God's special mercy on a poor and weak widow is seen in God's raising her only son from death in the Old Testament (Lk 4:25-26, see 1 Kgs 17:17-24) and in the New (Lk 7:12). The gospel presents widows as good examples of prayer and fasting (Lk 2:37), of persistence in prayer (Lk 18:3.5) and of loving God in spite of poverty (Mk 12:42-43; Lk 21:2-3). Because of her love for God a widow may decide to stay single (1 Cor 7:8).

Obedying the teaching of Christ to help the poor his church cared for widows from the start (Acts 6:1; 9:39.41). This is also implied in Paul's teaching in 1 Timothy 5:3-16, but this section contains much more than the idea of helping poor widows. It presents us with a group of elected widows who are supported by the church on the one hand but are also offering or have offered a service to the church which is honored and recognized while they are supported. They have to fulfill certain criteria in a similar way as we have seen in 1 Timothy 3 with regard to the overseers and the deacons. They seem to have a special spiritual stand within the church.

Qualifications for widows.

| | | |
|----|---|--|
| | 1 Tm 5:3-16 | |
| 5 | ἡ ὄντως χήρα | who is truly a widow |
| 5 | μεμονωμένη | left all alone (without living children or grandchildren, see 5:4) |
| 5 | ἥλπικεν ἐπὶ θεὸν | has set her hope on God |
| 5 | προσμένει ταῖς δεήσεσιν καὶ ταῖς προσευχαῖς νυκτὸς καὶ ἡμέρας | continues in supplications and prayers night and day |
| 7 | ἀνεπίλημπτοι | without reproach |
| 9 | μὴ ἔλαττον ἐτῶν ἑξήκοντα | not less than sixty years of age |
| 9 | γεγονυῖα ἐνὸς ἀνδρὸς γυνή | having been the wife of one husband |
| 10 | ἐν ἔργοις καλοῖς μαρτυρουμένη, | having a reputation for good works: |
| | εἰ ἐτεκνοτρόφησεν, | if she has brought up children, |
| | εἰ ἐξενεδόχησεν, | has shown hospitality, |
| | εἰ ἀγίων πόδας ἔνυψεν, | has washed the feet of the saints, |
| | εἰ θλιβομένοις ἐπήκεσεν, | has cared for the afflicted, |
| | εἰ παντὶ ἔργῳ ἀγαθῷ ἐπηκολούθησεν. | and has devoted herself to every good work. |

The fact that a widow who is enrolled in the list of those widows who are supported by the church (5:9) has "been the wife of one husband" before she became a widow, can help us to understand the qualifications for overseers (3:2) and deacons (3:12) who have to be husband of one wife. Overseers, deacons and chosen widows should be "without reproach" (3:2; 5:7) or "blameless" (3:10) and should reflect the ethical ideal of monogamy. It is possible that Paul here excludes divorced and remarried persons.

The honored calling of chosen widows. A look at the qualifications of the chosen widows of the church shows that their status is an honorable and of a high calling. True widows are worthy of honor (5:3). Whenever people are so poor that they

need help, there is the danger that they loose their self-respect and suffer even more feeling as people without honor. It is interesting that God used the writing of the apostle Paul to secure a place of honor for single, widowed and empoverished ladies within the church of God, which is the house of God, the temple of God (3:15).

Every widow who "has set her hope on God and continues in supplications and prayers night and day" becomes part of the spiritual power house of the church. Every local church who cares for such widows in the way shown by the apostle Paul and integrating them into the life of the church, may hope to see rich blessings of God on this approach.

7.7 **Role of Women in the Church**

For male and female in the image of God see section 3.10.1.

7.7.1 **In the Old Testament**

Social Structure

Within the law of God given through Moses there is the section about vows (Nm 30:3-16) which displays the social structure of the Old Testament with regard to women very well.

Unmarried women. The vow of an unmarried daughter living with her father is confirmed by him if he hears it and keeps silent or is made null and void if he hears it and opposes it (Nm 30:3-5).

Married women. The vow of a married woman is confirmed by her husband if he hears it and keeps silent or is made null and void

by him if he hears it and opposes it (Nm 30:6-8).

Divorced women. The vow of a divorced woman is always valid (Nm 30:9).

Widows. The vow of a widow is always valid (Nm 30:9).

Summary: This section shows that an unmarried woman living with her father is under the authority of her father and a married woman is under the authority of her husband. But a divorced woman or a widow is free from male authority. Her vow is always valid.

Offices and gifts

Some of the offices and gifts in the Old Testament were male-dominated, others were open for females.

Priests. Priests had to be males from the tribe of Levi and especially the clan of Aaron. There were no female priests according to the law of Moses (Ex 28:1-29:37; Lv 8:1-36; Nm 25:11-13; 1 Sm 2:27-36; 1 Kgs 2:27; 1:32-39; Jer 33:18,22).

Prophets. There were good female prophetesses like Miriam, the sister of Moses and Aaron (Ex 15:20), Deborah, the wife of Lappidoth (Jgs 4:4)⁶¹, and Huldah, the wife of Shallum (2 Kgs 22:14; 2 Chr 34:22) and the wife of Isaiah (Is 8:3). There were also negative prophetesses like Noadiah (Neh 6:14).

61. Now Deborah, a prophetess, the wife of Lappidoth, was judging Israel at that time.

Judges. In the book of Judges there are twelve Judges. One of them is the famous Deborah, the wife of Lappidoth who was both a prophetess and a judge (Jgs 4:4).

Kings. Judah was to be ruled by males from the tribe of Judah and especially the clan of David (2 Sm 7:11-18). The rule of Athaliah the mother of Ahaziah was not legitimate and she is not reckoned as queen (2 Kgs 11:1). The northern kingdom of Israel was ruled by kings. It could happen that a wife of a king became very influential, like Jezebel the daughter of Ethbaal king of the Sidonians who became king Ahab's wife (1 Kgs 16:31). But she is not reckoned as a good example to follow.

Soldiers. In God's law the age for military action is twenty years and older (Nm 1:3,20,24 etc.). Only men were counted to be part of the army. There were no regular female soldiers. But it could happen that women might partake in defending a city (Jgs 9:53) or do something decisive to secure the victory of Israel in times of war (Jgs 5:24-27; Joshua 2:4-6).

Wise women. There are quite a few examples of wise or clever women in the history books of the Old Testament, as for example Abigail (1 Sm 25:18-34) or the woman that saved the city Abel of Beth-maacah with her wisdom (2 Sm 20:15-22).

7.7.2 In the New Testament

Social Structure

When it comes to the social structure within the New Testament there seems to be a tendency to point back to texts from the Old

Testament. Peter does it ("as Sarah obeyed Abraham", 1 Pt 3:5-6) and Paul ("as the Law also says"; 1 Cor 14:34).

Unmarried girls. As in the Old Testament unmarried girls can be found living with their fathers (Acts 21:8-9). One understanding of 1 Cor 7:36-38 is that the father is part of the decision making process whether "his virgin daughter" is going to marry or not.⁶² Another is that it is the man who is engaged to marry "his virgin" but is willing to stay single.⁶³ In either understanding the girl is understood to be content and willing to stay single. There is a gift of staying single (1 Cor 7:7-8; Mt 19:11-12). Because of this gift of the Spirit the church may at any time have a great number of single ladies who survive their parents or who do not stay with their parents. In analogy to the widows or divorced women of the Old Testament these single ladies are neither under the authority of their father nor of a husband. They are directly responsible to God.

Married women. In the New Testament married women are seen as being under the authority of their husband (Eph 5:22-24.33; Col 3:18; 1 Cor 11:3; 14:34-35; 1 Tm 2:11-15; 1 Pt 3:1-6). The statement in Eph 5:21 "submitting to one another out of reverence for Christ" is showing that one result of the being filled with the Holy Spirit (Eph 5:18) is that everyone submits in the area where God wants him to submit to the authority God has placed in Christ over

62. So according to John Calvin, *I Corinthians*, Calvin's Commentaries, Torrance, D. W.; Torrance, Th. F. <ed>; Fraser, J. W. <trans> (Edinburgh, 1980), p. 164-168.

63. So according to F. E. Gaebelin, *The Expositors Bible Commentary: Romans, 1 Corinthians, 2 Corinthians, Galatians*, vol. 10, Harrison, E. F. and Mare, W. H. and Murray, J. H. and Boice, J. M. (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Zondervan, 1976), p. 236-237.

him: the woman under their husband (5:22), the children under their parents (6:1), the slaves under their masters (6:5), and the citizens under the government (Rom 13:1; 1 Pt 2:13-14).

Divorced women. As in the Old Testament divorced women are directly responsible to God (1 Cor 7:15-16).

Widows As in the Old Testament widows are directly responsible to God. They may experience the special care of the church if the spiritual life of the church is vibrant and caring and they fit the high spiritual standards to become elected to be a widow on list of the church to be supported (1 Tm 5:3-16; Acts 6:1-6).

Summary: This means that in the New Testament daughters living with their father and married women are under the male authority of the father or the husband respectively. But divorced women, widows and unmarried ladies not living with their father are directly responsible to God. Or to put it in a language leaned on 1 Cor 11:3:

But I want you to understand that the head of every man is Christ, the head of a wife is her husband, and the head of Christ is God.

The chain of authority for a married woman is the following: the woman is under her husband, who is under Christ, who is under God the Father. The unmarried woman in the house of her father is under her father who is under Christ who is under God the Father. The widow or divorced woman or unmarried woman not living with her father is directly under the authority of Christ who is under God the Father.

Offices and gifts

Some of the offices and gifts in the New Testament are male-dominated, others are open for females.

Sons and daughters of God. One of the most important verses for the modern discussion about the role of women in the church is the verse of the apostle Paul in Gal 3:28. Let us look at it within the context (Gal 3:24-29):

24 So then, the law was our guardian until Christ came, in order that we might be justified by faith. 25 But now that faith has come, we are no longer under a guardian, 26 for in Christ Jesus you are all sons of God, through faith. 27 For as many of you as were baptized into Christ have put on Christ. 28 There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free, there is neither male nor female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus.⁶⁴ 29 And if you are Christ's, then you are Abraham's offspring, heirs according to promise.

The subject in the context is the justification by faith (3:24) so that people who are justified by faith prove themselves to belong to the spiritual offspring of Abraham and are heirs (3:29) of the promised blessings of Abraham for all nations (3:6-9.14). An important part of these blessings is the privilege to be a son or a daughter of God with the full legal rights of an heir (Gal 4:6-7, 2 Cor 6:18). It is significant that the "daughters" are full heirs of the blessings of the coming world (Rom 4:13; 1 Pt 3:7). In Christ nationality (being Jew

64. οὐκ ἐνι Ἰουδαίῳ οὐδὲ Ἑλλήνι, οὐκ ἐνι δοῦλῳ οὐδὲ ἐλεύθερῳ, οὐκ ἐνι ἄρσεν καὶ θήλυν• πάντες γὰρ ὑμεῖς εἰς ἓστε ἐν Χριστῷ Ἰησοῦ.

or Greek), social status (being slave or free) or gender (being male or female) does not matter, "for you are all one in Christ Jesus".

That does not mean however that, while the church is still on her way to the promised country and heritage, it has no influence on life or ethics whether one is Jew or Greek, male or female, slave or free. When it comes to ethics and practical life, Paul makes a distinction between slaves (Eph 6:5-8; Col 3:22-25; cf. 1 Pt 2:18-25) and masters (Eph 6:09; Col 4:1). The same is true for married women. As we have seen, in the New Testament married women are seen as being under the authority of their husband (Eph 5:22-24.33; Col 3:18; 1 Cor 11:3; 14:34-35; 1 Tm 2:11-15; 1 Pt 3:1-6).

Every Christian married woman is a citizen of two worlds. In this world she has the authority of her husband over herself and as mother she has together with her husband parental authority over her children. But in the world to come there is no such thing as married life (Mt 22:30; Mk 12:25; Lk 20:35-36) or family life as we know it. Some experiences of Christian women relate to the order of the old creation, as for example giving birth to children with birth pangs. Other experiences relate to the order of the new world, which has already started for them with their spiritual new birth (Gal 4:6).

Priests. When it comes to individuals who are called priests in the New Testament church, there is only Jesus Christ who is called "a high priest after the order of Melchizedek" (Heb 5:10). Of course, there are the priests in the Jerusalem temple, but their leadership opposed Christ and had him crucified and their service has ceased with the destruction of the temple in Jerusalem in 70 A.D. (cf. Heb 7:11-12). All individuals of the church are spoken together of as priests or as a priesthood (1 Pt 2:9; Rv 5:9-10).

Kings. Jesus is called king of the Jews (Mt 2:1-2; 27:37) or of the house of Jacob (Lk 1:32-33) or King of kings and Lord of lords (Rv 19:16). The worldly governments of the kingdoms of this world in this time are arranged by God (Rom 13:1). All individuals of the church are spoken together of as kings or as a kingdom (1 Pt 2:9; Rv 5:9-10). This is not an individual way of speaking, more the whole church taken together. One exception is that the twelve apostles will sit on thrones judging the twelve tribes of Israel (Mt 19:28). Because the way of speaking is normally more a general for the members of the church with regard to priesthood and kingship, we better leave it at this general level and do not go into the details of being king or queen or priests as individuals, as males or females. The spiritual reality is already a present reality (Rom 8:30), but the whole dimension of the glory of this state of the children of God is left for the future to be revealed (Rom 8:16-23; 2 Cor 6:18).

Judges. The saints are also called to judge the world and angels (1 Cor 6:2-3). This seems also related to the future glory of the saints as kings and priests. We leave the details to the future fulfillment.

Apostles. The twelve apostles of Jesus were all men (Mt 10:2-4; Acts 1:13). Barnabas and Paul are also called apostles (Acts 14:14; 1 Cor 9:1-2). In spite of the fact that some see in Junia of Rom 16:7 an example of a female apostle, this verse is not as clear and the people not as famous that this could be understood as settled.

Prophets. Two prophetesses are mentioned in the New Testament using the noun in Greek, one is Anna, the daughter of Phanuel, of the tribe of Asher and she is a good example (Lk 2:36) and the other is "that woman Jezebel, who calls herself a prophetess and is

teaching and seducing my servants to practice sexual immorality and to eat food sacrificed to idols" who is obviously a very bad example (Rv 2:20). The verb is used in the following verses with women as subjects: "your sons and your daughters shall prophesy... even on my male servants and female servants in those days I will pour out my Spirit, and they shall prophesy (Acts 2:17.18). In Acts 21:9 we are told that the four unmarried daughters of Philip were prophesying. 1 Cor 11:5 speaks of wives who pray or prophesy. As the gift of prophecy is especially given to build up the church (1 Cor 14:4; 12:7), we can assume that women could also practise their gift in the assembly or church. This has been used to argue in favor of women preaching in church, especially combined with 1 Cor 14:3:

On the other hand, the one who prophesies speaks to people for their upbuilding and encouragement and consolation.

The idea is the following: Somebody who speaks for the upbuilding and encouragement and consolation of the congregation is prophesying and we call this nowadays preaching. Women who have the gift of prophecy should be allowed to preach. But here seems to be some kind of misunderstanding. Not every talk for the upbuilding and encouragement and consolation of the congregation is prophesying. You can say a cow is a mammal. But not every mammal is a cow. Prophecy should happen for the upbuilding, encouragement, admonition and consolation of the congregation. But not every talk which does this, is already a prophecy. Paul explains in the same chapter that one element of prophecy is that the person speaks about things she can not humanly know, but only by the inspiration of God's Spirit (1 Cor 14:24-25):

24 But if all prophesy, and an unbeliever or outsider enters, he is convicted by all, he is called to account by all, 25 the secrets of his heart are disclosed, and so, falling on his face, he will worship God and declare that God is really among you.

Prophecy is about knowing secrets, regarding the past, the present or the future. It is a knowledge given by God's Spirit to man for the progress of the church. In the Old or in the New Testament a prophet or a prophetess can say: "Thus says the Lord:..." or "Thus says the Holy Spirit..." (Jer 7:3; Acts 21:11). Decisive is not whether the speaker is a man or a woman, but that he or she is inspired by God's Spirit. The real speaker is God. Prophecy is not just preaching. It is proclaiming the word of God under a special inspiration of the Holy Spirit.

Evangelists The noun evangelist is only used thrice in the New Testament, for Philip (Acts 21:8) for Timothy (2 Tm 4:5) and in a general way (Eph 4:11). The verb may be used with the name of some individual as a subject, as e.g. an angel in Lk 1:19 or in Rv 14:6, John the Baptist (Lk 3:18), Jesus (Lk 4:18.43, Eph 2:17), the twelve apostles (Acts 5:42), or without giving further details about the people who spread the gospel (Acts 8:4; 1 Pt 1:12), Philip (Acts 8:12.35.40), God through Jesus Christ (Acts 10:36) or God to his servants, the prophets (Rv 10:7), men of Cyprus and Cyrene (Acts 11:20), Paul and his team (Acts 13:32 et al.). Such people need a calling (Rom 10:15). I have given this detailed information about those who spread the gospel, because among those many given names is not one sister included as a subject of the verb.⁶⁵ It

65. In the Old Testament we have the very interesting promise of God in Ps 68:11 "The Lord gives the word; the women who announce the news are a

can be argued, of course, that they might be included in the plural verbforms where no name is given. Still, as far as names are given together with the noun evangelist or with the verb to evangelize we have only brothers amongst the humans. But other sections make it clear that sisters took a strong part in spreading the gospel, as we can see in Phil 4:2-3:

2 I entreat Euodia and I entreat Syntyche to agree in the Lord. 3 Yes, I ask you also, true companion, help these women, who have labored side by side with me in the gospel together with Clement and the rest of my fellow workers, whose names are in the book of life.⁶⁶

Pastor-teachers. There is no New Testament example for a female pastor, which means literally shepherd, or an overseer, or an elder, or somebody who stands in front to lead. These four expressions are used in the New Testament for the group of leaders of a local church (see Acts 20:17.28; Tit 1:5-9; 1 Tm 3:1-7; 5:17; Eph 4:11).

Deacons. In 1 Tm 3:8-13 there is a section about the qualifications of deacons, which means servants. A verse like 3:12 speaks of male deacons:

Let deacons each be the husband of one wife, managing their children and their own households well.

great host". The women who announce the news are announcing good news (תִּי־טוֹבָה; LXX: ευαγγελιζομενοις).

66. ναὶ ἔρωτῶ καὶ σέ, γνήσιε σύζυγε, συλλαμβάνου αὐταῖς, αἵτινες ἐν τῷ εὐαγγελίῳ συνήθλησάν μοι μετὰ καὶ Κλήμεντος καὶ τῶν λοιπῶν συνεργῶν μου, ὧν τὰ ὀνόματα ἐν βίβλῳ ζωῆς.

But Rom 16:1-2 speak of sister Phoebe as a deacon:

1 I commend to you our sister Phoebe, a servant of the church at Cenchreae,⁶⁷ 2 that you may welcome her in the Lord in a way worthy of the saints, and help her in whatever she may need from you, for she has been a patron of many and of myself as well.

Such paragraphs written by Paul's hand make it abundantly clear that the churches planted by the apostle Paul and his team heavily encouraged the services of female Christian workers.

Soldiers In the New Testament the people of God "do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the cosmic powers over this present darkness, against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly places" (Eph 6:12)⁶⁸. Of course, there is the necessity of a worldly authority instituted by God with the power of the sword (Rom 13:1-7). But with regard to the church of God, the people of God, their task is to be spiritual soldiers, praying, loving, glorifying God with holy lives.

We have already seen in Phil 4:2-3 that the two Christian ladies Euodia and Syntyche were part of the spiritual struggle⁶⁹ to bring the gospel to the hearts of people (cf. Phil 1:27).

67. Συνίστημι δὲ ὑμῖν Φοίβην τὴν ἀδελφὴν ἡμῶν, οὕσαν καὶ διάκονον τῆς ἐκκλησίας τῆς ἐν Κεγχρεαῖς,

68. ὅτι οὐκ ἔστιν ἡμῖν ἡ πάλῃ πρὸς αἶμα καὶ σάρκα, ἀλλὰ πρὸς τὰς ἀρχάς, πρὸς τὰς ἐξουσίας, πρὸς τοὺς κοσμοκράτορας τοῦ σκότους τούτου, πρὸς τὰ πνευματικὰ τῆς πονηρίας ἐν τοῖς ἐπουρανίοις.

69. αἵτινες ἐν τῷ εὐαγγελίῳ συνήθλησάν μοι μετὰ καὶ Κλήμεντος καὶ τῶν λοιπῶν συνεργῶν μου

Wise women One good example for wise women in the New Testament is Priscilla who is always mentioned together with her husband Aquila, in Acts with the long form of her name Priscilla, (Acts 18:2,18,26) and in the letters of Paul with the short form Prisca (Rom 16:3; 1 Cor 16:19; 2 Tm 4:19). In Acts 18:2 her husband is introduced and then his wife Priscilla. In Acts 18:18 and 26 the wife is mentioned first. In the letters of Paul the wife is twice mentioned first. Of special interest is Acts 18:26:

He began to speak boldly in the synagogue, but when Priscilla and Aquila heard him, they took him and explained to him the way of God more accurately.

Apollos was a very clever and well trained person, a very good public speaker (Acts 18:24-25; 1 Cor 3:6,22; 4:6). But he learned even more through this couple. It is clear that the wife was at least part of the teaching process, perhaps even the more capable person for teaching, being mentioned first. Seeing this section (and e.g. Tit 2:3-5) nobody could claim that in the New Testament sisters are not capable of teaching. But it is also interesting that the setting of this teaching process is the home of this Jewish couple. They did not confront Apollos publicly, but invited him to their home and used this time of fellowship to help him grow even more. This is part of the cleverness and wisdom of this interesting couple.

Restrictions for women in the New Testament? Are there things which restrict the service of Christian women in the New Testament?

Female apostles, pastors, elders? According to our analysis there were no female apostles, no female pastors, elders, overseers in the New Testament church.

Absolute female silence in church? We do not understand the commandment of Paul in 1 Cor 14:33-37 that women should keep silent as an absolute, but as a relative commandment. Paul implies that women can pray and prophesy in 1 Cor 11:5. Because the gift of prophecy is a gift to give progress to the church, I understand that both the prophecies and the prayers of women were a normal part of public services. In 1 Cor 14:27-35 Paul commands three times that certain people keep silent in the assembly (vv. 28.30.34):

27 If any speak in a tongue, let there be only two or at most three, and each in turn, and let someone interpret. 28 But if there is no one to interpret, *let each of them keep silent in church* and speak to himself and to God. 29 Let two or three prophets speak, and let the others weigh what is said.⁷⁰ 30 If a revelation is made to another sitting there, *let the first be silent*. 31 For you can all prophesy one by one, so that all may learn and all be encouraged, 32 and the spirits of prophets are subject to prophets. 33 For God is not a God of confusion but of peace. As in all the churches of the saints, 34 *the women should keep silent in the churches*. For they are not permitted to speak, but should be in submission, as the Law also says. 35 If there is anything they desire to learn, let them ask their husbands at home. For it is shameful for a woman to speak in church.

If there is no interpreter, the person speaking in a tongue should keep silent (28). If somebody receives a revelation, the prophet,

70. προφηῆται δὲ δύο ἢ τρεῖς λαλείτωσαν, καὶ οἱ ἄλλοι διακρινέτωσαν•

who wanted to say something should keep silent (30). If the others weigh or examine critically what a prophet has said (29), the women should keep silent (34) and the husbands should do the talking. Otherwise this could become the cause of broken relationships between the different families of the church.

Should women teach in church? How can we understand Paul's meaning in 1 Tm 2:11-15:

11 Let a woman learn quietly with all submissiveness. 12 I do not permit a woman to teach or to exercise authority over a man; rather, she is to remain quiet. 13 For Adam was formed first, then Eve; 14 and Adam was not deceived, but the woman was deceived and became a transgressor. 15 Yet she will be saved through childbearing - if they continue in faith and love and holiness, with self-control.

Firstly we have to realize that "woman" here means married woman which is evident by the context of "childbearing". The "submissiveness" is then first towards her own husband (cf. Eph 5:22; Col 3:18; 1 Pt 3:1) and secondly also in the church service towards the people who are in charge to lead the service (1 Cor 14:33-35).

Secondly the context is about teaching in church in a way that the exercising of authority over a man is implied. We think of teaching in church because 1 Tm 2:1.8-10 seem to speak of intercession and behavior of men and women in the church service. Paul talks of authoritative teaching which has to be obeyed. Paul rejects this task for a married woman because she would leave her submissiveness. In other places he encourages women to teach (Tit 2:3-5) which shows that they might have the gift of teaching and the ability to do it.

Thirdly Paul goes back to Gn 2 and 3 to give this teaching a foundation in creation and salvation history. "For Adam was formed first, then Eve" is an argument that Eve was made for Adam (cf. 1 Cor 11:7-9) and that Adam was to be the head of the family even before the fall. "... and Adam was not deceived, but the woman was deceived and became a transgressor" gives an argument based on how sin came into the world. The phrase "was deceived"⁷¹ is taken from the LXX Gn 3:13.⁷² The enemy successfully attacked first the wife of Adam, Eve, in his sinister plan to sow the seed of doubt towards the word of God into human hearts. From this Paul draws the conclusion that authoritative teaching should be done by men (cf. Gn 3:16).

Fourthly the "Yet she will be saved through childbearing - if they continue in faith and love and holiness, with self-control" is to be understood with Gn 3:15-16 in mind. One consequence of the fall were the troubles of pregnancy and giving birth for the mothers. These are difficult hours. God can make this difficult experience be something related to salvation and not against it. In the first half of the verse the verb is in the singular, still pointing to the woman *per se*, Eve. But in the second part of the verse the verb is in the plural, pointing to the modern counterparts of Eve, the women and mothers of today. Eve gave birth to children, opening up the line leading to the ultimate seed of the woman, Jesus Christ, the savior. Salvation in Christ is related to faith, love and holiness. The modern counterparts of Eve can also hope for being kept safe through the process of childbearing, while looking up to God for help.

71. 14 καὶ Ἀδὰμ οὐκ ἠπατήθη, ἡ δὲ γυνὴ ἐξαπατηθεῖσα ἐν παραβάσει γέγονεν.

72. καὶ εἶπεν ἡ γυνὴ Ὁ ὄφις ἠπάτησέν με, καὶ ἔφαγον.

Fifthly this verse has also to be understood against the backdrop of gnostic heretic teachings Paul is fighting in these letters, especially the teaching that it is forbidden to marry (1 Tm 4:3; 6:20-21; 1:19-20; 2 Tm 2:16-18). The Gnostics had the tendency to be against God's good creation, including sexuality. They might have pointed to the birth pangs as proof that sex and marriage are evil and to be avoided. Therefore Paul's statement, "Yet she will be saved through childbearing - if they continue in faith and love and holiness, with self-control", could be anti-gnostic, refuting their hatred of the married state and emphasizing that it is in full agreement with being saved.

Chapter 8

Eschatology - about the Last Things

8.1 The Last Days

8.1.1 The Last Days in the Old Testament

In the Torah

The last days is a phrase which is seen first in Genesis 49:1:

Then Jacob called his sons and said, “Gather yourselves together, that I may tell you what shall happen to you in days to come.”

The phrase "in days to come" is literally "in the end of the days", see the Hebrew¹ which the King James Version gives as "in the last

1. בְּאַחֲרֵית הַיָּמִים

days".² The text of the Septuagint³ is translated by NETS⁴ with "at the last of the days".

In this context the dying Jacob (Gen 49:28-33) gives his sons his last blessing which proves later to be prophetic. For the progress of salvation history it is interesting that he prophesies (Gen 49:10) that the kingdom will belong to the tribe of Judah:

The scepter shall not depart from Judah,
nor the ruler's staff from between his feet,
until tribute comes to him;
and to him shall be the obedience of the peoples.

Within the Torah the person who starts the teaching about things "in the last days" is Jacob. The next time we see this phrase in the Torah it is used by Balaam in Nm 24:14:

And now, behold, I am going to my people. Come,
I will let you know what this people will do to your
people in the latter days.

For the last four words of this quote we literally have again in the Hebrew original "in the end of the days"⁵. The Septuagint has "at the end of days".⁶ In the context Balaam had been called by Balak, the king of Moab, to curse Israel (Nm 24:10). Balak's hope then

2. The King James Version is given according to KJV, The Holy Bible - King James Version, the Hebrew text according to OpenScriptures.org, Westminster Leningrad Codex, and the LXX according to Rahlfs, Septuaginta.

3. ἐπ' ἔσχατων τῶν ἡμερῶν

4. If not otherwise noted the English translation of the Septuagint text is given according to Pietersma and Wright, A New English Translation of the Septuagint.

5. בְּאַחֲרִית הַיָּמִים

6. ἐπ' ἔσχατου τῶν ἡμερῶν

was to fight the Israelites victoriously (Nm 22:6). It is interesting to see Balaam, this strange figure who came because of his love for money (2 Pt 2:15) and still delivers a great last prophecy reaching very far into the future (Nm 24:17-24):

15 And he took up his discourse and said,
“The oracle of Balaam the son of Beor,
the oracle of the man whose eye is opened,
16 the oracle of him who hears the words of God,
and knows the knowledge of the Most High,
who sees the vision of the Almighty,
falling down with his eyes uncovered:
17 I see him, but not now;
I behold him, but not near:
a star shall come out of Jacob,
and a scepter shall rise out of Israel;
it shall crush the forehead of Moab
and break down all the sons of Sheth.
18 Edom shall be dispossessed;
Seir also, his enemies, shall be dispossessed.
Israel is doing valiantly.
19 And one from Jacob shall exercise dominion
and destroy the survivors of cities!”
20 Then he looked on Amalek and took up his dis-
course and said,
“Amalek was the first among the nations,
but its end is utter destruction.”
21 And he looked on the Kenite, and took up his dis-
course and said,
“Enduring is your dwelling place,
and your nest is set in the rock.

22 Nevertheless, Kain shall be burned
 when Asshur takes you away captive.”
 23 And he took up his discourse and said,
 “Alas, who shall live when God does this?
 24 But ships shall come from Kittim
 and shall afflict Asshur and Eber;
 and he too shall come to utter destruction.”

This prophecy had its application at that time regarding the defeat of Moab, and the consequent shock to it's king. It is also about the far future in the same verse which fits the Messianic hope of the Old Testament and the idea that it relates to "the last days".

After Jacob and Balaam and still within the Pentateuch Moses also speaks about the last days in Deuteronomy 4:30:

When you are in tribulation, and all these things come
 upon you in the latter days,⁷ you will return to the
 Lord your God and obey his voice.

The context speaks of Israel's going astray and committing idolatry (4:25) and God punishing them with exile accordingly (4:26-28). But if they are in exile and repent (4:29), God will have mercy on them because of his covenant (4:31). The phrase "in the end of the days" in 4:30 gives the time frame for this.

The next time Moses uses this phrase is in Dt 31:29 in a very similar context:

For I know that after my death you will surely act corruptly and turn aside from the way that I have com-

7. For "in the latter days" the Hebrew has literally "in the end of the days" **בְּאַחֲרִית הַיָּמִים**; the LXX reads ἐπ' ἐσχάτῳ τῶν ἡμερῶν which is translated "in the end of days".

manded you. And in the days to come⁸ evil will befall you, because you will do what is evil in the sight of the Lord, provoking him to anger through the work of your hands.

There are quite a few parallels between Jacob and Moses within the Pentateuch here. The dying Jacob spoke of the last days, so does Moses. Jacob gave his blessings on the 12 tribes, so does Moses (Dt 33). Both sections are part of the closure of Deuteronomy and Genesis respectively. Dt 31:29 is part of the introduction for the song of Moses in Dt 32 which then speaks of the days to come, including the far future. Israel will turn away from God (32:15-16). God will punish them for this (32:19ff), but in the end he will have mercy on them again (32:36ff). Compare this to Dt 30:1-6 where God will gather them from the punishment of exile and circumcise their hearts.

In 8th century prophets

The next time we encounter the phrase is in the 8th century prophets Hosea, Isaiah and Micah. God speaks through Hosea in 3:4-5:

4 For the children of Israel shall dwell many days without king or prince, without sacrifice or pillar, without ephod or household gods. 5 Afterward the children of Israel shall return and seek the Lord their God, and David their king, and they shall come in fear to the Lord and to his goodness in the latter days.⁹

8. For "in the days to come" the Hebrew has "in the end of the days" בְּאַחֲרֵית הַיָּמִים ; the LXX translates "at the end of days" ἔσχατον τῶν ἡμερῶν.

9. For "in the latter days" the Hebrew has literally "in the end of the days" בְּאַחֲרֵית הַיָּמִים ; the LXX translates "in the last days" ἐπ' ἐσχάτων τῶν ἡμερῶν.

The time of Hosea's service is given in 1:1:

The word of the Lord that came to Hosea, the son of Beeri, in the days of Uzziah, Jotham, Ahaz, and Hezekiah, kings of Judah, and in the days of Jeroboam the son of Joash, king of Israel.¹⁰

The place of Hosea's service, at least in the beginning, was the northern kingdom of Israel, not Judah. So the fact that the "children of Israel" will seek the "Lord their God" and "David their king" points to a deep change from the state of affairs in his own time. Hosea sees this happening "in the end of days". He also predicts an exile and the return of Israelites from Egypt and Assyria which makes him agree with the basic prophecies of Moses we have seen before in Deuteronomy (Hos 11:11):

They shall come trembling like birds from Egypt,
and like doves from the land of Assyria,
and I will return them to their homes,
declares the Lord.

His contemporary Isaiah who served in Jerusalem and Judah also delivered a message about the last days (Is 2:1-5):

The word that Isaiah the son of Amoz saw concerning
Judah and Jerusalem.

10. According to Eugene H. Merrill, *Kingdom of Priests - A History of Old Testament Israel* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Baker Book House, 1988), p. 320, the time of the kings of Judah was Uzziah 792-740, Jotham 750-731, Ahaz 735-715, and Hezekiah 729-686 B.C. and the time of Jeroboam, king of Israel, was 793-753 B.C.

2 It shall come to pass in the latter days¹¹
 that the mountain of the house of the Lord
 shall be established as the highest of the mountains,
 and shall be lifted up above the hills;
 and all the nations shall flow to it,
 3 and many peoples shall come, and say:
 “Come, let us go up to the mountain of the Lord,
 to the house of the God of Jacob,
 that he may teach us his ways
 and that we may walk in his paths.”
 For out of Zion shall go the law,
 and the word of the Lord from Jerusalem.
 4 He shall judge between the nations,
 and shall decide disputes for many peoples;
 and they shall beat their swords into plowshares,
 and their spears into pruning hooks;
 nation shall not lift up sword against nation,
 neither shall they learn war anymore.
 5 O house of Jacob,
 come, let us walk in the light of the Lord.

The time and place of Isaiah's prophetic service is given in Is 1:1:

The vision of Isaiah the son of Amoz, which he
 saw concerning Judah and Jerusalem in the days of
 Uzziah, Jotham, Ahaz, and Hezekiah, kings of Judah.

He served in Jerusalem from 740 B.C. at least (Is 6:1) under Uzziah
 to 701 B.C. (Is 36:1) under Hezekiah. This adds up to 40 years or

11. For “in the latter days” the Hebrew has literally “in the end of the days” בְּאַחֲרֵית הַיָּמִים ; the LXX translates “in the last days” ἐν ταῖς ἐσχάταις ἡμέραις.

more. According to my analysis the section in 2:1-5 forms together with 1:1-31 the introduction to the whole book. In Chapter One we see the state of Jerusalem and Judah at the time of Isaiah: They are children of God who deny their father and have less sense than a donkey (1:2-3). Spiritually they are like Sodom and Gomorrah, not really willing to hear the word of the Lord or the law of God (1:9-10). It is only God's grace that Jerusalem is still left as a remnant in a destroyed country (1:7-8).

The tension between Chapter One and 2:1-5 leads to a question: How is it possible that the corrupt and Sodom-like Jerusalem of Chapter One at the time of Isaiah will be transformed to be like the Jerusalem of the end times: the worship center of the world uniting all Gentiles and all of Israel to serve the true God peacefully? The answer to this question is given by the whole book: It is through the word of God (2:3; 42:4) and the Messiah (9:6-7; 11:1-10) by the power of the Holy Spirit (44:3-4), after God's judgments have fulfilled their purpose (6:11-13; 26:8-9). As in Hosea's prophecy, the exile is included in the judgments (Is 5:13; 6:12). Isaiah's vision reaches very far, including new heavens and a new earth (Is 65-66). If somebody might wonder how Isaiah could look as far as that, the answer is found in Is 46:9-10. It is God speaking:

Remember the former things of old;
for I am God, and there is no other;
I am God, and there is none like me,
10 declaring the end from the beginning
and from ancient times things not yet done,
saying, 'My counsel shall stand,
and I will accomplish all my purpose.'

Micah is another contemporary of Hosea and Isaiah. This section in 4:1-5 is a very close parallel to Is 2:1-5 as anyone can see who

compares them:

It shall come to pass in the latter days¹²
that the mountain of the house of the Lord
shall be established as the highest of the mountains,
and it shall be lifted up above the hills;
and peoples shall flow to it,
2 and many nations shall come, and say:
“Come, let us go up to the mountain of the Lord,
to the house of the God of Jacob,
that he may teach us his ways
and that we may walk in his paths.”
For out of Zion shall go forth the law,
and the word of the Lord from Jerusalem.
3 He shall judge between many peoples,
and shall decide for strong nations afar off;
and they shall beat their swords into plowshares,
and their spears into pruning hooks;
nation shall not lift up sword against nation,
neither shall they learn war anymore;
4 but they shall sit every man under his vine and under
his fig tree,
and no one shall make them afraid,
for the mouth of the Lord of hosts has spoken.
5 For all the peoples walk
each in the name of its god,
but we will walk in the name of the Lord our God
forever and ever.

12. For “in the latter days” the Hebrew has literally “in the end of the days”
בְּאַחֲרֵית הַיָּמִים; the LXX translates “in the last days” ἐπ’ ἐσχάτων τῶν ἡμερῶν.

Within the context of the book of Micah¹³ this prophecy of Jerusalem's future glory stands in contrast to the destruction of the city at the end of Micah 3, namely verses 9-12:

9 Hear this, you heads of the house of Jacob
and rulers of the house of Israel,
who detest justice
and make crooked all that is straight,
10 who build Zion with blood
and Jerusalem with iniquity.
11 Its heads give judgment for a bribe;
its priests teach for a price;
its prophets practice divination for money;
yet they lean on the Lord and say,
“Is not the Lord in the midst of us?
No disaster shall come upon us.”
12 Therefore because of you
Zion shall be plowed as a field;
Jerusalem shall become a heap of ruins,
and the mountain of the house a wooded height.

The tension between Micah 3 and Micah 4:1-5 is very similar to what we have seen in Is 1 and Is 2:1-5. The question arises: How will God bring this about that the destroyed Jerusalem¹⁴ of Micah

13. For our purposes here it is not necessary to decide where this prophecy originated first. The prophecy is an integral part of the context of the book of Isaiah and of the book of Micah as well. As it is our duty to hear the prophetic message within the context of each book, we may well appreciate both of them within their given contexts.

14. According to 4:10 Jerusalem is exiled to Babylon and redeemed from there again. This agrees with Isaiah and Hosea as well who also predict an exile.

3:12 will become the world center of spreading the good news and transforming the nations to servants of God? Again, as in Isaiah and Hosea, the coming Messiah has a crucial role in this (Mi 5:2-5a):

2 But you, O Bethlehem Ephrathah,
who are too little to be among the clans of Judah,
from you shall come forth for me
one who is to be ruler in Israel,
whose origin is from of old,
from ancient days.
3 Therefore he shall give them up until the time
when she who is in labor has given birth;
then the rest of his brothers shall return
to the people of Israel.
4 And he shall stand and shepherd his flock
in the strength of the Lord,
in the majesty of the name of the Lord his God.
And they shall dwell secure,
for now he shall be great to the ends of the earth.
5 And he shall be their peace.

We can say that Micah has a similar view of future developments as Hosea and Isaiah have. There is a time of punishment from God for their sins, including an exile. In exile they repent and God's mercy leads them home. The Messiah is born from a woman and brings about eternal peace (Mi 5:3.5; Is 7:14; 9:6-7). Jerusalem becomes the world center of a mankind serving God (Mi 4:1-5; Is 2:1-5).

Close to the exile and into the exile

The last sections about the "last days" in the Old Testament bring us near the exile and into the exile. Jeremiah, Ezekiel and Daniel

continue the teaching about the last days. We find in Jer 23:20

The anger of the Lord will not turn back until he has accomplished the intents of his heart. In the latter days¹⁵ you will understand it clearly.

According to Jer 1:2 Jeremiah was called in the 13th year of Josiah, king of Judah (627 B.C.).¹⁶ At the time of the fall of Jerusalem (586 B.C.) he was set free by the Babylonians. Later he was forced to join the Jews that went to Egypt (Jer 43:4-7) after the murder of Gedaliah (about 585 B.C.).¹⁷ Jeremiah served more than 40 years as a prophet, much of the time suffering from his contemporaries. The context of Jer 23:20 is the section "concerning the prophets" (23:9-40). Much of this is against false prophets and their ways. They were encouraging the wicked not to expect judgment (23:16-17). Because of their influence Jerusalem has become like Sodom and Gomorrah (23:14-15). Jeremiah's prophecies about those false prophets are part of a series of prophecies about the leaders of Judah, including the wicked kings (22:1-30) and the wicked "shepherds" (23:1-8) which phrase of course also includes the kings as part of the leader class. It is interesting that together with the judgment prophecies which will be understood by them "in the last days", there is a prophecy about the Davidic Messiah in the same context as the good shepherd in contrast to prophecies about the wicked (23:3-8):

15. For "in the latter days" the Hebrew has literally "in the end of the days" בְּאַחֲרֵית הַיָּמִים ; the LXX translates "in the last of days" ἐπ' ἐσχάτου τῶν ἡμερῶν.

16. According to Merrill, *Kingdom of Priests - A History of Old Testament Israel*, p. 458.

17. According to *ibid.*, p. 467.

3 Then I will gather the remnant of my flock out of all the countries where I have driven them, and I will bring them back to their fold, and they shall be fruitful and multiply. 4 I will set shepherds over them who will care for them, and they shall fear no more, nor be dismayed, neither shall any be missing, declares the Lord. 5 Behold, the days are coming, declares the Lord, when I will raise up for David a righteous Branch, and he shall reign as king and deal wisely, and shall execute justice and righteousness in the land. 6 In his days Judah will be saved, and Israel will dwell securely. And this is the name by which he will be called: 'The Lord is our righteousness.' 7 Therefore, behold, the days are coming, declares the Lord, when they shall no longer say, 'As the Lord lives who brought up the people of Israel out of the land of Egypt,' 8 but 'As the Lord lives who brought up and led the offspring of the house of Israel out of the north country and out of all the countries where he had driven them.' Then they shall dwell in their own land."

We have the same elements here which we have found in Hosea, Isaiah and Micah: After the judgment of the exile, there is a return from it and salvation through the coming Messiah. This shows that the "last days" of Jer 23 include the judgment of 23:20, but also the following salvation in the days of the Davidic Messiah. The same is true for the next section in Jer 30:21-24:

21 Their prince shall be one of themselves;
their ruler shall come out from their midst;
I will make him draw near, and he shall approach me,

for who would dare of himself to approach me?
declares the Lord.

22 And you shall be my people,
and I will be your God.”

23 Behold the storm of the Lord!

Wrath has gone forth, a whirling tempest;
it will burst upon the head of the wicked.

24 The fierce anger of the Lord will not turn back
until he has executed and accomplished
the intentions of his mind.

In the latter days¹⁸ you will understand this.

Jer 30:24 is almost exactly the same as 20:30. I have included 30:21-23 in the quote to show that the Messiah is mentioned nearby. The wider context is Jer 30-33 which is one of the great salvation sections in Jeremiah. Here we find the return from the exile (30:10; 32:37), the new covenant promised (31:31-34) including the forgiveness of the sins and salvation in the days of the coming Messiah (Jer 33:14-17):

14 Behold, the days are coming, declares the Lord,
when I will fulfill the promise I made to the house of
Israel and the house of Judah. 15 In those days and
at that time I will cause a righteous Branch to spring
up for David, and he shall execute justice and right-
eousness in the land. 16 In those days Judah will be
saved and Jerusalem will dwell securely. And this is
the name by which it will be called: ‘The Lord is our
righteousness.’ 17 For thus says the Lord: David shall

18. For “in the latter days” the Hebrew has literally “in the end of the days”
בְּאַחֲרֵית הַיָּמִים .

never lack a man to sit on the throne of the house of Israel.

In Jeremiah the idea of salvation after judgment is not only true for Israel, but also for some of the foreign nations he prophesies about, for example Moab in Jer 48:46-47:

46 Woe to you, O Moab!
The people of Chemosh are undone,
for your sons have been taken captive,
and your daughters into captivity.
47 Yet I will restore the fortunes of Moab
in the latter days¹⁹, declares the Lord.
Thus far is the judgment on Moab.

He speaks similarly about Elam in Jer 49:37-39:

37 I will terrify Elam before their enemies
and before those who seek their life.
I will bring disaster upon them,
my fierce anger, declares the Lord.
I will send the sword after them,
until I have consumed them,
38 and I will set my throne in Elam
and destroy their king and officials,
declares the Lord.
39 But in the latter days²⁰
I will restore the fortunes of Elam, declares the Lord.

19. For "in the latter days" the Hebrew has literally "in the end of the days" **בְּאַחֲרֵית הַיָּמִים**.

20. For "in the latter days" the Hebrew has literally "in the end of the days" **בְּאַחֲרֵית הַיָּמִים**.

The thirtieth year mentioned by the prophet Ezekiel in 1:1-3 might have been his own thirtieth year and can be dated by Ez 1:2 as the fifth year of the exile of King Jehoiachin (593 B.C.).²¹ The last prophecy given with a date within his book is 29:17-21 "in the 27th year" (571 B.C.) This means at least 22 years of prophetic service. He touches on the subject of the "last days" in his prophecy about "Gog, of the land of Magog, the chief prince of Meshech and Tubal" (Ez 38:1) as we can see in Ez 38:8 and 38:16:

8 After many days you will be mustered. In the latter years²² you will go against the land that is restored from war, the land whose people were gathered from many peoples upon the mountains of Israel, which had been a continual waste. Its people were brought out from the peoples and now dwell securely, all of them... 16 You will come up against my people Israel, like a cloud covering the land. In the latter days²³ I will bring you against my land, that the nations may know me, when through you, O Gog, I vindicate my holiness before their eyes.

God will vindicate his holiness through Gog by destroying the attacker and his army (39:1-7). This is at the same time salvation for the Israelites who have been brought home from the exile and

21. According to Merrill, *Kingdom of Priests - A History of Old Testament Israel*, p. 482.

22. For "in the latter years" the Hebrew has literally "in the end of the years" בְּאַחֲרֵית הַשָּׁנִים; the LXX translates "at the end of years" ἐπ' ἐσχάτου ἐτῶν.

23. For "in the latter days" the Hebrew has literally "in the end of the days" בְּאַחֲרֵית הַיָּמִים; the LXX translates "at the end of days" ἐπ' ἐσχάτων τῶν ἡμερῶν.

have received God's Holy Spirit (39:25-29; 36:21-28; 37:14). They have been united under the Davidic Messiah (37:24; 34:23). We see again that similar elements are found in the context of the prophecies about the last days in the Old Testament.

Now we come to Daniel who is also set in the exile. We read in Dan 10:13-14:

13 The prince of the kingdom of Persia withstood me twenty-one days, but Michael, one of the chief princes, came to help me, for I was left there with the kings of Persia, 14 and came to make you understand what is to happen to your people in the latter days.²⁴
For the vision is for days yet to come.”

The context of this section is Dan 10-12. We learn from 10:1 that this revelation was received in the "third year of Cyrus king of Persia" which could be understood in connection with 1:21 as 536 B.C., two years after the famous decree of 538 B.C. allowing the Jews to go home to their country. Daniel is told about the shift from the Medo-Persian kingdom to the Greek kingdom as a dominating force in world politics and influence on the future of the people of God (11:2ff). There will be a time of great trouble for Israel (12:1) culminating in the resurrection of the dead (12:2-3). As Dan 10-12 is the closure of the book and has many links with Dan 7 to 9 it is interesting to note that the word "end" is used quite frequently in an eschatological sense in the chapters 7-12 (8:17.19; 9:26; 11:27.35.40; 12:4.6.9.13).

24. For "in the latter days" the Hebrew has literally "in the end of the days" בְּאַחֲרֵית הַיָּמִים ; the LXX translates "at the end of days" ἐπ' ἐσχάτου τῶν ἡμερῶν.

In our survey about the "last days" in the Old Testament we have seen that the idea is already present in the Pentateuch (Jacob, Balaam and Moses). It is further developed by the 8th century B.C. prophets Hosea, Isaiah and Micah. Closer to the exile and within it Jeremiah, Ezekiel and Daniel talk about them. There are recurrent ideas connected to the last days: the king from Judah (Gn 49:10) or Israel (Nm 24:17), later the specific Davidic Messiah (Hos, Is, Mi, Jer, Ez), the exile and the return from it (Dt, Hos, Is, Mi, Jer, Ez, Dn) and the outpouring of the Holy Spirit and a change of heart (Dt, Is, Ez) and last but not least the crushing of the enemies of God's people (Dt, Nm, Is, Mi, Jer, Ez, Dn).

8.1.2 The last days in the New Testament

The last days are also an important subject in the New Testament.

Christ

Jesus is the start of the end times. In the parable of the tenants in Mark 12:1ff the final²⁵ sending of the son (Mark 12:6) marks the climax of the story of the parable. As this parable is a reflection of Israel's salvation history it is clear that for Jesus the sending of the Son of God is the beginning of the end times. We find the same idea in Heb 1:1-2:

1 Long ago, at many times and in many ways, God spoke to our fathers by the prophets, 2 but in these last days²⁶ he has spoken to us by his Son, whom he

25. ἔσχατον

26. For "in these last days" the Greek has ἐπ' ἐσχάτου τῶν ἡμερῶν τούτων. If not noted otherwise, the Greek New Testament quotations are from the Holmes, The Greek New Testament: SBL Edition.

appointed the heir of all things, through whom also he created the world.

In the New Testament the beginning of the last days is the first coming of Jesus Christ. The end of the last days is his second coming. In his great chapter about the resurrection Paul speaks of Christ as the last Adam (1 Cor 15:42-49:

42 So is it with the resurrection of the dead. What is sown is perishable; what is raised is imperishable. 43 It is sown in dishonor; it is raised in glory. It is sown in weakness; it is raised in power. 44 It is sown a natural body; it is raised a spiritual body. If there is a natural body, there is also a spiritual body. 45 Thus it is written, “The first man Adam became a living being”; the last Adam became a life-giving spirit.²⁷ 46 But it is not the spiritual that is first but the natural, and then the spiritual. 47 The first man was from the earth, a man of dust; the second man is from heaven. 48 As was the man of dust, so also are those who are of the dust, and as is the man of heaven, so also are those who are of heaven. 49 Just as we have borne the image of the man of dust, we shall also bear the image of the man of heaven.

For Paul the first Adam had an impact on all the children of Adam and Eve afterwards. All of mankind comes from him. So Jesus Christ as the last Adam who was crucified and has risen from the dead is both the end of the old mankind and the beginning of the

27. For “the last Adam (became) a life-giving spirit” the Greek has ὁ ἔσχατος Ἀδὰμ εἰς πνεῦμα ζωοποιῶν..

new. In the life of Christ the end of everything old is the cross (Gal 6:14; 2:19-20; 2 Cor 5:14; Eph 4:22) and the beginning of everything new is his resurrection (Rom 6:4; Eph 2:5-6; 2 Cor 5:17; 1 Cor 15:22). He is the life-giving spirit.

In Revelation Christ is revealed to John as "the first and the last"²⁸ (Rv 1:17; 2:8; 22:13). With Is 44:6²⁹ and 48:12³⁰ in mind this is a powerful self-revelation of Jesus Christ as God (22:13):

12 "Behold, I am coming soon, bringing my recompense with me, to repay everyone for what he has done. 13 I am the Alpha and the Omega, the first and the last, the beginning and the end."

In the last days

This is an idiom that is also found in the New Testament several times. We have already seen its use in Heb 1:1-2. In his sermon on Pentecost Peter points to Joel's prophecy in the following way (Acts 2:16-17):

16 But this is what was uttered through the prophet Joel:
17 And in the last days³¹ it shall be, God declares,
that I will pour out my Spirit on all flesh,

28. For "the first and the last" the Greek has ὁ πρῶτος καὶ ὁ ἔσχατος.

29. Thus says the Lord, the King of Israel and his Redeemer, the Lord of hosts: "I am the first and I am the last; besides me there is no god.

30. Listen to me, O Jacob, and Israel, whom I called! I am he; I am the first, and I am the last.

31. For "in the last days" the Greek has ἐν ταῖς ἐσχάταις ἡμέραις. This is an explanation of the original "afterward" in Joel 2:28.

and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy,
and your young men shall see visions,
and your old men shall dream dreams.

In the Old Testament teaching about the last days we have seen that the outpouring of God's Spirit was one element of God's work related to the last days. Here we have the New Testament pointer to the fulfillment. As the first coming of Christ is the beginning of the last days and his second coming the end of the last days, we can say that during his absence according to the body the presence of the Holy Spirit is another characteristic of the last days (John 16:7; 14:16-20; Mt 28:20; 18:20).

In 2 Tm 3:1-2 Paul starts to give a description of people living in the last days:

1 But understand this, that in the last days³² there will come times of difficulty. 2 For people will be lovers of self, lovers of money, proud, arrogant, abusive, disobedient to their parents, ungrateful, unholy...

In agreement with Paul and his note about "lovers of money" James warns rich people in his letter (5:3):

1 Come now, you rich, weep and howl for the miseries that are coming upon you. 2 Your riches have rotted and your garments are moth-eaten. 3 Your gold and silver have corroded, and their corrosion will be evidence against you and will eat your flesh like fire. You have laid up treasure in the last days.³³ 4 Behold, the wages of the laborers who mowed your fields,

32. For "in the last days" the Greek has ἐν ἑσχάταις ἡμέραις.

33. For "in the last days" the Greek has ἐν ἑσχάταις ἡμέραις.

which you kept back by fraud, are crying out against you, and the cries of the harvesters have reached the ears of the Lord of hosts.

Peter joins the warnings about evils in the last days in his second letter (3:1-4):

1 This is now the second letter that I am writing to you, beloved. In both of them I am stirring up your sincere mind by way of reminder, 2 that you should remember the predictions of the holy prophets and the commandment of the Lord and Savior through your apostles, 3 knowing this first of all, that scoffers will come in the last days³⁴ with scoffing, following their own sinful desires. 4 They will say, "Where is the promise of his coming? For ever since the fathers fell asleep, all things are continuing as they were from the beginning of creation."

One characteristic of the last days is that people will look at the prophecies of the Old ("the predictions of the holy prophets") and New Testaments ("the commandment of the Lord and Savior through your apostles") about the last days with disrespect. They will mock the idea of the coming of the day of the Lord to abolish the old world and bring in the new heavens and the new earth (3:10-13).

On the last day

This especially used in John in the singular. First we see this in John 6:39.40.44.54, but to have more of the context we read 6:35-40 and 6:44.54:

34. For "in the last days" the Greek has ἐπ' ἐσχάτων τῶν ἡμερῶν.

35 Jesus said to them, "I am the bread of life; whoever comes to me shall not hunger, and whoever believes in me shall never thirst. 36 But I said to you that you have seen me and yet do not believe. 37 All that the Father gives me will come to me, and whoever comes to me I will never cast out. 38 For I have come down from heaven, not to do my own will but the will of him who sent me. 39 And this is the will of him who sent me, that I should lose nothing of all that he has given me, but raise it up on the last day."³⁵ 40 For this is the will of my Father, that everyone who looks on the Son and believes in him should have eternal life, and I will raise him up on the last day...³⁶ 44 No one can come to me unless the Father who sent me draws him. And I will raise him up on the last day...³⁷ 54 Whoever feeds on my flesh and drinks my blood has eternal life, and I will raise him up on the last day."³⁸

This is a great teaching about salvation. Jesus is the true life giving bread! Of course only believers will come to him to eat and drink. Who will come? Those the Father has given to the Son, will come to him. All. No exception. He whom the father will draw to the Son, he will come. Jesus accepts every single person coming to him drawn by the Father. He has received the commandment from the Father to lose nothing given to him. This is the spiritual explanation of the commandment of Jesus in 6:12 to collect all the bread in

35. For "on the last day" the Greek has τῇ ἐσχάτῃ ἡμέρᾳ.

36. For "on the last day" the Greek has τῇ ἐσχάτῃ ἡμέρᾳ.

37. For "on the last day" the Greek has ἐν τῇ ἐσχάτῃ ἡμέρᾳ.

38. For "on the last day" the Greek has τῇ ἐσχάτῃ ἡμέρᾳ.

baskets and lose nothing of it.³⁹ And we can trust that Jesus will fulfill this commandment and lose nothing. Four times he promises to raise every single person belonging to him "on the last day". To say this twice would have been a great emphasis. To say it four times makes it unforgettable.

In John 11:23-24 we hear Jesus and Martha talking:

23 Jesus said to her, "Your brother will rise again."
24 Martha said to him, "I know that he will rise again
in the resurrection on the last day."⁴⁰

We know that Lazarus was raised from the dead on that very day. But it is interesting that Martha believed the teaching we have just seen in John 6 that the resurrection would be "on the last day". In John 12:47-48 Jesus says:

47 If anyone hears my words 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 The one who re-
jects me and does not receive my words has a judge;
the word that I have spoken will judge him on the last
day.⁴¹

According to these six uses of 'the last day' in John two things happen on the last day: The resurrection of the believers for life and the judgment of the unfaithful who have rejected the word of Jesus (compare John 5:28-29).

39. Compare the Greek words in 6:12 *Συναγάγετε τὰ περισσεύσαντα κλάσματα, ἵνα μή τι ἀπόληται* with those in 6:39 *τοῦτο δέ ἐστιν τὸ θέλημα τοῦ πέμψαντός με ἵνα πᾶν ὃ δέδωκέν μοι μὴ ἀπολέσω ἐξ αὐτοῦ ἀλλὰ ἀναστήσω αὐτὸ τῇ ἐσχάτῃ ἡμέρᾳ.*

40. For "on the last day" the Greek has *ἐν τῇ ἐσχάτῃ ἡμέρᾳ.*

41. For "on the last day" the Greek has *ἐν τῇ ἐσχάτῃ ἡμέρᾳ.*

Other combinations of time words with "last"

are found in the New Testament. In 1 Pt 1:20 Jesus is presented as a sacrificial lamb through whose blood we are redeemed:

He was foreknown before the foundation of the world but was made manifest in the last times⁴² for your sake.

The contrast here is that God's plan of salvation was clear from before the foundation of the world, but that the means of salvation was finally revealed when Christ came, was crucified and rose from the dead on the third day. So the last times again start with the coming of Jesus Christ.

It is possible that Jude pointing in his letter to the apostles is especially thinking of 2 Peter 3:2-3 and quoting him (Jude 1:17-18):

17 But you must remember, beloved, the predictions of the apostles of our Lord Jesus Christ. 18 They said to you, "In the last time⁴³ there will be scoffers, following their own ungodly passions."

Surely the "in the last days" in 2 Pt 3:3 means the same as "in the last time" in Jude and the rest is very similar. In his first letter Peter praises God for his powerful mercy in saving us and keeping us safe to the end (1:3-5):

3 Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ! According to his great mercy, he has caused

42. For "in the last times" the Greek has ἐπ' ἐσχάτου τῶν χρόνων.

43. For "in the last time" the Greek has Ἐπ' ἐσχάτου χρόνου.

us to be born again to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, 4 to an inheritance that is imperishable, undefiled, and unfading, kept in heaven for you, 5 who by God's power are being guarded through faith for a salvation ready to be revealed in the last time.⁴⁴

The revelation of our salvation "in the last time" will be related here to the revelation of Christ in 1:13 pointing to his second coming. In his first letter (2:18-23) John has another interesting contribution to the New Testament teaching about the end times:

18 Children, it is the last hour,⁴⁵ and as you have heard that antichrist is coming, so now many antichrists have come. Therefore we know that it is the last hour.⁴⁶
 19 They went out from us, but they were not of us; for if they had been of us, they would have continued with us. But they went out, that it might become plain that they all are not of us. 20 But you have been anointed by the Holy One, and you all have knowledge. 21 I write to you, not because you do not know the truth, but because you know it, and because no lie is of the truth. 22 Who is the liar but he who denies that Jesus is the Christ? This is the antichrist, he who denies the Father and the Son. 23 No one who denies the Son has the Father. Whoever confesses the Son has the Father also.

44. For "in the last time" the Greek has ἐν καιρῷ ἐσχάτῳ.

45. For "the last hour" the Greek has ἐσχάτη ὥρα.

46. For "the last hour" the Greek has ἐσχάτη ὥρα.

The church knows that the coming of antichrist is part of the last times. This goes back to certain prophecies of Jesus Christ about the rise of false Christs before his coming (Mt 24:5,23-26; Mk 13:5-6,21-22; Lk 21:8). John points out that many such antichrists have already come. It is a phrase only John uses (1 Jn 2:18,22; 4:3; 2 Jn 1:7). Because John could see at the end of the first century that so many antichrists have come, he speaks of the "last hour" of world history. After so many years this last hour is still going on.

Some other special last things

According to 1 Cor 15:26 the "last enemy"⁴⁷ of Jesus Christ to be destroyed is death. This will happen according to 1 Cor 15:54-57 on the day of resurrection. The time when this will happen is given in 1 Cor 15:52 as "at the last trumpet"⁴⁸.

In Revelation 15:1 we hear of the last plagues:

Then I saw another sign in heaven, great and amazing, seven angels with seven plagues, which are the last,⁴⁹ for with them the wrath of God is finished.

In Rev 21:9 the last plagues are mentioned again:

Then came one of the seven angels who had the seven bowls full of the seven last plagues⁵⁰ and spoke to me, saying, "Come, I will show you the Bride, the wife of the Lamb."

47. For the "last enemy" the Greek has ἔσχατος ἐχθρὸς.

48. For "at the last trumpet" the Greek has ἐν τῇ ἐσχάτῃ σάλπιγγι.

49. For the "seven plagues, which are the last" the Greek has πληγὰς ἑπτὰ τὰς ἐσχάτας.

50. For the "full of the seven last plagues" the Greek has τῶν γεμόντων τῶν ἑπτὰ πληγῶν τῶν ἐσχάτων.

The importance of the seven angels administering the bowls full of the seven last plagues is underlined by the fact that three of the last four bigger sections are introduced and accompanied by them: First we see them in action in 15:1-16:21, then one of them guides John in 17:1-19:10 and thirdly another one guides him in 21:9-22:10.

8.2 The day of the Lord

8.2.1 The day of the Lord in the Old Testament

Obadiah

According to Winfried Meissner we can see Obadiah as the first of the writing prophets⁵¹ who prophesied about the middle of the 9th century B.C.⁵² In Ob 1:8-9.15-21 the prophet talks about "the day of the Lord". We hear in Ob 1:15:

For the day of the Lord is near upon all the nations.
As you have done, it shall be done to you;
your deeds shall return on your own head.

Even if all nations are mentioned, the main target for Obadiah is Edom (Ob 1:8-9; see also 1:1.18.19.21):

8 Will I not on that day, declares the Lord,

51. Winfried Meissner, *Bücher Joel und Obadja*, vol. 36, Edition C Bibelkommentar Altes Testament (Holzgerlingen: Hänssler, 2000), p. 252.

52. Later prophets seem to have borrowed from Obadiah. Compare Ob 1:8-9.15-21 with Jer 49:7-22; Ob 1:17 with Joel 2:32; Ob 1:10 with Joel 3:19; Ob 1:11 with Joel 3:3; Ob 1:15a with Joel 3:14; Ob 1:15b with Joel 3:4.7; Ob 1:17 with Joel 3:16f; Ob 1:18 with Joel 3:8; Ob 1:1-9 with Jer 38:22; 49:7ff; Ob 1:16 with Jer 49:12; 25:27ff; Ob 1:17 with Is 14:2. In Ob 1:4.17-19 he seems to point back to Nm 24:21.18f.

destroy the wise men out of Edom,
 and understanding out of Mount Esau?
 9 And your mighty men shall be dismayed, O Teman,
 so that every man from Mount Esau will be cut off by
 slaughter.

If this assumption is correct that Obadiah is the first writing prophet, then he is also the one who began the teaching of the "day of the Lord". He may have had Moses' words of Dt 32:35-36 in mind:⁵³

35 Vengeance is mine, and recompense,
 for the time when their foot shall slip;
 for the day of their calamity is at hand,⁵⁴
 and their doom comes swiftly.'
 36 For the Lord will vindicate his people
 and have compassion on his servants,
 when he sees that their power is gone
 and there is none remaining, bond or free.

The words "for the day of their calamity is at hand",⁵⁵ are reflected in Ob 1:13 "in the day of their calamity"⁵⁶ and in Ob 1:15 "for the day of the Lord is near".⁵⁷ We have already seen before that there is a teaching of the end times in Deuteronomy (31:29) with regard to the song of Moses (Dt 32:1-43). We could see the "day of the Lord" as an action day of God where he endorses his covenant including curses and blessings (Dt 28). Blessings for those who are faithful or repent from their sins, curses for the enemies of the people of God

53. *ibid.*, p. 69.

54. כִּי קָרוֹב יוֹם אֲיֹנִים

55. כִּי קָרוֹב יוֹם אֲיֹנִים

56. בְּיוֹם אֲיֹנִים

57. בְּיִקְרֹב יוֹם-יְהוָה

or those Israelites who have broken the covenant.⁵⁸ The outcome of the day of the Lord in Obadiah is: "... the kingdom shall be the Lord's" (Ob 1:21).

Joel

With Meissner⁵⁹ we see Joel as following Obadiah⁶⁰ and preceding Amos.⁶¹ The tools of God's judgment for Israel in Joel are an enormous army of locusts devouring everything (1:4-7) and a fire that consumes pastures, fields and the water supplies (1:19-20; 2:3). A vast army of all nations is also mentioned, but they are the ones who are judged (3:1-3.9-14). An extra interesting piece of information is that this army comes from the north (2:20).

One key idea of Joel is a call to repentance, to prayer and fasting (1:13-14; 2:1.12-17) because the day of the Lord is near (1:15; 2:1-2; 2:11; 3:14). They should use the trumpet to warn the people (2:1.15). The result of repentance is salvation for Israel's remnant (2:18-27.32; 3:1.16-18.20-21). An outpouring of God's Spirit is promised in relation with the coming of the day of the Lord (2:28-32). God is present in Israel (2:27-29; 3:17.21). The day of the Lord has cosmological dimensions with regard to earth, heavens, sun, moon and stars (2:10-12; 2,30-31; 3:15-16). Salvation also touches the earth and the environment (2:19.21-22).

58. Meissner, *Bücher Joel und Obadja*, p. 64-67.

59. *ibid.*, p. 252.

60. Ob 1:17 seems to be quoted as the word of the Lord in Joel 2:32.

61. Amos seems to start his book in 1:2 with a quote from Joel 4:16 and to end it in 9:13 with a quote from Joel 4:18.

Amos

The prophecy of Amos was received at the time "concerning Israel in the days of Uzziah king of Judah and in the days of Jeroboam the son of Joash, king of Israel, two years before the earthquake".⁶² Amos seems to be fighting a misconception of the day of the Lord which was widespread (5:18-20):

18 Woe to you who desire the day of the Lord!
Why would you have the day of the Lord?
It is darkness, and not light,
19 as if a man fled from a lion,
and a bear met him,
or went into the house
and leaned his hand against the wall,
and a serpent bit him.
20 Is not the day of the Lord darkness, and not light,
and gloom with no brightness in it?

Obadiah had prophesied that the judgment of Edom and all nations would mean salvation for Judah (Ob 1:15-21). Joel had also prophesied that God would save Israel from the attacking nations (Joel 3:2.16):

2 I will gather all the nations
and bring them down to the Valley of Jehoshaphat.
And I will enter into judgment with them there,
on behalf of my people and my heritage Israel,
because they have scattered them among the nations
and have divided up my land...
16 The Lord roars from Zion,

62. See Zec 14:5.

and utters his voice from Jerusalem,
 and the heavens and the earth quake.
 But the Lord is a refuge to his people,
 a stronghold to the people of Israel.

In the context of Joel the roaring of the Lord means judgment of the nations and protection of Israel. Israel had misunderstood and misused the prophecies of Obadiah and of Joel as if repentance were not necessary and God would save them anyhow on his day because they were Israelites. They had eradicated the call of Joel to repent. Therefore Amos quotes this roaring of the Lord but directs it against Israel at the beginning of his book (Amos 1:2):

And he said:
 “The Lord roars from Zion
 and utters his voice from Jerusalem;
 the pastures of the shepherds mourn,
 and the top of Carmel withers.”

The main intention of the book of Amos is to destroy the false security of Israel that they are the people of God but without repenting from their sins (Amos 3:1-2):

1 Hear this word that the Lord has spoken against you,
 O people of Israel, against the whole family
 that I brought up out of the land of Egypt:
 2 “You only have I known
 of all the families of the earth;
 therefore I will punish you
 for all your iniquities.”

Israel's election and their liberation out of Egypt is here turned against them. They are not secure just because they are God's one

and only nation in this world. On the contrary, they will be punished for every single commandment of the covenant they have broken! The day of the Lord in Amos 5:18-20 will be a dark judgment day for Israel leading them into exile (Amos 5:27). This happened when the Assyrians destroyed Samaria in 722 B.C. and deported the northern tribes into the Assyrian exile (2 Kgs 17).

We see in Amos what we will see again in the following writing prophets that the prophets give the "day of the Lord" a double perspective. One perspective is the historical perspective: Some things happen within history, perhaps in their generation or in following generations which will be a fulfillment of certain elements of their prophecy of the day of the Lord. In the case of Amos this is the Assyrian exile of the northern tribes.

But there is also the eschatological aspect of the day of the Lord. At some point in history there will be a total change of the living conditions of Israel, the nations and the whole world. The kingdom will be the Lord's and God will take over. Within Amos this is connected to the rebuilding of the "booth of David" in 9:11-15.

Both perspectives, the historical and the eschatological, are united in the person of the God of the covenant. He has made his covenants with Abraham, Israel and David. He is the ultimate judge and Savior of the world bringing about the kingdom of God and the coming of His Messiah who will establish a kingdom of peace lasting for ever. Every single historical day of the Lord is a precursor of the final and ultimate day of the Lord. The principles are the same in all days of the Lord, justice and righteousness without favoritism.

Isaiah

The first date given in the book of Isaiah is found in 6:1 which is 740 B.C. The last historical note within the book relates the death of Sennacherib king of Assyria in Is 37:37-38 which happened in 681 B.C.⁶³ The first time Isaiah speaks of the day of the Lord (2:6-22) he presents the day very much in the way of Amos as a judgment day upon Israel (2:11-12):

11 The haughty looks of man shall be brought low,
and the lofty pride of men shall be humbled,
and the Lord alone will be exalted in that day.
12 For the Lord of hosts has a day
against all that is proud and lofty,
against all that is lifted up -
and it shall be brought low.

On that day the Lord alone will be exalted. This seems to be the connection to 2:1-5 where the house of the Lord will be the highest place on earth, the center of God's revelation to change the nations. The result is 2:1-5, the way to get there is 2:6-22. The terror caused on earth is described in Is 2:19-21:

19 And people shall enter the caves of the rocks
and the holes of the ground,
from before the terror of the Lord,
and from the splendor of his majesty,
when he rises to terrify the earth.
20 In that day mankind will cast away
their idols of silver and their idols of gold,

63. According to K. A. Kitchen, *On the Reliability of the Old Testament* (Eerdmans, 2003), p. 23.

which they made for themselves to worship,
to the moles and to the bats,
21 to enter the caverns of the rocks
and the clefts of the cliffs,
from before the terror of the Lord,
and from the splendor of his majesty,
when he rises to terrify the earth.

In Is 13:1-14:27 we have an oracle of Isaiah concerning Babylon. The day of the Lord is the subject of 13:2-22. Is 13:6.9 reflects Joel 1:15 by presenting the day of the Lord as "near" and as "a destruction" from the Almighty. As in Joel there are cosmological dimensions to this day (Is 13:10.13). In the same context the destruction of Babylon's kingdom through the Medes is predicted (Is 13:17-22). Again we have the historical⁶⁴ and the eschatological dimension⁶⁵ in one text. In Is 2 Israel was the target of the day of the Lord, here it is Babylon. In Is 22:5 another special day of the Lord is mentioned which in this context again targets Jerusalem. Is 24:1-23 presents the end of this earth. We read in Is 24:19-23 what change this will bring:

19 The earth is utterly broken,
the earth is split apart,
the earth is violently shaken.
20 The earth staggers like a drunken man;
it sways like a hut;
its transgression lies heavy upon it,

64. The Persians and Medes took over from the Babylonians in 539 B.C. See Merrill, *Kingdom of Priests - A History of Old Testament Israel*, p. 448.

65. In the context of the book of Isaiah 13:13 really means the end of this world as in Is 24; 34; 65 and 66.

and it falls, and will not rise again.
 21 On that day the Lord will punish
 the host of heaven, in heaven,
 and the kings of the earth, on the earth.
 22 They will be gathered together
 as prisoners in a pit;
 they will be shut up in a prison,
 and after many days they will be punished.
 23 Then the moon will be confounded
 and the sun ashamed,
 for the Lord of hosts reigns
 on Mount Zion and in Jerusalem,
 and his glory will be before his elders.

"On that day" (24:21) will be in the context of Isaiah the day of the Lord, compare with 25:9; 26:1; 27:1.2; 27:12-13 (all from Is 24-27). On that day Israel sees his God and rejoices in His salvation (25:9). On that day they will sing joyfully about Jerusalem as the city of salvation (26:1). On that day God will kill "Leviathan the fleeing serpent, Leviathan the twisting serpent, and he will slay the dragon that is in the sea" (27:1). On that day Israel will be changed from a useless vineyard (see Is 5:1-7) into a vineyard filling the whole world with good fruit (27:2-6). On that day God will gather his people from Egypt and Assyria by blowing the trumpet and collecting all of them (27:12.13).

Is 34 is another section where all nations and especially Edom are the target of the day of the Lord (Is 34:8)⁶⁶ as it was the case in Ob 1:15.18.19. As we had seen in Is 24 the end of the earth, we are told here about the passing away of the heavens (34:4):

66. For the Lord has a day of vengeance, a year of recompense for the cause of Zion. The first half of the sentence is in Hebrew: כִּי יוֹם נִקְמָם לַיהוָה

All the host of heaven shall rot away,
 and the skies roll up like a scroll.
 All their host shall fall,
 as leaves fall from the vine,
 like leaves falling from the fig tree.

Is 34-35 are twin chapters. Is 34 shows us the judgment of Edom and all nations on the day of the Lord, while Is 35 depicts God coming to redeem his people and lead them home to a new Zion with eternal joy. The "day of vengeance" for the Lord in Is 34:8 is taken up by the Messiah in Is 61:1-2 as part of his proclamation:

1 The Spirit of the Lord God is upon me,
 because the Lord has anointed me
 to bring good news to the poor;
 he has sent me to bind up the brokenhearted,
 to proclaim liberty to the captives,
 and the opening of the prison to those who are bound;
 2 to proclaim the year of the Lord's favor,
 and the day of vengeance of our God;⁶⁷
 to comfort all who mourn.

This is very similar to Is 34-35: Judgment of the enemies of God and comfort for his people. The same theme is continued in Is 62:10-63:6, only that here we have comfort first (62:10-12) and then vengeance (63:1-6), especially 63:4:

For the day of vengeance was in my heart,
 and my year of redemption had come.⁶⁸

67. יוֹם נִקְמָה לְאֱלֹהֵינוּ.

68. כִּי יוֹם נִקְמָה בְּלִבִּי.

Again the day of the Lord is directed against all nations (63:6) and especially Edom (63:1). The Lord is trampling the nations to death as somebody treads a wine press making his garments red (63:1-3.6). We learn from 66:7-8 that Jerusalem and the whole country are born again on one day:

7 Before she was in labor she gave birth;
before her pain came upon her she delivered a son.
8 Who has heard such a thing?
Who has seen such things?
Shall a land be born in one day?⁶⁹
Shall a nation be brought forth in one moment?
For as soon as Zion was in labor
she brought forth her children.

This seems to be about the new birth of Israel through a renewed Jerusalem. This day is not called day of the Lord here. But within the context of Isaiah it will be the same day. The context is the new heavens and the new earth in Is 65-66. Isaiah has taught of the passing away of the earth (Is 24) and the heavens (Is 34) before. Now he teaches the new heavens and the new earth (Is 65:17; 66:22) and a newly created Jerusalem (65:18-19).

Another context within Isaiah where this is taught is Is 51:3-8.16 with a special emphasis on the word of God taking part in the new creation (Is 51:7.16) when heaven and earth pass away (51:6). The prayer in Is 64:1-3 is noteworthy as here they ask for God's coming with a great impact on the heavens and the earth. In a way this prayer is answered in Is 65-66 with a total change of the world order and by the coming of God in Is 66:15-16 with fire:

69. הַיּוֹחֵל אֶרֶץ בְּיוֹם אֶחָד.

15 For behold, the Lord will come in fire, and his chariots like the whirlwind, to render his anger in fury, and his rebuke with flames of fire. 16 For by fire will the Lord enter into judgment, and by his sword, with all flesh; and those slain by the Lord shall be many.⁷⁰

The salvation of Jerusalem (66:7-14) goes again hand in hand with the judgment of the world (66:15-16).

Zephaniah

Zephaniah prophesied in the days of Josiah the son of Amon, king of Judah (1:1). The day of the Lord is an important subject in the three chapters he wrote: 1:7.8.9.10; 1:14.15.16.18; 2:2.3; 3:8.11.16. The day of the Lord brings judgment of Israel (1:4-6) affecting all mankind and beasts (1:2-3); the Philistines (2:4-7); Moab and the Ammonites (2:8-11); the Cushites (2:12) and the Assyrians (2:13-15).

The historical dimension of this day of the Lord relates to the coming of the Babylonians who conquered Jerusalem and Judah in 605 and 597 B.C. and destroyed Jerusalem in 586.⁷¹ The other nations named were also affected by the victories of the Babylonians.

Zephaniah also sees salvation for Israel's remnant (2:9; 3:12-13.19-20) and even for a remnant of the nations (2:11; 3:9). In Zep 1:18 we read: "In the fire of his jealousy, all the earth shall be consumed". In 3:8 God says "in the fire of my jealousy all the earth shall be consumed". The outcome of the day of the Lord is God's

70. See also Is 59:16-21.

71. Meissner, *Bücher Joel und Obadja*, p. 70.

joyful presence in Israel and Jerusalem (3:14.15.17). Compare 3:13 with Rv 14:4.

Jeremiah

In Lamentations 2:21-22 Jeremiah sees the fall of Jerusalem as something that happened "on the day of the anger of the Lord". There are some elements in Jer 25:15-38 which remind us of the day of the Lord in other prophets. For example the roaring of the lion (Jer 25:30.38) as in Joel and Amos.

The phrase "on that day" in 25:31-33 could be understood in the background of the day of the Lord (compare Jer 25:33 with Is 66:16). Certain phrases in Jer 30:1-3.4-11.17-22.23-24 remind us of other passages which talk of the day of the Lord, especially Jer 30:7-8. It is interesting that Jer 31:1 continues in the same time frame (see 31:1-14.15-25.26.27-30.31-40) including the prediction of the new covenant.

Ezekiel

The fall of Jerusalem is prophesied in Ez 7:19 as happening "in the day of the wrath of the Lord" or in 13:5 "in the day of the Lord". Ez 34:12 speaks of the going into the exile as happening "on a day of clouds and thick darkness".⁷² Ez 30:2ff sees the conquest of Egypt as happening on the "day of the Lord".⁷³ There are certain elements in Ez 38-39 which remind us of prophecies about the day of the Lord in other books: 38:8.15.16.17.18-23; 39:6-7.8.10 (see Jer 30:16; Ob); 39:17 (see Rev 19:17-18); 39:21-23 (from that day forward!).25-29 (pouring out of the Spirit, see Joel; having come

72. בָּיּוֹם עָנָן וְעָרְפָּל

73. See Meissner, Bücher Joel und Obadja, p. 70.

back from all nations; knowing the Lord). There are also some parallels in Ez 47:1ff and Joel 3:18; Ez 36:26f; 39:29 and Joel 2:28f; Ez 38:6.15; 39:2.11; 38:17; 39:2.8 and Joel 2:20 (the enemy is from the north).

Zechariah

Zechariah closes his book with the day of the Lord 14:1.3.4.6.7.8.9.13.20.21 He comes for battle to save his people from the enemies. We read in Zec 14:1-4:

1 Behold, a day is coming for the Lord, when the spoil taken from you will be divided in your midst.
2 For I will gather all the nations against Jerusalem to battle, and the city shall be taken and the houses plundered and the women raped. Half of the city shall go out into exile, but the rest of the people shall not be cut off from the city. 3 Then the Lord will go out and fight against those nations as when he fights on a day of battle. 4 On that day his feet shall stand on the Mount of Olives that lies before Jerusalem on the east, and the Mount of Olives shall be split in two from east to west by a very wide valley, so that one half of the Mount shall move northward, and the other half southward.

This day can be combined with the event in Zec 12:9-10 which may report God's saving Israel at the same time. They recognize him whom they have pierced and mourn for him and receive forgiveness of their sins and the Holy Spirit (13:1).

Malachi

According to Malachi the day of the Lord is like "a refiner's fire and like fullers' soap" (3:2). It is "burning like an oven" for the evildoers who will be like stubble burnt to ashes (4:1.3). But for those who fear the Lord "the sun of righteousness shall rise with healing in its wings" on that day (4:2). Because this day is dangerous for those unprepared, God sends Elijah the prophet to prepare God's people for this day (3:1; 4:5). Mal 4:5 points back to Joel 2:31.

8.2.2 The day of the Lord in the New Testament

The "day of the Lord" is also an important subject in the New Testament. According to our understanding the following terms are used for the "day of the Lord" in a synonymous way in the given verses:

the day of the Lord⁷⁴ (Acts 2:20; 1 Cor 5:5; 1 Thes 5:2; 2 Thes 2:2; 2 Pt 3:10)
 the day of our Lord Jesus Christ⁷⁵ (1 Cor 1:8)
 the day of our Lord Jesus⁷⁶ (2 Cor 1:14)
 the day of Christ Jesus⁷⁷ (Phil 1:6)
 the day of Christ⁷⁸ (Phil 1:10; 2:16)
 the day of the son of man⁷⁹ (Lk 17:24)
 the day the son of man will be revealed⁸⁰ (Lk 17:30)

74. ἡμέρα κυρίου or ἡ ἡμέρα τοῦ κυρίου.

75. ἐν τῇ ἡμέρᾳ τοῦ κυρίου ἡμῶν Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ

76. ἐν τῇ ἡμέρᾳ τοῦ κυρίου ἡμῶν Ἰησοῦ

77. ἄχρι ἡμέρας Χριστοῦ Ἰησοῦ

78. εἰς ἡμέραν Χριστοῦ

79. οὕτως ἔσται ὁ υἱὸς τοῦ ἀνθρώπου ἐν τῇ ἡμέρᾳ αὐτοῦ

80. ἔσται ἡ ἡμέρα ὃ υἱὸς τοῦ ἀνθρώπου ἀποκαλύπτεται

the day of God⁸¹ (2 Pt 3:12; Rv 16:14)
 the day of wrath⁸² (Rom 2:5; Rv 6:17)
 the day of judgment⁸³ (Mt 10:15; 11:22,24; 12:36; 2
 Pt 2:9; 3:7; 1 John 4:17)
 the day when God judges⁸⁴ (Rom 2:16)
 the judgment of the great day⁸⁵ (Jude 1:6)
 the last day⁸⁶ (John 6:39,40,44,54; 11:24; 12:48)
 the day of eternity⁸⁷ (2 Pt 3:18)
 on that day⁸⁸ (Mt 7:22; 24:36; 26:29; Mk 13:32; 14:25;
 Lk 10:12; 17:31; 21:34; 2 Thes 1:10; 2 Tm 1:12;
 1:18; 4:8.
 the day⁸⁹ (1 Cor 3:13; 1 Thes 5:4)

What can we learn according to these sections about the day of the Lord?

What happens before the day of the Lord?

The outpouring of God's Spirit happens before (Acts 2:16-21).

81. τὴν παρουσίαν τῆς τοῦ θεοῦ ἡμέρας or εἰς τὸν πόλεμον τῆς ἡμέρας τῆς μεγάλης τοῦ θεοῦ

82. ἐν ἡμέρᾳ ὀργῆς καὶ ἀποκαλύψεως δικαιοκρισίας τοῦ θεοῦ or ἡ ἡμέρα ἡ μεγάλη τῆς ὀργῆς αὐτῶν

83. ἐν ἡμέρᾳ κρίσεως or εἰς ἡμέραν κρίσεως καὶ ἀπωλείας τῶν ἀσεβῶν ἀνθρώπων or ἐν τῇ ἡμέρᾳ τῆς κρίσεως

84. ἐν ἡμέρᾳ ὅτε κρίνει ὁ θεὸς

85. εἰς κρίσιν μεγάλης ἡμέρας

86. τῇ ἐσχάτῃ ἡμέρᾳ or ἐν τῇ ἐσχάτῃ ἡμέρᾳ

87. εἰς ἡμέραν αἰῶνος

88. ἡ ἡμέρα ἐκείνη or ἐν ἐκείνῃ τῇ ἡμέρᾳ or ἐν τῇ ἡμέρᾳ ἐκείνῃ or Περὶ δὲ τῆς ἡμέρας ἐκείνης or ἕως τῆς ἡμέρας ἐκείνης or εἰς ἐκείνην τὴν ἡμέραν

89. ἡ ἡμέρα

Signs and wonders in heaven and on earth happen before it. The sun turns to darkness and the moon to blood (Acts 2:16-21).

A strong denial of the coming of the day of the Lord by scoffers will happen (2 Pt 3:3-4).

The man of lawlessness "is revealed, the son of destruction, who opposes and exalts himself against every so-called god or object of worship, so that he takes his seat in the temple of God, proclaiming himself to be God" (2 Thes 2:3-4). "What is restraining" the man of lawlessness and "who is restraining" him has to be out of the way before he can be revealed (2 Thes 2:6-7).

Armageddon will be the place where three unclean spirits will cause a worldwide army to be gathered (Rv 16:13-14)).

What will the day of the Lord be like?

Nobody knows the day. The Lord comes on his day like a thief in the night (1 Thes 5:2.4; 2 Pt 3:10; Mt 24:36.42-43; Mk 13:32; Lk 12:39-40; 21:34; Rv 3:3; 16:15).

Visible everywhere like lightning and not secret will the son of man be on his day (Lk 17:24.30; Mt 24:27).

Great and awe-inspiring is this day (Acts 2:20; Jude 1:6; Rv 6:17; 16:14).

Fiery will this day be consuming all nonspiritual works in fire and dissolving the heavens and the earth (1 Cor 3:13-15; 2 Pt 3:10.12; compare 2 Thes 1:7).

A "day of eternity" ending this world and bringing eternity (2 Pt 3:18).

What happens on the day of the Lord?

The judgment will happen on that day so that some get saved and rewarded and others are condemned and punished (Mt 7:22; 10:15; 11:22.24; 12:36; Lk 10:12; 17:24-37; John 12:48; Acts 2:21; Rom 2:5-10.16; 1 Cor 1:8; 5:5; 2 Cor 1:14; Phil 1:10; 2:16; 1 Thes 5:3; 2 Thes 2:8; 2 Tm 1:18; 4:8; 2 Pt 2:9; 3:7; 1 John 4:17; Jude 1:6).

The completion of God's work in the believers is promised for that day (Phil 1:6; 2 Tm 1:12).

The resurrection will happen (John 6:39.40.44.54; 11:24; 5:28; 1 Thes 4:13-5:11).

The transformation of the living believers will happen (1 Thes 4:13-5:11; compare 1 Cor 15:50-52).

The rapture of the believers towards Jesus Christ coming in the clouds will happen (1 Thes 4:17).

The eternal kingdom of God starts on that day (Mt 26:29; Mk 14:25).

War will break out - between the armies of the kings of the whole world on the one hand and the almighty God on the other and God will have the victory (Rv 16:14).

A glorious divine appearing will be the coming of the Lord Jesus Christ (2 Thes 1:10).

8.3 The coming kingdom of God

8.3.1 In the Old Testament

The idea that God is king is found quite often in the Old Testament,⁹⁰ but in some texts there is also the idea of a future coming kingdom of God which will change the whole world. Some of those texts we have already seen together with predictions of the coming Messiah. There will be a kingdom of peace lasting forever with Jerusalem as the center of the world according to Is 2:1-5; Micah 4:1-5 and Jer 3:15-18. In Isaiah there are more statements about the coming kingdom of God (Is 9:6-7; 11:1-10; 24:23; 25:6-9; 26:19; 52:7; 60-62; 65-66). Let us hear Is 9:6-7:

6 For to us a child is born,
to us a son is given;
and the government shall be upon his shoulder,
and his name shall be called
Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God,
Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace.
7 Of the increase of his government and of peace
there will be no end,
on the throne of David and over his kingdom,
to establish it and to uphold it
with justice and with righteousness
from this time forth and forevermore.
The zeal of the Lord of hosts will do this.

90. See for example Ex 15:18; 1 Sm 8:7; 12:12; Ps 96:10; 97:1; 99:1.

The idea is that this king will start to reign and never stop to rule. This is an eternal kingdom. If we combine Is 9:6 and 10:21 the same name "Mighty God"⁹¹ is used as the name of the son of David in 9:6 and of God in 10:21. The result is a hint at the divinity of the Messiah who will live and remain for ever.

In the second year (604 B.C.)⁹² of his reign king Nebuchadnezzar of Babylon had a dream of an image and of a stone destroying the image. In his interpretation of the king's dream Daniel explains that the image represents four world kingdoms and that the stone which destroys the image is the kingdom of God (Dan 2:44-45):

44 And in the days of those kings the God of heaven will set up a kingdom that shall never be destroyed, nor shall the kingdom be left to another people. It shall break in pieces all these kingdoms and bring them to an end, and it shall stand forever, 45 just as you saw that a stone was cut from a mountain by no human hand, and that it broke in pieces the iron, the bronze, the clay, the silver, and the gold. A great God has made known to the king what shall be after this. The dream is certain, and its interpretation sure.

According to the prophetic explanation God would establish his kingdom during the time of the four kingdoms of the world. There would be a time of overlapping with both the image and the stone on the scene but finally the stone would destroy all four kingdoms and become the only power left in the world. The first kingdom was Babylon with Nebuchadnezzar as the golden head (2:38). When we look back from the New Testament fulfillment to Dan 2, we can

91. אֵל גִּבּוֹר

92. Merrill, *Kingdom of Priests - A History of Old Testament Israel*, p. 448.

count 1. Babylon, 2. Medo-Persia, 3. Greece and 4. the Roman Empire. It is impressive that Jesus Christ was born during the Roman Empire fulfilling this prophecy. In the first year of Belshazzar king of Babylon, Daniel himself saw a dream which he wrote down in Dan 7 (Dn 7:1). Daniel saw four animals representing four kingdoms of this world. The first like a lion, the second like a bear, the third like a leopard and the fourth totally different, terrifying and causing a lot of trouble for the saints. But because of the power and the judgment of God, "the ancient of days", these four world kingdoms were finished and all power was handed over to someone who was like a son of man (Dn 7:13-14):

13 I saw in the night visions,
and behold, with the clouds of heaven
there came one like a son of man,
and he came to the Ancient of Days
and was presented before him.
14 And to him was given dominion
and glory and a kingdom,
that all peoples, nations, and languages
should serve him;
his dominion is an everlasting dominion,
which shall not pass away,
and his kingdom one
that shall not be destroyed.

At the end of the following interpretation of the vision the empowering of the one who is like a son of man and who stands in contrast to the four wild animals is explained with the following words (Dn 7:27):

And the kingdom and the dominion

and the greatness of the kingdoms
 under the whole heaven
 shall be given to the people of the saints
 of the Most High;
 their kingdom shall be an everlasting kingdom,
 and all dominions shall serve and obey them.'

If we combine the teaching of Dn 2 and Dn 7 and Is 9 we can say that according to these prophecies a kingdom of God was to be expected which would last for ever. As Nebuchadnezzar in his own person represents the whole Babylonian kingdom (Dn 2:38) the son of David represents and establishes the whole kingdom of God (Is 9:6-7; Dn 7:13-14.28). When the Messiah receives the kingdom, the people of the saints of the Most High receive the kingdom. Or to put it in other words: The coming of the Messiah is the coming of the kingdom of God. We have already seen that the day of the Lord in Zechariah 14 results in God's universal kingdom (Zec 14:9):

And the Lord will be king over all the earth.
 On that day the Lord will be one and his name one.

8.3.2 **In the New Testament**

The "kingdom of God"⁹³ is a very important concept in the New Testament. The "kingdom of heaven" is used synonymously in

93. Kingdom of God Mt 12:28 ἡ βασιλεία τοῦ θεοῦ; 19:24; 21:31; 21:43; Mk 1:15; 4:11; 4:26; 4:30; 9:1; 9:47; 10:14; 10:15; 10:23; 10:24; 10:25; 12:34; 14:25; 15:43; Lk 4:43; 6:20; 7:28; 8:1; 8:10; 9:2; 9:11; 9:27; 9:60; 9:62; 10:9; 10:11; 11:20; 13:18; 13:20; 13:28; 13:29; 14:15; 16:16; 17:20; 17:21; 18:16; 18:17; 18:24; 18:25; 18:29; 19:11; 21:31; 22:16; 22:18; 23:51; John 3:3; 3:5; Acts 1:3; 8:12; 14:22; 19:8; 28:23; 28:31; Rom 14:17; 1 Cor 4:20; 6:9; 6:10; 15:24; 15:50; Gal 5:21; Eph 5:5; Col 4:11; 1 Thes 2:12; 2 Thes 1:5; 2 Tm 4:1; Heb 1:8; Jas 2:5; Rv 12:10.

Matthew probably because of the Jewish tendency to avoid using the name of God. Therefore "of heaven" is said instead of "of God".⁹⁴ Because Jesus Christ is the king of this kingdom of God or of heaven the "kingdom of Christ"⁹⁵ is used synonymously as well. The kingdom is also called the kingdom of the father of the righteous (Mt 13:43). In the following we will try to sum up what these sections teach us about the kingdom of God or of Christ.

The kingdom of God is near.

The liberation of demon possessed people is a sign of the kingdom of God having arrived (Mt 12:28; Lk 11:20). John the Baptist started to preach that people should repent because the kingdom of God was near (Mt 3:2).⁹⁶ After John was put into prison, Jesus preached the same message (Mt 4:17, Mk 1:15). Later Jesus sent the twelve (Mt 10:7) and the 72 disciples (Lk 10:9.11 with the same message that the kingdom of God is near. In all these texts this is the reason for immediate repentance. In his discourse about the destruction of Jerusalem and the further developments until his own coming back with the clouds Jesus says (Lk 21:31):

So also, when you see these things taking place,
you know that the kingdom of God is near.⁹⁷

94. The phrase "kingdom of heaven" is used in Matthew 3:2 ἡ βασιλεία τῶν οὐρανῶν; 4:17; 5:3; 5:10; 5:19; 5:20; 7:21; 8:11; 10:7; 11:11; 11:12; 13:11; 13:24; 13:31; 13:33; 13:44; 13:45; 13:47; 13:52; 16:19; 18:1; 18:3; 18:4; 18:23; 19:12; 19:14; 19:23; 20:1; 22:2; 23:13; 25:1.

95. Kingdom of Christ Eph 5:5 ἐν τῇ βασιλείᾳ τοῦ Χριστοῦ καὶ θεοῦ; 2 Tm 4:1; Heb 1:8; 2 Pt 1:11; Rv 11:15; 12:10; 1 Cor 15:24.)

96. ἤγγικεν γὰρ ἡ βασιλεία τῶν οὐρανῶν

97. ὅτι ἐγγύς ἐστιν ἡ βασιλεία τοῦ θεοῦ

This is another aspect of the kingdom of God being near than used in the call to repentance above. In the call of repentance the kingdom of God was offered to Israel in the person of Jesus Christ the Messiah. But when Jesus was rejected and crucified, the kingdom of God was taken away from them to be given to another people who would produce the fruit God requested (Mt 21:43; Lk 19:41-44). This other nation would be people from Israel (like Peter, James and John) and from all Gentile nations (like Luke and Theophilus) who would accept Jesus Christ as Savior and bring forth fruit worthy of repentance. But in Lk 21:31 the course of the end times comes to its closure. The times of the Gentiles will come to an end (Lk 21:24) and the son of David will come to his nation to claim his throne for ever (Lk 1:32-33; 13:34-35; Rom 11:25-29) to fulfill the old prophecy of Is 9:6-7 and Is 11:1-10.

To whom does the kingdom of God belong?

When Jesus saw the faith of the centurion, he proclaimed that many people like him will come from east and west and recline at table with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob in the kingdom of heaven (Mt 8:11; Lk 13:28 is very similar, but adding north and south.). People who reach this kingdom will feast, eat bread and drink wine, enjoying the blessings of God's kingdom (Mk 14:25; Lk 14:15; 22:16.18).

To enter the kingdom of God it is not enough to call Jesus Lord, but it is necessary to live under his rule (Mt 7:21. According to Mt 18:3 only those who turn and become like children will enter. All have to receive the kingdom like a child (Mk 10:15; Lk 18:17).

For the rich it is notoriously difficult to enter the kingdom (Mt 19:23.24; Mk 10:23.24.25; Lk 18:24.25). This is also true for those who think themselves spiritually rich (compare Mt 5:3), therefore

repentant tax collectors and prostitutes will go into the kingdom of God before them (Mt 21:31).

Jesus admonishes people very drastically to fight sin and temptation in their lives. It would be better to lose one eye and enter the kingdom handicapped than to go to hell with both eyes (Mk 9:47). One has to be born of water and the Spirit to enter God's kingdom (John 3:5). Paul states in Acts 14:22, "that through many tribulations we must enter the kingdom of God". If believers follow Peter's admonition "there will be richly provided" for them "an entrance into the eternal kingdom of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ" (2 Pt 1:11).

Who is great or small in the kingdom of God? In the sermon on the mount Jesus declares (Mt 5:19.20):

Therefore whoever relaxes one of the least of these commandments and teaches others to do the same will be called least in the kingdom of heaven, but whoever does them and teaches them will be called great in the kingdom of heaven.

When the disciples asked who will be the greatest in the kingdom of heaven, Jesus showed them a child and explained: "Whoever humbles himself like this child is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven" (Mt 18:1.4). It may come as a surprise that the smallest in the kingdom of God is greater than John the Baptist about whom Jesus says that among those born of women there has arisen no one greater than John the Baptist (Mt 11:11; Lk 7:28).

John the Baptist is a man of transition. He marks the end of the Law and the Prophets according to Lk 16:16-18:

16 The Law and the Prophets were until John; since then the good news of the kingdom of God is preached, and everyone forces⁹⁸ his way into it. 17 But it is easier for heaven and earth to pass away than for one dot of the Law to become void. 18 Everyone who divorces his wife and marries another commits adultery, and he who marries a woman divorced from her husband commits adultery.

In Lk 16:16-18 force seems to be used to get into the kingdom. John also marks the start of the preaching of the near kingdom of God (Mt 3:2). Jesus says about him (Mt 11:11-14):

11 Truly, I say to you, among those born of women there has arisen no one greater than John the Baptist. Yet the one who is least in the kingdom of heaven is greater than he. 12 From the days of John the Baptist until now the kingdom of heaven has suffered violence,⁹⁹ and the violent take it by force. 13 For all the Prophets and the Law prophesied until John, 14 and if you are willing to accept it, he is Elijah who is to come.

The verse 11:12 translated like this could point to the fact that John has been put into prison (Mt 11:2) as a representative prophet of the

98. Here the verb form in the Greek καὶ πᾶς εἰς αὐτὴν βιάζεται is understood as middle.

99. Here the verb form βιάζεται is understood as passive, see F. E. Gaebelein, *The Expositors Bible Commentary: Matthew, Mark, Luke*, vol. 8, Carson, D. A. and Wessell, W. W. and Liefeld, W. L. (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Zondervan, 1984), p. 266. If it is understood as middle, it can be translated: "the kingdom of heaven has been coming violently". In this case Jesus means the successful spreading of the kingdom by the power of God.

kingdom of God and suffers violence. The violent who take it by force could be people who make it impossible for others to enter as in Mt 23:13. And the same powers that attacked John would sooner or later also attack Jesus.

To inherit the kingdom of God is used by Paul synonymously with the other phrase to have (or reap) eternal life. Compare Gal 5:19-21 with Gal 6:7-8:

5:19 Now the works of the flesh are evident: sexual immorality, impurity, sensuality, 20 idolatry, sorcery, enmity, strife, jealousy, fits of anger, rivalries, dissensions, divisions, 21 envy, drunkenness, orgies, and things like these. I warn you, as I warned you before, that those who do such things will not inherit the kingdom of God...¹⁰⁰ 6:7 Do not be deceived: God is not mocked, for whatever one sows, that will he 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.

Those who will not inherit the kingdom will reap "corruption". Those who follow the Spirit and bring forth the fruit of the Spirit will inherit the kingdom and reap eternal life. In 1 Cor 6:9-10 the people who will not inherit the kingdom are "the unrighteous... the sexually immoral... idolaters ... adulterers... men who practice homosexuality ... thieves... the greedy... drunkards... revilers... swindlers". In Eph 5:5 the people who are excluded from the kingdom¹⁰¹ are the "sexually immoral or impure" or the "covetous".

100. οἱ τὰ τοιαῦτα πράσσοντες βασιλείαν θεοῦ οὐ κληρονομήσουσιν

101. οὐκ ἔχει κληρονομίαν ἐν τῇ βασιλείᾳ τοῦ Χριστοῦ καὶ θεοῦ

Paul always uses the phrase in a negative sense to show who will not inherit the kingdom of God. This is also true for the last section we are going to look at in 1 Cor 15:50 in the context of 15:50-57:

50 I tell you this, brothers: flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God,¹⁰² nor does the perishable inherit the imperishable. 51 Behold! I tell you a mystery. We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed, 52 in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet. For the trumpet will sound, and the dead will be raised imperishable, and we shall be changed. 53 For this perishable body must put on the imperishable, and this mortal body must put on immortality. 54 When the perishable puts on the imperishable, and the mortal puts on immortality, then shall come to pass the saying that is written: "Death is swallowed up in victory." 55 "O death, where is your victory? O death, where is your sting?" 56 The sting of death is sin, and the power of sin is the law. 57 But thanks be to God, who gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ.

The whole of chapter 15 is dedicated to the subject of the resurrection of the dead. "Flesh and blood" are the human beings as they are in this earthly life. In 15:44-45 flesh and blood is called "a natural body"¹⁰³ in contrast to the future "spiritual body"¹⁰⁴. Adam represents this natural body having been created as "a living being".¹⁰⁵

102. σὰρξ καὶ αἷμα βασιλείαν θεοῦ κληρονομήσαι οὐ δύναται

103. σῶμα ψυχικόν

104. σῶμα πνευματικόν

105. Ἐγένετο ὁ πρῶτος ἄνθρωπος Ἀδάμ εἰς ψυχὴν ζῶσαν•

The blood within an earthly¹⁰⁶ human being is identified as the seat of his "natural life" or his "soul" (see Lev 17:10-11).

In contrast to the first Adam stands Christ as the last Adam who in his resurrection became "a life-giving spirit"¹⁰⁷ and is the prototype of the heavenly¹⁰⁸ and new mankind (15:48). Everyone who wants to enter the kingdom of God must be changed into the likeness of Christ as the heavenly Adam.¹⁰⁹

Dead believers will stand up with an already new body. Believers who will be alive at the time of the last trumpet and the coming of Christ (see 1 Thes 4:16; Mt 24:31; Is 27:13) will be changed within one second, within the twinkling of an eye. The verses 15:54-57 celebrate this as the victory over death, which is the last enemy Paul spoke about in 15:26.

To what kind of people does the kingdom of God belong? The kingdom is for people who are the "poor in spirit" (Mt 5:3) or the "poor" (Lk 6:20; Jas 2:5) or those who are persecuted because of righteousness (Mt 5:10 or who turn and become like children (Mt 18:3 or are children (Mt 19:14, Mk 10:14, Lk 18:16). Indeed everyone has to receive the kingdom of God like a child (Mk 10:15; Lk 18:17). God as the father of the "little flock" is going to give the kingdom to them (Lk 12:32). We learn from Lk 9:62 who is not fit for the kingdom:

“No one who puts his hand to the plow and looks back is fit¹¹⁰ for the kingdom of God.”

106. χοϊκός

107. πνεῦμα ζωοποιούν

108. ὁ ἐπουράνιος

109. Compare Phil 3:20-21.

110. εὐθετός

When John reports his personal testimony of how he received the book of Revelation he says in Rv 1:9):

I, John, your brother and partner in the tribulation and the kingdom and the patient endurance that are in Jesus, was on the island called Patmos on account of the word of God and the testimony of Jesus.

Here is someone who has a share in the tribulation and the kingdom! Patient suffering and glory go hand in hand. That is the life of John and the teaching of Revelation and indeed the whole of New Testament (see Mt 5:10 above). Amongst the scribes who discussed the most important commandment with Jesus there was one who had so much insight that Jesus told him he was "not far from the kingdom of God" (Mk 12:34). Joseph of Arimathea was "a respected member of the Council, who was also himself looking for the kingdom of God" (Mk 15:43¹¹¹; compare Lk 23:51). The kingdom, of course, belongs to those whom God calls "into his own kingdom and glory" (1 Thes 2:12) or who are "considered worthy of the kingdom of God" (2 Thes 1:5). To see the kingdom of God one has to be born again (John 3:3). Jesus said that some of his disciples would live until they see the kingdom of God having come in power (Mk 9:1; Lk 9:27).

To become a kingdom of priests was the invitation to Israel by God in Ex 19:6. That was part of God's covenant promise on Mount Sinai. In the New Testament or "New Covenant" Peter declares that those Gentiles who believe in Christ are "a royal priesthood"¹¹²

111. ὃς καὶ αὐτὸς ἦν προσδεχόμενος τὴν βασιλείαν τοῦ θεοῦ

112. βασιλείον ἱεράτευμα

(1 Pt 2:9). They are now included together with the believing Israelites in this promise of the covenant. In Rv 1:5-6 Christ is praised:

5 ... To him who loves us and has freed us from our sins by his blood 6 and made us a kingdom, priests to his God and Father¹¹³, to him be glory and dominion forever and ever. Amen.

In Rv 5:9-10 is a very similar praise of Jesus Christ:

9 ... "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, 10 and you have made them a kingdom and priests to our God, and they shall reign on the earth."¹¹⁴

But here is also a piece of additional information which is quite significant. The redeemed believers from all nations are "a kingdom and priests to our God" in the sense that they themselves "shall reign on the earth" (compare also Rv 20:6; 22:5). The kingdom of God is where God the Father reigns through Christ, God's Son who reigns through his redeemed from all nations.

Parables of the kingdom of God

1. Parable of the sower (Mt 13:11,18)
2. Parable of the weeds (Mt 13:24)
3. Parable of the mustard seed (Mt 13:31, Mk 4:30, Lk 13:18)

113. καὶ ἐποίησεν ἡμᾶς βασιλείαν, ἱερεῖς τῷ θεῷ καὶ πατρὶ αὐτοῦ

114. καὶ ἐποίησας αὐτοὺς τῷ θεῷ ἡμῶν βασιλείαν καὶ ἱερεῖς, καὶ βασιλεύουσιν ἐπὶ τῆς γῆς.

4. Parable of the yeast (Mt 13:33, Lk 13:20)
5. Parable of the hidden treasure (Mt 13:44)
6. Parable of the pearl (Mt 13:45)
7. Parable of the net (Mt 13:47)
8. Parable of the house owner (Mt 13:52)
9. Parable of the growing seed (Mk 4:26)
10. Parable of the unmerciful servant (Mt 18:23)
11. Parable of the workers in the vineyard (Mt 20:1)
12. Parable of the wedding banquet (Mt 22:2)
13. Parable of the ten virgins (Mt 25:1)
14. Parable of the great banquet (Lk 14:15-16)
15. Parable of the ten minas (Lk 19:11)

All these parables teach different aspects of the spreading of the kingdom of God, of its development through history and its final eschatological realization:

How to receive and spread the kingdom by faith and
give first priority to it (1, 5, 6, 8, 12, 13, 14, 15)

The astonishing spread and powerful growth of the
kingdom (3, 4, 9)

About the activities of the devil to hinder the kingdom
(1, 2)

About God's judgment separating the wicked from the
righteous (2, 7, 10, 12, 13, 15)

About God's kindness and mercy in offering the king-
dom (11, 12, 14, 15)

Working and sacrificing for God's kingdom

The mystery or mysteries of the kingdom of God have been given to the disciples of Jesus so that they can understand them and, of

course, teach them (Mt 13:11; Lk 8:10; Mk 4:11). In his twofold work Luke uses several phrases for teaching or preaching the kingdom of God. "Preaching the good news of"¹¹⁵ the kingdom is used in Lk 4:43; 8:1; 16:16 and Acts 8:12. "Preaching"¹¹⁶ the kingdom is found in Lk 4:43-44; 8:1; 9:2; Acts 28:31. Jesus "spoke to them of the kingdom of God"¹¹⁷ (Lk 9:11). When Jesus called someone to follow him who wanted to bury his father first he commanded him (Lk 9:60):

Leave the dead to bury their own dead. But as for you, go and proclaim the kingdom of God.¹¹⁸

According to Acts 1:3 the risen Christ presented himself alive to the apostles "appearing to them during forty days and speaking about the kingdom of God."¹¹⁹ In Ephesus Paul "entered the synagogue and for three months spoke boldly, reasoning and persuading them about the kingdom of God"¹²⁰ (Acts 19:8). When Paul arrived in Rome as a prisoner he explained to the leading Jews that he was not a criminal and would put no charge against his people before Caesar, but that he actually was bound because he believed in the future hope of redemption for Israel (Acts 28:17-20). When they showed interest he invited them to his rented house and they came (Acts 28:23):

When they had appointed a day for him, they came to him at his lodging in greater numbers. From morning till evening he expounded to them, testifying to the

115. εὐαγγελίζομαι

116. κηρύσσω

117. ἐλάλει αὐτοῖς περὶ τῆς βασιλείας τοῦ θεοῦ

118. σὺ δὲ ἀπελθὼν διάγγελλε τὴν βασιλείαν τοῦ θεοῦ.

119. λέγων τὰ περὶ τῆς βασιλείας τοῦ θεοῦ

120. διαλεγόμενος καὶ πείθων περὶ τῆς βασιλείας τοῦ θεοῦ

kingdom of God and trying to convince them about Jesus both from the Law of Moses and from the Prophets.¹²¹

The book of Acts summarizes the two years of Paul's light captivity in Rome and his ability to teach and preach in this way (28:30-31):

He lived there two whole years at his own expense, and welcomed all who came to him, 31 proclaiming the kingdom of God¹²² and teaching about the Lord Jesus Christ with all boldness and without hindrance.

While scribes and Pharisees try to shut the entrance to the kingdom of God in people's faces without having the authority to do so (Mt 23:13), Jesus gives the apostle Peter a great promise in Mt 16:19:

I will give you the keys of the kingdom of heaven, and whatever you bind on earth shall be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven.”

It is not necessary to understand this authority as exclusively given to Peter because in Mt 18:18-20 the same authority seems to be given to two or three who become one in prayer in the name of Jesus. In Col 4:11 Paul lists some Jews as his "fellow workers for the kingdom of God"¹²³ and states that "they have been a comfort to me". There are people who do not marry because of the kingdom of God (Mt 19:12). Others leave "house or wife or brothers or parents

121. διαμαρτυρούμενος τὴν βασιλείαν τοῦ θεοῦ πείθων τε αὐτοὺς περὶ τοῦ Ἰησοῦ ἀπὸ τε τοῦ νόμου Μωϋσέως καὶ τῶν προφητῶν ἀπὸ πρωτῆ ἕως ἑσπέρας.

122. κηρύσσων τὴν βασιλείαν τοῦ θεοῦ

123. συνεργοὶ εἰς τὴν βασιλείαν τοῦ θεοῦ

or children, for the sake of the kingdom of God" and will "receive many times more in this time, and in the age to come eternal life" (Lk 18:29). Paul sees evidence of "the righteous judgment of God" that the Thessalonian believers "may be considered worthy of the kingdom of God" for which they are also suffering (2 Thes 1:5).

Qualities of the kingdom of God

When Paul wants to show the Christians in Rome how the "weak" and the "strong" in faith can live together in peace and not have clashes about eating, drinking and holy days he admonishes them by pointing to the qualities of God's kingdom (Rom 14:17):

For the kingdom of God is not a matter of eating and drinking but of righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Spirit.¹²⁴

There were some people in Corinth who despised Paul (2 Cor 10:10) and had the ability to talk in a dazzling way, but Paul is confident that when he comes it will become evident who has the real authority from God (1 Cor 4:20):

For the kingdom of God does not consist in talk but in power.¹²⁵

The kingdom of God at the end of the end times

The "Our Father" contains this request (Mt 6:10; Lk 11:2):

124. οὐ γὰρ ἐστὶν ἡ βασιλεία τοῦ θεοῦ βρώσις καὶ πόσις, ἀλλὰ δικαιοσύνη καὶ εἰρήνη καὶ χαρὰ ἐν πνεύματι ἁγίῳ•

125. οὐ γὰρ ἐν λόγῳ ἡ βασιλεία τοῦ θεοῦ ἀλλ. ἐν δυνάμει.

Your kingdom come.¹²⁶

The Greek verb form is aorist imperative. This request may include the following aspects: Firstly that God's salvation bringing reign which has already started with the coming of Christ may be spread. This means that people obediently accept God's rule in their lives and taste the blessings of eschatological salvation. Secondly, that the consummate and final ushering in of the kingdom of God may happen soon.¹²⁷ Because this eschatological coming of the kingdom of God is related to the second coming of Christ in the clouds of heaven, we will see more of this when we talk about the second coming of Jesus Christ.

When will the kingdom come? That is the question of some Pharisees in Lk 17:20. Jesus answers the Pharisees in a negative sense (17:21-22):

20 ...The kingdom of God is not coming with signs to be observed, 21 nor will they say, 'Look, here it is!' or 'There!' for behold, the kingdom of God is in the midst of you.¹²⁸

The Pharisees did not recognize the kingdom of God that was already present in the person of the king of this kingdom, the Mes-

126. ἐλθέτω ἡ βασιλεία σου

127. Wilfrid Haubeck and Heinrich von Siebenthal, *Neuer sprachlicher Schlüssel zum Neuen Testament. Band 1 Matthäus - Apostelgeschichte; Band 2 Römer - Offenbarung. Elektronische Fassung.* (Giessen: Brunnen, 2002) under Mt 6:10.

128. Οὐκ ἔρχεται ἡ βασιλεία τοῦ θεοῦ μετὰ παρατηρήσεως, 21 οὐδὲ ἐροῦσιν• Ἴδου ὧδε ἢ• Ἐκεῖ• ἰδοὺ γὰρ ἡ βασιλεία τοῦ θεοῦ ἐντὸς ὑμῶν ἐστίν.

siah Jesus, who was in the midst of them¹²⁹. Another way to understand the phrase is that the kingdom was or should be "within them" meaning in their hearts. But most of the Pharisees were against Jesus, so he did not really want to tell them that the kingdom was in their hearts.

In Lk 11:20 the kingdom had already been proclaimed as present because Jesus cast out demons by the finger of God. If the Pharisees continued not to acknowledge the kingdom of God as present in the person of Jesus Christ, they would certainly miss the blessings of the future consummation of the kingdom which would be ushered in on the day of the son of man (Lk 17:24) or on the day when the son of man would be revealed (Lk 17:30). Therefore after the short answer to the Pharisees in 17:20-21, the section of Lk 17:22-37 is directed to the disciples.

The introduction to the parable of the ten minas (Lk 19:11) makes it clear that Jesus wanted to remove a misunderstanding from his disciples:

As they heard these things, he proceeded to tell a parable, because he was near to Jerusalem, and because they supposed that the kingdom of God was to appear immediately.¹³⁰

This parable introduces an intermediate time during which the disciples of Christ have to work under his instructions during his absence and wait for Christ's second coming. Those who have proven themselves faithful servants in his absence will be entrusted with great authority at the time of his second coming.

129. ἐντὸς ὑμῶν

130. ὅτι παραχρῆμα μέλλει ἡ βασιλεία τοῦ θεοῦ ἀναφαίνεσθαι•

Beginning with the resurrection of Christ Paul explains the eschatological development of the kingdom in 1 Cor 15:20-28:

20 But in fact Christ has been raised from the dead, the firstfruits of those who have fallen asleep. 21 For as by a man came death, by a man has come also the resurrection of the dead. 22 For as in Adam all die, so also in Christ shall all be made alive. 23 But each in his own order: Christ the firstfruits, then at his coming those who belong to Christ. 24 Then comes the end, when he delivers the kingdom to God the Father after destroying every rule and every authority and power. 25 For he must reign until he has put all his enemies under his feet. 26 The last enemy to be destroyed is death. 27 For "God has put all things in subjection under his feet." But when it says, "all things are put in subjection," it is plain that he is excepted who put all things in subjection under him. 28 When all things are subjected to him, then the Son himself will also be subjected to him who put all things in subjection under him, that God may be all in all.

The beginning and the end of the progress of the kingdom of God is clear. The beginning is Christ's resurrection. The end is the defeat of the last enemy after which Christ delivers the kingdom to God the Father. In 15:54-57 the defeat of death is identified with the resurrection day of the believers. This is when Christ will have destroyed "every rule and every authority and power" on the same day of his coming. In 2 Tm 4:1-2 Paul urges Timothy to persevere in his (evangelistic 4:5!) service reminding him of Christ's kingdom:

I 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, and exhort, with complete patience and teaching.

According to Heb 1:8 "the scepter of uprightness" is the scepter of Christ's kingdom.¹³¹ When obedient believers are promised that "there will be richly provided for you an entrance into the eternal kingdom of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ" (2 Pt 1:11), it is clear that the final consummation of Christ's kingdom is meant. In Rv 12:10-12 the fact that the devil is thrown out of heaven is celebrated from a heavenly perspective:

10 And I heard a loud voice in heaven, saying, "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 brothers has been thrown down, who accuses them day and night before our God. 11 And they have conquered him by the blood of the Lamb and by the word of their testimony, for they loved not their lives even unto death. 12 Therefore, rejoice, O heavens and you who dwell in them! But woe to you, O earth and sea, for the devil has come down to you in great wrath, because he knows that his time is short!"

Heaven can already rejoice because the expulsion of the devil marks the triumph of the kingdom of God over this adversary. It is an important step in the progress of God's kingdom, but the result is that the devil's great wrath causes havoc on the earth for a "short

131. και ἡ ῥάβδος τῆς εὐθύτητος ῥάβδος τῆς βασιλείας σου.

time".¹³² The time described at the seventh trumpet in Rv 11:15 marks the very end:

Then the seventh angel blew his trumpet, and there were loud voices in heaven, saying, "The kingdom of the world has become the kingdom of our Lord and of his Christ, and he shall reign forever and ever."

Here the kingdoms of the world are done away with and God and his Christ have taken over. In the same context "the time for the dead to be judged and for rewarding your servants" has come (Rv 11:18). In Lk 21:8-30 Jesus speaks about developments during the end times before his coming and then he says (Lk 21:31):

So also, when you see these things taking place, you know that the kingdom of God is near.¹³³

In Heb 12:26-29 we are promised that the coming kingdom is unshakable:

26 At that time his voice shook the earth, but now he has promised, "Yet once more I will shake not only the earth but also the heavens." 27 This phrase, "Yet once more," indicates the removal of things that are shaken—that is, things that have been made—in order that the things that cannot be shaken may remain. 28 Therefore let us be grateful for receiving a kingdom that cannot be shaken, and thus let us offer to God acceptable worship, with reverence and awe, 29 for our God is a consuming fire.

132. εἰδὼς ὅτι ὀλίγον καιρὸν ἔχει

133. ὅτι ἐγγύς ἐστιν ἡ βασιλεία τοῦ θεοῦ

The writer speaks of "that time" pointing back to Exodus 20 when God shook the earth and proclaimed the Ten Commandments. The Old Testament promise of "once more" shaking not only the earth but also the heavens is taken from Haggai 2:6. The coming unshakable kingdom is thought to be present after the removal of the shakable order. This means that it belongs to the new heavens and the new earth which are eternal and full of righteousness (compare 2 Pt 3:13).

8.4 Words Used for the Second Coming of Christ

The New Testament speaks quite often of the second coming of Christ which the believing church is eagerly waiting for. To lay a good foundation to understand this subject it will be good to look at three Greek words which are used for the second coming of Christ at the end of this age of the world: *parousia*¹³⁴ which is often translated as "coming", *apokalypsis*¹³⁵ which can be translated as "revelation" and *ēpiphania*¹³⁶ as "appearing" or "manifestation".

8.4.1 Appearing or Manifestation (*ēpiphania*)

In the New Testament only Paul uses this word and only for the manifestation of Jesus Christ as God either in his first (2 Tm 1:10) or in his second coming (2 Thes 2:8; 1 Tm 6:14; 2 Tm 4:1.8; Tit 2:13). Because this is an important emphasis, let us look at all the verses. In 2 Tm 1:8-10 Paul himself is imprisoned and wants to encourage Timothy to be ready to suffer for the Gospel of Christ:

134. ἡ παρουσία

135. ἡ ἀποκάλυψις

136. ἡ ἐπιφάνεια

8 Therefore do not be ashamed of the testimony about our Lord, nor of me his prisoner, but share in suffering for the gospel by the power of God, 9 who saved us and called us to a holy calling, not because of our works but because of his own purpose and grace, which he gave us in Christ Jesus before the ages began, 10 and which now has been manifested through the appearing of our Savior Christ Jesus, who abolished death and brought life and immortality to light through the gospel.¹³⁷

The words "because of his own purpose and grace"¹³⁸ can be understood as a hendiadys, which means the two nouns "purpose and grace" present a single idea: God gives his grace according to His purpose, and here is his eternal purpose and plan "before the ages began". This agrees with Eph 1:3-4 where Paul praises God for our election in Christ before the foundation of the world.

God saved us "not because of our works" but because of his own decision to give his grace to Paul and Timothy and all the other chosen ones. There are two sides to this grace which God gives His elect according to his purpose, the eternal side (1:9) and the historical side (1:10): This grace "has been manifested through the appearing of our Savior Christ Jesus who abolished death and brought life and immortality to light through the gospel." The manifestation of Christ as God happens in history through his abolishing death and revealing eternal life in His own resurrection from the dead after his crucifixion. This is also made known to people

137. φανερωθεῖσαν δὲ νῦν διὰ τῆς ἐπιφανείας τοῦ σωτῆρος ἡμῶν Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ, καταργήσαντος μὲν τὸν θάνατον φωτίσαντος δὲ ζωὴν καὶ ἀφθαρσίαν διὰ τοῦ εὐαγγελίου

138. κατὰ ἰδίαν πρόθεσιν καὶ χάριν

"through the gospel". The instant a chosen man or woman of God hears the gospel and accepts it, this eternal grace of God becomes visible in their accepting of salvation through faith in Jesus Christ. In all other instances the word *ēphania* is used by Paul for the second coming of Christ at the end of this age of the world, as for example in 2 Thes 2:8:

8 And then the lawless one will be revealed, whom the Lord Jesus will kill with the breath of his mouth and bring to nothing by the appearance of his coming.¹³⁹

The "lawless one" is an important enemy of God who will be killed only with a word from the mouth of Christ which Paul has worded according to the prophecy in Is 11:4. The phrase "by the appearance of his coming (*parousia*)" or by the "manifestation of his coming" means that Jesus will be manifest as God in his coming leaving no chance for this lawless "pseudo-god". Jesus is the judge and one sentence uttered through the breath of his mouth seals the eternal condemnation of this enemy of God. In 1 Tm 6:13-16 Paul admonishes Timothy in a very solemn way to be faithful until Jesus Christ's coming manifestation as God:

13 I charge you in the presence of God, who gives life to all things, and of Christ Jesus, who in his testimony before Pontius Pilate made the good confession, 14 to keep the commandment unstained and free from reproach until the appearing of our Lord Jesus

139. καὶ τότε ἀποκαλυφθήσεται ὁ ἄνομος, ὃν ὁ κύριος Ἰησοῦς ἀνελεῖ τῷ πνεύματι τοῦ στόματος αὐτοῦ καὶ καταργήσει τῇ ἐπιφανείᾳ τῆς παρουσίας αὐτοῦ

Christ,¹⁴⁰ 15 which he will display at the proper time - he who is the blessed and only Sovereign, the King of kings and Lord of lords, 16 who alone has immortality, who dwells in unapproachable light, whom no one has ever seen or can see. To him be honor and eternal dominion. Amen.

Paul writes to Timothy in 2 Tm 4:1-2 in a very similar way:

1 I 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:¹⁴¹ 2 preach the word; be ready in season and out of season; reprove, rebuke, and exhort, with complete patience and teaching.

The manifest coming of Jesus Christ as God is one of the greatest motivations for his servants to do their work faithfully and not to stop doing it. In this letter only a few verses ahead Paul shows us that the same idea also encourages him (4:8):

Henceforth there is laid up for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, will award to me on that Day, and not only to me but also to all who have loved his appearing.¹⁴²

In this context Paul reflects on his possible coming death (4:6-7). But he loves the coming manifestation of Jesus Christ as God and

140. τηρῆσαί σε τὴν ἐντολὴν ἁσπιλον ἀνεπίλημπτον μέχρι τῆς ἐπιφανείας τοῦ κυρίου ἡμῶν Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ

141. Διαμαρτύρομαι ἐνώπιον τοῦ θεοῦ καὶ Χριστοῦ Ἰησοῦ, τοῦ μέλλοντος κρίνειν ζῶντας καὶ νεκρούς, καὶ τὴν ἐπιφάνειαν αὐτοῦ καὶ τὴν βασιλείαν αὐτοῦ•

142. πᾶσιν τοῖς ἡγαπηκόσι τὴν ἐπιφάνειαν αὐτοῦ.

Lord together with innumerable others. He is looking forward to receive the crown of righteousness out of the hand of his beloved Lord.

In his letter to Titus the apostle Paul speaks of the appearance of God's grace in the first coming of Christ which changed the lives of many so that they now lead a holy life full of hope for the coming manifestation of Jesus Christ as God (Ti 2:11-14):

11 For the grace of God has appeared, bringing salvation for all people, 12 training us to renounce ungodliness and worldly passions, and to live self-controlled, upright, and godly lives in the present age, 13 waiting for our blessed hope, the appearing of the glory of our great God and Savior Jesus Christ,¹⁴³ 14 who gave himself for us to redeem us from all lawlessness and to purify for himself a people for his own possession who are zealous for good works.

8.4.2 **Revelation (apōkalypsis)**

The word "revelation" (apōkalypsis) is used in the New Testament in many different ways. Most often it is used as a spiritual gift or an activity of the Holy Spirit through which God's Spirit reveals some truth which God wants to teach his church (1 Cor 14:6,26; 2 Cor 12:1,7; Gal 1:12; 2:2; Eph 1:17). A special case of this is when a mystery is revealed (Rom 16:25; Eph 3:3). The first words of the book of Revelation can be understood in this same sense (Rv 1:1):

The revelation of Jesus Christ, which God gave

143. προσδεχόμενοι τὴν μακαρίαν ἐλπίδα καὶ ἐπιφάνειαν τῆς δόξης τοῦ μεγάλου θεοῦ καὶ σωτῆρος ἡμῶν Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ

him to show to his servants the things that must soon take place.¹⁴⁴

In Rom 8:19 "the creation waits with eager longing for the revealing of the sons of God".¹⁴⁵ From Col 4:3-4 we learn that "the revealing of the sons of God" will happen when Christ will be revealed, that is on the day of Christ's second coming. On the same day God's righteous judgment will be revealed (Rom 2:5). In the prophetic words of Simeon about Jesus as a baby in his arms Christ is in His person the salvation and a light of revelation to the non-Israelite nations of the world (Lk 2:29-32):

29 "Lord, now you are letting your servant
depart in peace, according to your word;
30 for my eyes have seen your salvation
31 that you have prepared
in the presence of all peoples,
32 a light for revelation to the Gentiles,¹⁴⁶
and for glory to your people Israel."

Simeon's words point back to Is 42:6 and 49:6.9. These verses belong to the passages which present the sufferings and the glory of the special servant of the Lord in Isaiah (42:1-12; 49:1-13; 50:4-11; 52:13-53:12). Maybe that is the reason why he had such deep insight into the coming suffering of the Messiah Jesus that he could warn Mary of the pains for her ahead (Lk 2:34-35).

The following verses speak of the revelation of Christ in the context

144. Ἀποκάλυψις Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ, ἣν ἔδωκεν αὐτῷ ὁ θεὸς δεῖξαι τοῖς δούλοις αὐτοῦ, ἃ δεῖ γενέσθαι ἐν τάχει

145. ἡ γὰρ ἀποκαταδοκία τῆς κτίσεως τὴν ἀποκάλυψιν τῶν υἱῶν τοῦ θεοῦ ἀπεκδέχεται•

146. φῶς εἰς ἀποκάλυψιν ἐθνῶν

of his second coming (1 Cor 1:7; 2 Thes 1:7; 1 Pt 1:7; 1:13; 4:13). The apostles Paul and Peter use this term in this meaning.

At the beginning of his first letter to the Corinthians Paul thanks God for the grace given to them "7 so that you are not lacking in any spiritual gift, as you wait for the revealing of our Lord Jesus Christ,¹⁴⁷ 8 who will sustain you to the end, guiltless in the day of our Lord Jesus Christ" (1 Cor 1:7-8). When Jesus Christ will come back again "in the day of our Lord Jesus Christ" he will also be revealed. We note that the believers serve each other with their spiritual gifts and are at the same time waiting for the revelation of the Lord Jesus Christ. This means that He will be revealed as Lord in his divine glory.

The next section we want to look at is 2 Thes 1:7, but we want to do this within the context of Paul's thanksgiving for their faith and love and steadfastness (2 Thes 1:3-10) because this is a very important text to understand Paul's ideas about what is happening at the same time and on the same day of Christ's revelation:

3 We ought always to give thanks to God for you, brothers, as is right, because your faith is growing abundantly, and the love of every one of you for one another is increasing. 4 Therefore we ourselves boast about you in the churches of God for your steadfastness and faith in all your persecutions and in the afflictions that you are enduring. 5 This is evidence of the righteous judgment of God, that you may be considered worthy of the kingdom of God, for which you are also suffering— 6 since indeed God considers it just to repay with affliction those who afflict you, 7

147. ἀπεκδεχόμενους τὴν ἀποκάλυψιν τοῦ κυρίου ἡμῶν Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ

and to grant relief to you who are afflicted as well as to us, when the Lord Jesus is revealed from heaven with his mighty angels¹⁴⁸ 8 in flaming fire, inflicting vengeance on those who do not know God and on those who do not obey the gospel of our Lord Jesus. 9 They will suffer the punishment of eternal destruction, away from the presence of the Lord and from the glory of his might, 10 when he comes on that day to be glorified in his saints, and to be marveled at among all who have believed, because our testimony to you was believed.

In 1:3-4 Paul thanks God for their love and faith and steadfastness in all the persecutions they are enduring. God's righteous judgment will change the situation totally: The afflicted believers will be given relief and those who afflict them will be repaid with affliction (1:5-6). The time for both actions of God (repaying with affliction and giving relief) is given in 1:7-8 as "when the Lord Jesus is revealed from heaven with his mighty angels in flaming fire, inflicting vengeance on those who do not know God" and further in 1:10 as "when he comes on that day to be glorified in his saints, and to be marveled at among all who have believed". These words make it very clear that the relief for the believers and the judgment of the unbelievers happens in the same coming of Jesus Christ which is called "revelation" (apōkalyptō) in 1:7.

Peter uses the same word in the same sense in a very similar context of the suffering of the believers and the praise we owe God (1 Pt 1:3-7):

148. 6 εἴπερ δίκαιον παρὰ θεῷ ἀνταποδοῦναι τοῖς θλίβουσιν ὑμᾶς θλίψιν
7 καὶ ὑμῖν τοῖς θλιβομένοις ἀνεσθῆναι μεθ' ἡμῶν ἐν τῇ ἀποκαλύψει τοῦ κυρίου
Ἰησοῦ ἀπ' οὐρανοῦ μετ' ἀγγέλων δυνάμεως αὐτοῦ

3 Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ! According to his great mercy, he has caused us to be born again to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, 4 to an inheritance that is imperishable, undefiled, and unfading, kept in heaven for you, 5 who by God's power are being guarded through faith for a salvation ready to be revealed in the last time. 6 In this you rejoice, though now for a little while, if necessary, you have been grieved by various trials, 7 so that the tested genuineness of your faith—more precious than gold that perishes though it is tested by fire—may be found to result in praise and glory and honor at the revelation of Jesus Christ.¹⁴⁹

They have been born again by God's mercy and initiative (1:3) to an eternal inheritance (1:4) and are guarded by God's power through faith for their final salvation (1:5). This means that they can rejoice in spite of their sufferings (1:6), so that their tested faith may result in something wonderful and glorious "at the revelation of Jesus Christ".

Again the completion of the sufferings of the Christians is the time when Jesus Christ is revealed. We think that 1 Pt 1:13-21 should be understood with the Passover feast in mind. The first commandment in (1 Pt 1:13) "Wherefore gird up the loins of your mind, be sober, and hope to the end for the grace that is to be brought unto you at the revelation of Jesus Christ" (KJV) can be combined with Ex 12:11¹⁵⁰.

149. ἐν ἀποκαλύψει Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ

150. In this manner you shall eat it: with your belt fastened, your sandals on your feet, and your staff in your hand. And you shall eat it in haste. It is the

The passover lamb had to be chosen on the 10th of the month before being slaughtered on the 14th of the same month (Ex 12:3.6). This resembles the statement of Peter in 1:18-21 that they were "18 ... ransomed from the futile ways inherited from your forefathers, not with perishable things such as silver or gold, 19 but with the precious blood of Christ, like that of a lamb without blemish or spot. 20 He was foreknown before the foundation of the world but was made manifest in the last times for your sake, 21 who through him are believers in God, who raised him from the dead and gave him glory, so that your faith and hope are in God."

If our assumption is correct, then 1 Pt 1:13 encourages the believers to wait for the revelation of Christ on a daily basis. As the Israelites were liberated in the night of the exodus from the slavery and all sufferings of Egypt, so the church will be liberated with abundant grace from all troubles through the revelation of Jesus Christ. Again the revelation of Christ marks the end of their sufferings. The same is true for the last section in 1 Pt 4:13:

But rejoice insofar as you share Christ's sufferings, that you may also rejoice and be glad when his glory is revealed.¹⁵¹

The revelation of Christ is here not only the end of their sufferings, but the day when they will be rewarded: As they had a share in Christ's sufferings, they will have a share in the joy of the revelation of His glory (compare 2 Cor 4:16-18; Rom 8:17-18).

Lord's Passover.

151. ἀλλὰ καθὼ κοινωνεῖτε τοῖς τοῦ Χριστοῦ παθήμασιν χαίρετε, ἵνα καὶ ἐν τῇ ἀποκαλύψει τῆς δόξης αὐτοῦ χαρῆτε ἀγαλλιώμενοι.

8.4.3 Coming (parousia)

The Greek word *parousia* means literally "presence" and is also translated as such in Phil 2:12-13:

12 Therefore, my beloved, as you have always obeyed, so now, not only as in my presence but much more in my absence,¹⁵² work out your own salvation with fear and trembling, 13 for it is God who works in you, both to will and to work for his good pleasure.

Here Paul speaks of his own presence or absence in Philippi. In 2 Cor 10:10 Paul quotes his adversaries who say about him "his bodily presence is weak, and his speech of no account". But most often *parousia* is translated by 'coming': If somebody is absent and then is 'present', this is most naturally translated with his "coming". So we have the coming of Stephanas and Fortunatus and Achaicus mentioned in 1 Cor 16:17, the coming of Titus in 2 Cor 7:6.7 and of Paul in Phil 1:26. A special case is the coming of "the lawless one" in 2 Thes 2:9 because it is of eschatological significance (2 Thes 2:9-12):

9 The coming of the lawless one is by the activity of Satan with all power and false signs and wonders,¹⁵³ 10 and with all wicked deception for those who are perishing, because they refused to love the truth and so be saved. 11 Therefore God sends them a strong delusion, so that they may believe what is

152. μή ὡς ἐν τῇ παρουσίᾳ μου μόνον ἀλλὰ νῦν πολλῶ μᾶλλον ἐν τῇ ἀπουσίᾳ μου

153. οὗ ἔστιν ἡ παρουσία κατ' ἐνέργειαν τοῦ Σατανᾶ ἐν πάσῃ δυνάμει καὶ σημείοις καὶ τέρασιν ψεύδους

false, 12 in order that all may be condemned who did not believe the truth but had pleasure in unrighteousness.

In 17 cases of the 24 instances in the New Testament the word *parousia* is used for the coming of the "Lord" or "Jesus Christ". We find the coming of the day of God (2 Pt 3:12), or the coming of the "Lord" (James 5:7.8), or "his" coming (2 Pt 3:4; 1 John 2:28) or the coming of the son of man (Mt 24:27.37.39) or the coming of Jesus (Mt 24:3; 1 Cor 15:23; 1 Thes 2:19; 3:13; 4:15; 5:23; 2 Thes 2:1; 2:8; 2 Pt 1:16).

Sometimes it has been said that *parousia* is used in 1 Thes 4:15 for a secret coming of Jesus for his church as the bride and that this stands in contrast to *ēpiphania* as the manifestation of Jesus on the day of his second coming for the world. One influential proponent of the idea of such a two phase coming of Christ was the British evangelist John Nelson Darby. We will discuss his theory below. Here it is enough to say that the word *parousia* does not imply secrecy in itself. The context has to show whether the coming of somebody is secret or not.

In most or all of the 24 uses of *parousia* in the New Testament it is clear that it is not a secret coming or presence. In addition to this it seems that a look at Mt 24:27 in the context of 24:23-27 forbids the expectation of a secret coming of Christ altogether:

23 Then if anyone says to you, 'Look, here is the Christ!' or 'There he is!' do not believe it. 24 For false christs and false prophets will arise and perform great signs and wonders, so as to lead astray, if possible, even the elect. 25 See, I have told you beforehand. 26 So, if they say to you, 'Look, he is in the wilderness,' do not go out. If they say, 'Look, he is

in the inner rooms,' do not believe it. 27 For as the lightning comes from the east and shines as far as the west, so will be the coming of the Son of Man.¹⁵⁴

Jesus tells his disciples not to believe any idea of a secret coming of Christ in a desert or in a private place of a house, because the coming of the Son of Man will be as public as lightning which is visible from one end of the sky to the other.

8.5 The Olivet Discourse - Is there a Sign of the Coming of Christ?

The most important and ground breaking passage of the New Testament about the end times is found in Mt 24, Mk 13 and Lk 21. Here we find the foundational teaching of Jesus about eschatology, and Mk 13:1-2 tells us how it came about.

1 And as he came out of the temple, one of his disciples said to him, "Look, Teacher, what wonderful stones and what wonderful buildings!" 2 And Jesus said to him, "Do you see these great buildings? There will not be left here one stone upon another that will not be thrown down."

The subject of the coming destruction of the temple was a very dangerous one. To sin against the temple of God in words or in deeds was a capital offense. It was the main way of the Jewish enemies of the Christians to accuse them and to try to kill them (Mt 26:61; Acts 6:13-14; 21:28). Therefore it is not surprising that the main part of

154. ὥσπερ γὰρ ἡ ἀστραπή ἐξέρχεται ἀπὸ ἀνατολῶν καὶ φαίνεται ἕως δυσμῶν, οὕτως ἔσται ἡ παρουσία τοῦ υἱοῦ τοῦ ἀνθρώπου•

this discourse of Jesus about the end times was a private teaching lesson for only four disciples, the closest co-workers and friends of Jesus, the four apostles whose names come first in every available list of apostles in the New Testament (Mt 10:2; Mk 3:16-18; Lk 6:14; Acts 1:13).

8.5.1 The question of the disciples

This has to be understood in order to follow Jesus's answer to this question:

Mt 24:3

3 As he sat on the Mount of Olives, the disciples came to him privately, saying,

“Tell us, when will these things be, and what will be the sign of your coming and of the close of the age?”

Εἰπὸν ἡμῖν πότε ταῦτα ἔσται, καὶ τί τὸ σημεῖον τῆς σῆς παρουσίας καὶ συντελείας τοῦ αἰῶνος.

Mk 13:3-4

3 And as he sat on the Mount of Olives opposite the temple, Peter and James and John and Andrew asked him privately,

4 “Tell us, when will these things be, and what will be the sign when all these things are about to be accomplished?”

Εἰπὸν ἡμῖν πότε ταῦτα ἔσται, καὶ τί τὸ σημεῖον ὅταν μέλλῃ ταῦτα συντελεῖσθαι πάντα.

Lk 21:7

And they asked him,

“Teacher, when will these things be, and what will be the sign when these things are about to take place?”

Διδάσκαλε, πότε οὖν ταῦτα ἔσται, καὶ τί τὸ σημεῖον ὅταν μέλλῃ ταῦτα γίνεσθαι;

The disciples ask in Matthew, Mark and Luke, "When will these things be, and what will be the sign..." This is where all three

agree. But there are also differences. In Mark and Luke the requested "sign" is related to "these things" taking place which will relate to the destruction of the temple and of Jerusalem. In Matthew it is the "sign of your coming and of the close of the age". In the question which all three have "When will these things be...", "these things" also point to the destruction of the temple and of Jerusalem.

So we can see, that the question in Matthew has the widest scope, including the destruction of the temple and of Jerusalem and the coming of Christ and the "close of the age". We have already looked at the different words for the coming of Christ and their meaning. The "close of the age" or "end of the age" is mentioned in Mt 13:39; 13:40; 13:49; 24:3; 28:20; "the end of the ages" is found in Heb 9:26. In Heb 9:26 Christ "has appeared once for all at the end of the ages to put away sin by the sacrifice of himself". According to this Christ's first coming in the flesh and his death already belong to "the end of the ages" (ages used in the plural).¹⁵⁵

In Mt 13 the phrase "close of the age" is used in the explanation of the parables of the weeds and of the net. It points to the day of judgment (13:39-43.49-50):

39 ... The harvest is the close of the age, and the reapers are angels. 40 Just as the weeds are gathered and burned with fire, so will it be at the close of the age. 41 The Son of Man will send his angels, and they will gather out of his kingdom all causes of sin and all law-breakers, 42 and throw them into the fiery furnace. In that place there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth. 43 Then the righteous will shine like the

155. Compare with 1 Cor 10:11: "Now these things happened to them as an example, but they were written down for our instruction, on whom the end of the ages has come." εἰς οὓς τὰ τέλη τῶν αἰώνων κατήντηκεν.

sun in the kingdom of their Father.... 49 So it will be at the close of the age. The angels will come out and separate the evil from the righteous 50 and throw them into the fiery furnace. In that place there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.

According to Mt 13 the angels throw the wicked into the "fiery furnace" at the "close of the age". Only the righteous remain in the kingdom of their father and have glorified bodies shining like the sun. According to Mt 28:19-20 Christ promises to be with the believers until the end of the age while they "make disciples of all nations, baptizing them" and "teaching them".

The "end of the age" according to these sections in Matthew is the end of the world as we know it: The wicked will be separated from the righteous and thrown into the fire of hell. The righteous will be revealed in glorified bodies, and the time and the opportunity to make disciples of all nations will be over (compare Rom 11:25). Now when we come back to Mt 24:3, we can understand what the disciples mean when they ask for the sign "of the coming" of Jesus and "of the close of the age". Both have to be understood as happening at the same time: The coming of Jesus is the close of the age on judgment day. It is the end of the world as we know it.

8.5.2 An outline of the Olivet discourse

1. Worldwide part (Mt 24:4-14; Mk 13:5-13; Lk 21:8-19)
2. Israel specific part (Mt 24:15-28; Mk 13:14-23; Lk 21:20-24)
3. Return of Christ (Mt 24:29-31; Mk 13:24-27; Lk 21:25-27)
4. When? (Mt 24:32-25:13; Mk 13:28-37; Lk 21:28-36).

The Olivet discourse of Jesus can be divided into a *worldwide part* (Mt 24:4-14; Mk 13:5-13; Lk 21:8-19) which covers the whole

history from that time up to the second coming of Christ (up to "the end" in Mt 24:14). Then there is a Jerusalem and *Israel specific part* which answers the question of the disciples what the "sign" will be that Jerusalem and the temple will be destroyed (Mt 24:15-28; Mk 13:14-23; Lk 21:20-24). Including Luke 21:24, this not only covers the time of the Jewish war with the destruction of Jerusalem in 70 C.E. as a climax but also all history afterwards "until the times of the Gentiles are fulfilled". Certain elements of temptation and disaster which are given in the first part (Mt 24:4-14) are repeated here with specific application to Jerusalem (war and flight, distress, famine, false prophets and false Christs). After this comes the third part of the discourse which talks about the *second coming of Christ* and what happens immediately before it (Mt 24:29-31; Mk 13:24-27; Lk 21:25-27). The fourth and last part gives an answer to the time question of the disciples ("*when*"?; Mt 24:32-25:13¹⁵⁶; Mk 13:28-37; Lk 21:28-36).

8.5.3 What things are characteristic of the end times?

When Jesus teaches his disciples about the characteristics of the end times until he comes again, he does it with a purpose. The most important part of his discourse is what he commands. We have to follow his commandments to get a real understanding of this teaching. These characteristics are important as far as they are combined with imperatives. Therefore, when we go through the list of things that will happen in the end times, we have to look out for the imperatives. At the same time we can take his discourse as a

156. Matthew has some additional material going beyond the time question in Mt 25:14-46.

framework and an outline to talk about the different characteristics in the context of the letters and Revelation as far as they are touched on there.

1. False Christs and false prophets

While the disciples ask for the time and the sign of these things to happen, Christ starts his answer talk with an imperative neither to trust the false Christs nor to be led astray (Mt 24:4-5; cf. Mk 13:5-6 and Lk 21:8:)

See that no one leads you astray. 5 For many will come in my name, saying, "I am the Christ," and they will lead many astray.

As deception and people being led astray is one of the challenges of the end times, the gift of sound teaching is very much needed. One characteristic of sound teaching is to present the person of Jesus Christ and his glory in a way that the true believers will not be attracted by false Christs and false prophets.

The warning is repeated a little later (Mt 24:23-27); cf. Mk 13:21-23):

23 Then if anyone says to you, 'Look, here is the Christ!' or 'There he is!' do not believe it. 24 For false christs and false prophets will arise and perform great signs and wonders, so as to lead astray, if possible, even the elect.¹⁵⁷ 25 See, I have told you beforehand. 26 So, if they say to you, 'Look, he is in the wilderness,' do not go out. If they say, 'Look, he

157. ἐγερθήσονται γὰρ ψευδόχριστοι καὶ ψευδοπροφῆται, καὶ δώσουσιν σημεῖα μεγάλα καὶ τέρατα ὥστε πλανῆσαι εἰ δυνατόν καὶ τοὺς ἐκλεκτούς•

is in the inner rooms,' do not believe it. 27 For as the lightning comes from the east and shines as far as the west, so will be the coming of the Son of Man.

The believers are warned that, when Christ will come again, he will be widely visible like the lightning that is seen from everywhere under heaven. There is no secret coming of Christ into a desert or into a room. They do not have to investigate and go there, because Christ will come visibly.

The apostle John has coined a special word for false Christs which only he uses: antichrist and antichrists. The Greek preposition "anti" can mean that the "antichrist" is "against Christ" or is "a (false) substitute for Christ". John explains (1 John 2:18-19.22-23):

18 Children, it is the last hour, and as you have heard that antichrist is coming, so now many antichrists have come. Therefore we know that it is the last hour.¹⁵⁸
 19 They went out from us, but they were not of us; for if they had been of us, they would have continued with us. But they went out, that it might become plain that they all are not of us... 22 Who is the liar but he who denies that Jesus is the Christ? This is the antichrist, he who denies the Father and the Son. 23 No one who denies the Son has the Father. Whoever confesses the Son has the Father also.

From these verses it becomes clear that John sees the "antichrist" as a person who is "against" Christ, who denies that Jesus is the Christ and that Jesus is the Son of God. That true Christology is

158. Παιδιά, ἐσχάτη ὥρα ἐστίν, καὶ καθὼς ἠκούσατε ὅτι ἀντίχριστος ἔρχεται, καὶ νῦν ἀντίχριστοι πολλοὶ γεγόνασιν• ὅθεν γινώσκωμεν ὅτι ἐσχάτη ὥρα ἐστίν.

the main means to take the mask off the face of the antichrists is also taught in 1 John 4:1-3:

1 Beloved, do not believe every spirit, but test the spirits to see whether they are from God, for many false prophets have gone out into the world. 2 By this you know the Spirit of God: every spirit that confesses that Jesus Christ has come in the flesh is from God, 3 and every spirit that does not confess Jesus is not from God. This is the spirit of the antichrist, which you heard was coming and now is in the world already.

The key truth here is the incarnation of God in his Son, Jesus Christ. The Spirit of God who is the Spirit of truth (4:6) affirms it. The "spirit of the antichrist" who is "the spirit of error" (4:6) denies it. The idea that the antichrists "do not confess the coming of Jesus Christ in the flesh" is also found in 2 John 1:7.

False prophets go hand in hand with false Christs as we have already seen in Mt 24:24, Mk 13:22 and in 1 John 4:1-3. They are ravenous wolves "who come ... in sheep's clothing" (Mt 7:15). They are many and lead many astray (Mt 24:11; 2 Pt 2:1-2) and are very popular (Lk 6:26). Another word for them is false teachers 2 Pt 2:1. Paul overcomes the evil influence of the false prophet Bar-Jesus and leads the proconsul of Cyprus, Sergius Paulus, to faith in Jesus Christ (Acts 13:6-12). The second beast of Rv 13 which performs great signs of deception and persecutes the saints with the death penalty and makes business impossible for them (Rv 13:13-18) is called a false prophet in Rv 16:13, 19:20 and 20:10.

2. Disrespect for God's law and God's revelation

Connected with the false prophets is the increasing lawlessness (anōmia) in the end times in the context of Mt 24:11-12:

11 And many false prophets will arise and lead many astray. 12 And because lawlessness will be increased, the love of many will grow cold.¹⁵⁹

The relationship between "lawlessness" and "love growing cold" can be easily understood. If the summary of God's law and revelation is loving God with all your heart and loving your neighbor as yourself (Mt 22:34-40) then the rejection of God's law and God's word will lead to the disappearance of true love. The same connection between false prophets and lawlessness is found in Mt 7:15-16.21-23:

15 Beware of false prophets, who come to you in sheep's clothing but inwardly are ravenous wolves. 16 You will recognize them by their fruits... 21 Not everyone who says to me, 'Lord, Lord,' will enter the kingdom of heaven, but the one who does the will of my Father who is in heaven. 22 On that day many will say to me, 'Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy in your name, and cast out demons in your name, and do many mighty works in your name?' 23 And then will I declare to them, 'I never knew you; depart from me, you workers of lawlessness.'

The false prophets of 7:15 and their disciples are the "workers of lawlessness" of 7:23. The "workers of lawlessness" are thrown into

159. καὶ διὰ τὸ πληθυνθῆναι τὴν ἀνομίαν ψυγῆσεται ἡ ἀγάπη τῶν πολλῶν.

the fiery furnace in Mt 13:41-42. In Mt 23:27-28 the scribes and Pharisees are said to be "full of hypocrisy and lawlessness". In Rom 4:7 and Heb 10:17 "lawless deeds" and "sins" are used as synonyms. This is exactly the message of 1 Jn 3:4:

Everyone who makes a practice of sinning also practices lawlessness; sin is lawlessness.¹⁶⁰

Lawlessness is the opposite of righteousness in Rom 6:19, 2 Cor 6:14 and Heb 1:9. According to Ti 2:14 Jesus "gave himself for us to redeem us from all lawlessness and to purify for himself a people for his own possession who are zealous for good works." That such people will stand in contrast to their surrounding world is evident from 2 Tm 3:1-9 where Paul gives a vivid picture of misguided people in the last days. One important parallel of Mt 24:12 in the New Testament is the famous passage of Paul about the "the man of lawlessness" (2 Thes 2:3) and the "mystery of lawlessness" (2 Thes 2:7) in 2 Thes 2:3-10:

3 Let no one deceive you in any way. For that day will not come, unless the rebellion comes first, and the man of lawlessness is revealed, the son of destruction,¹⁶¹ 4 who opposes and exalts himself against every so-called god or object of worship, so that he takes his seat in the temple of God, proclaiming himself to be God. 5 Do you not remember that when I was still with you I told you these things? 6 And you know what is restraining him now so that he may be

160. Πᾶς ὁ ποιῶν τὴν ἁμαρτίαν καὶ τὴν ἀνομίαν ποιεῖ, καὶ ἡ ἁμαρτία ἐστὶν ἡ ἀνομία.

161. ὅτι ἐὰν μὴ ἔλθῃ ἡ ἀποστασία πρῶτον καὶ ἀποκαλυφθῇ ὁ ἄνθρωπος τῆς ἀνομίας, ὁ υἱὸς τῆς ἀπωλείας

revealed in his time. 7 For the mystery of lawlessness is already at work. Only he who now restrains it will do so until he is out of the way.¹⁶² 8 And then the lawless one will be revealed¹⁶³, whom the Lord Jesus will kill with the breath of his mouth and bring to nothing by the appearance of his coming. 9 The coming of the lawless one is by the activity of Satan with all power and false signs and wonders, 10 and with all wicked deception for those who are perishing, because they refused to love the truth and so be saved.

This passage clearly teaches that the revelation of the lawless one at the end of the end times is only a climax of something that had already started at the time of Paul ("the mystery of lawlessness is already at work" 2:7). Therefore 2 Thes 2:3-12 is a close parallel of Mt 24:12. The deceitful signs and wonders of the lawless one reflect other passages about the false Christs and false prophets and give the same warning of deceiving miracles (see above Mt 24:24; Mk 13:22; Rv 13:13-14; Mt 7:22).

3. Wars and revolutions

Wars will also be characteristic for the end times (pōlēmos; Mt 24:6-8; compare Mark 13:7; Lk 21:9):

6 And you will hear of wars and rumors of wars.
See that you are not alarmed, for this must take place,

162. τὸ γὰρ μυστήριον ἤδη ἐνεργεῖται τῆς ἀνομίας• μόνον ὁ κατέχων ἄρτι ἕως ἐκ μέσου γένηται.

163. καὶ τότε ἀποκαλυφθήσεται ὁ ἄνομος

but the end is not yet.¹⁶⁴ 7 For nation will rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom, and there will be famines and earthquakes in various places. 8 All these are but the beginning of the birth pains.

Of course, there have been wars and revolutions throughout history. Perhaps here, we are told that there will be wars so that we can know beforehand that the world cannot have lasting peace without acknowledging Jesus Christ as Lord who is the prince of peace (Is 9:6-7; Mi 5:5).

But the most important emphasis here is on the imperative and the negative time information: "See that you are not alarmed, for this must take place, but the end is not yet." The normal inclination of the human heart is to be shocked and terrified when war comes close. Jesus challenges his disciples to trust God even in such very difficult times and not to be alarmed or paralyzed. They have to continue to do what they are supposed to do, endure to the end and spread the Gospel (Mt 24:13-14).

These wars are not the end. Together with famines and earthquakes they only signal the closer coming end as growing birth pains signal the immediate birth of a baby. As the birth pains grow in intensity and the times of rest in between get shorter, so wars will grow in their catastrophic dimensions and the times of rest for the world may get shorter until the new birth takes place and the world is born again (Mt 19:28; Rom 8:22).

In the book of Revelation "war" or "battles" are also an important subject with regard to the end times. The "locusts" of the fifth trumpet were in appearance "like horses prepared for battle" or war

164. μελλήσετε δὲ ἀκούειν πολέμους καὶ ἀκοὰς πολέμων• ὁράτε, μὴ θροεῖσθε• δεῖ γὰρ γενέσθαι, ἀλλ' οὐπω ἐστὶν τὸ τέλος.

(Rv 9:7). The "noise of their wings was like the noise of many chariots with horses rushing into battle" (Rv 9:9). When the two special witnesses of Jesus Christ mentioned in Rv 11 "have finished their testimony, the beast that rises from the bottomless pit will make war on them and conquer them and kill them" (Rv 11:7). We learn now about a special war in heaven in Rv 12:7-9:

7 Now war arose in heaven, Michael and his angels fighting against the dragon. And the dragon and his angels fought back, 8 but he was defeated and there was no longer any place for them in heaven. 9 And the great dragon was thrown down, that ancient serpent, who is called the devil and Satan, the deceiver of the whole world—he was thrown down to the earth, and his angels were thrown down with him.

It seems that Satan's expulsion from heaven is the prelude of the last times of war and battles on earth (Rv 12:17-13:7).

Then the dragon became furious with the woman and went off to make war on the rest of her offspring, on those who keep the commandments of God and hold to the testimony of Jesus. And he stood on the sand of the sea. 13:1 And I saw a beast rising out of the sea, with ten horns and seven heads, with ten diadems on its horns and blasphemous names on its heads... 5 And the beast was given a mouth uttering haughty and blasphemous words, and it was allowed to exercise authority for forty-two months. 6 It opened its mouth to utter blasphemies against God, blaspheming his name and his dwelling, that is, those who dwell in heaven. 7 Also it was allowed to make war on the saints and to conquer them.

The time frame given here is 42 months or three and a half years. This first beast in Rv 13 seems to be the same as "the beast that rises from the bottomless pit" in Rv 11:7. Here and there the beast seems to have the victory over the saints of God. Nobody seems to be able to cope with it and fight it: "Who is like the beast, and who can fight against it?"

But it is based on a great lie. The dragon who empowers the beast has just been defeated by God's heavenly army of angels under the leadership of the archangel Michael. The name "Michael" means "Who is like God?" The answer is, of course, nobody. The two questions "Who is like God?" and "Who is like the beast?" resemble the contrast of truth and deception. The true ruler of history is not the dragon, but God who is the hidden agent even in Rv 13 where he is hidden in the divine passive "it was given to him" (Rv 13:5.5.7.7.14.15).

In Rv 16:14 unclean spirits like frogs come out of the mouth of the dragon, the beast and the false prophet and go forth to convince the kings of the world to join the war at the place of Armageddon. "Armageddon"¹⁶⁵ is probably from the Hebrew "Har Megiddo"¹⁶⁶ "Mountain of Meggido". Meggido is a place in Israel where sometimes battles have been fought during the time of the Old Testament (see 2 Kgs 23:29; Zec 12:11). It lies on the main route connecting Egypt with Mesopotamia. The unclean spirits convince the kings by performing signs.

According to Rv 19:19 "the beast and the kings of the earth" will then be "gathered to make war against" Jesus Christ and his army at the time of his second coming.

When Satan will be released from his prison after one thousand

165. Ἀρμαγεδών

166. הַר מִגְדּוֹ

years he "will come out to deceive the nations that are at the four corners of the earth, Gog and Magog, to gather them for battle; their number is like the sand of the sea" (Rv 20:7-8).¹⁶⁷

Revolutions are only mentioned by Luke in his version of the Olivet discourse (akatastasia in Lk 21:9¹⁶⁸) as a characteristic of the end times. The same word is used in 1 Cor 14:33 and is translated as "confusion" in the ESV:

For God is not a God of confusion but of peace.

In 2 Cor 6:5 it can be rendered with "riots", in 2 Cor 12:20 with "disorder". James 3:16 tells us:

For where jealousy and selfish ambition exist, there will be disorder and every vile practice.

Looking at James 3:16 we can realize that the revolutions of the end times are also a revelation of the human heart.

4. Earthquakes

Earthquakes are also to be counted amongst "the beginning of the birth pains" of the new world (sēismōs¹⁶⁹; Mt 24:7 and Mk 13:8; cf. Lk 21:11). For the disturbance of the sea in Mt 8:24 the same Greek word sēismōs is used. There was a great earthquake in connection with the passion and resurrection of Jesus Christ which was

167. There are some more verses in the New Testament which contain references to wars or battles but they are not related to eschatology: Lk 14:31; 1 Cor 14:8; Heb 11:34; Jas 4:1.

168. ὅταν δὲ ἀκούσητε πολέμους καὶ ἀκαταστασίας, μὴ πτοηθῆτε•

169. σεισμὸς

understood by the "the centurion and those who were with him" as a sign of God (Mt 27:54; Mt 28:2).

In Acts 16:26 God uses an earthquake to unfasten the bonds of the prisoners, Paul and Silas included, and to prepare the jailer and his family for receiving salvation. In the introduction of the seven trumpets an earthquake is mentioned (Rv 8:5) together with peals of thunder, rumblings, and flashes of lightning reminding the reader of theophanies in the Old Testament (Ex 19:16-18; 20:18; 1 Kgs 19:11-12). The same is true for the closing section of the seven trumpets (Rv 11:19) and of the seven bowls Rv 16:18).

As the resurrection of Christ was accompanied by an earthquake so the resurrection and ascension of his two special witnesses who resemble Moses and Elijah (see the theophanies in Ex 19-20 and 1 Kgs 19!) will be accompanied by an enormous earthquake in Jerusalem (Rv 11:5-13) killing 7000 people and converting the rest.

While the seven trumpets have three references to earthquakes, the seven seals and the seven bowls have one each, related to the sixth seal (Rv 6:12) and the seventh bowl (Rv 16:18). Because the 7th seal in Rv 8:1 consists only of "silence in heaven for about half an hour", all three groups of seven have an earthquake as part of their completing action. The great earthquake of the sixth seal is related to the fact that "every mountain and island was removed from its place" (Rv 6:12.14) and the great earthquake of the seventh bowl is related to the fact that "every island fled away, and no mountains were to be found" (Rv 16:18-20).

5. Fatal diseases

It is only Luke who gives us this information about "plagues or pestilences" in the last times in his version of the Olivet discourse

of Jesus (Lk 21:11¹⁷⁰). He uses the same Greek word "lōimōs" when he describes how the Jews accused Paul before the governor of Judea, Felix (Acts 24:5):

For we have found this man a plague, one who
stirs up riots among all the Jews throughout the world
and is a ringleader of the sect of the Nazarenes.

We can easily imagine how they had a picture in their minds of a fast-spreading disease which destroying many. Since this prediction of Christ in Luke 21:11 history has seen many outbreaks of fatal illnesses killing millions and millions of people. In spite of the great progress of medical sciences over the last generations there are still enormous outbreaks. The commandment "Love your neighbor as yourself" urges the disciples of Christ to help suffering people. But at the same time this prediction shows us that illnesses will not be totally overcome before the second coming of Christ.

6. Famines

All three evangelists point to famines in the context of wars as part of the end times (limōs¹⁷¹; Mt 24:7; Mk 13:8; Lk 21:11). In the New Testament the word is used for famines in the time of Joseph (Acts 7:11) and of Elijah (Lk 4:25). In the parable of the prodigal son famine brings the lost son to his senses. He returns home and causes great joy (Lk 15:14; Lk 15:17).

A great example for a Christian approach to a famine is found in Acts 11:28-30: The prophet Agabus foretells the famine, then the believers in Antioch answer by collecting money for those who

170. σεισμοί τε μεγάλοι καὶ κατὰ τόπους λιμοὶ καὶ λοιμοὶ ἔσονται

171. All three use the plural for famines: λιμοί.

need it most in Judea, "sending it to the elders by the hand of Barnabas and Saul".

Even a famine is under the control of God and can not separate us from the love of Christ (Rom 8:35). The sufferings of the apostle Paul included famine and thirst (2 Cor 11:27). The fourth seal pictures amongst other things famine striking the earth (Rv 6:7-8):

7 When he opened the fourth seal, I heard the voice of the fourth living creature say, "Come!"¹⁷² 8 And I looked, and behold, a pale horse! And its rider's name was Death, and Hades followed him. And they were given authority over a fourth of the earth, to kill with sword and with famine and with pestilence and by wild beasts of the earth.

Here again we see famine associated with war (the sword). Famine and pestilence are often the tragic outcomes of war. War destroys the resources and infrastructure of a country, famine follows, then malnourished people die from diseases because they do not have enough strength to fight them. The plagues causing the downfall of the proud and bloodthirsty city of Babylon include famine (Rv 18:7-8):

7 As she glorified herself and lived in luxury,
so give her a like measure of torment and mourning,

172. I would prefer to translate the Greek imperative Ἔρχου in Rv 6:1.3.5.7 with "Go!" giving the starting signal to the four riders. The verb denotes a linear movement which can be translated with either coming or going. I do not think that the four living creatures who were around the throne of God (Rv 4:6) wanted the four riders to come to the throne. No, they commanded them to go and rush towards earth with the speed a rider on a horse would have.

since in her heart she says,
 'I sit as a queen, I am no widow,
 and mourning I shall never see.'
 8 For this reason her plagues will come in a
 single day, death and mourning and famine,
 and she will be burned up with fire;
 for mighty is the Lord God who has judged her.

7. Terrifying great signs from heaven

Only Luke mention signs from heaven in this earlier part of the discourse (Lk 21:11):

And there will be terrors and great signs from heaven.¹⁷³

The phrase "terrors and great signs from heaven" can be understood as "terrifying great signs from heaven". In the Bible there are also sometimes "good signs" from heaven or "encouraging signs" from heaven. In Lk 2:9-15 it was clear that the angels came from heaven and returned to heaven after having given their message of joy and salvation. Ahaz could have chosen a sign from heaven to encourage him to have faith in God in the time of war (Is 7:11), but he declined. Here the meaning of Jesus is that the great heavenly signs will cause fear. They will not give joy or encouragement.

When we look at the word for "sign", we can note down that this is the first time that Jesus has used the word "sign" which the disciples have asked for in their question according to Mt 24:3: "What will be the sign of your coming and of the close of the age?"

Often people speak of "the signs of the times" and they mean "earthquakes, wars, famines, plagues" etc. But the word "sign" is

173. φόβητρά τε καὶ σημεῖα ἀπ' οὐρανοῦ μέγала ἔσται.

not used by Jesus himself for these things. They are certain things which happen in the times before the end, but they are not named "signs" by Christ. He calls them "the beginning of the birth pains".

So it is better to prefer to use "the sign of your coming and of the close of the age" in a narrower sense, something which happens that signals that the end is really near. When we look at the later mention of this subject in the same discourse, it becomes clear that the signs from heaven mentioned there have this effect of pointing to the end of the world.

8. Persecution of the disciples of Christ

In the version according to Matthew, Jesus touches on the subject of the persecution of his disciples after the "beginning of the birth pains" (Mt 24:6-8 wars, famines, earthquakes) in the midst of which Jesus had said "... but the end is not yet" (Mt 24:6).¹⁷⁴ But now in this second section of his discourse Jesus speaks about certain characteristics of the end times including persecution and then closes with "... and then the end will come" (Mt 24:14).¹⁷⁵ This puts the two beginning sections (Mt 24:5-8 and 24:9-14) into a relationship of "beginning of the birth pains" which have to happen and "completing characteristics of the end times". Now, let us have a look at this second section (Mt 24:9-14):

9 Then they will deliver you up to tribulation and put you to death, and you will be hated by all nations for my name's sake. 10 And then many will fall away and betray one another and hate one another. 11 And many false prophets will arise and lead many

174. ἀλλ' οὐπω ἐστὶν τὸ τέλος.

175. καὶ τότε ἥξει τὸ τέλος.

astray. 12 And because lawlessness will be increased, the love of many will grow cold. 13 But the one who endures to the end will be saved. 14 And this gospel of the kingdom will be proclaimed throughout the whole world as a testimony to all nations, and then the end will come.

We have already mentioned the temptation of being led astray by false Christs or prophets which seems to go through the different stages of this discourse (Mt 24:5 the first thing mentioned; 24:11 in our section here and later in 24:23-28). We have also seen that "lawlessness" (24:12) is related to the false teaching of the false Christs and false prophets.

Salvation is reserved for those who endure to the end (24:13) in spite of the temptation of heretical teachings by false prophets and in spite of the temptation of persecution (24:9-10). 24:13 has the emphasis of this section. It is not phrased as an imperative grammatically, but it is a command to endure to the end according to its content.

While all three evangelists talk about persecution in their version of the Olivet discourse (Mt 24:9-11.13; Mk 13:9.11-13; Lk 21:12-19) Mark and Luke record some statements of Jesus to encourage the disciples within the context of the temptation of persecution which Matthew had given before in another context (see Mt 10:16-39). Mark puts it like this (13:9-11):

9 But be on your guard. For they will deliver you over to councils, and you will be beaten in synagogues, and you will stand before governors and kings for my sake, to bear witness before them. 10 And the gospel must first be proclaimed to all nations. 11 And when they bring you to trial and deliver you over, do

not be anxious beforehand what you are to say, but say whatever is given you in that hour, for it is not you who speak, but the Holy Spirit.

In Mark the worldwide proclamation of the gospel, the persecution of the church and the powerful work of the Holy Spirit in the disciples giving testimony in court are all intertwined. Jesus wants the disciples to be on their guard and not to be anxious. What a picture of the Savior who can protect us in our inmost beings even in the midst of the greatest troubles and at the same time build his church amongst the nations! Let us also look at the words of Luke (21:13-15, 18-19):

13 This will be your opportunity to bear witness.
14 Settle it therefore in your minds not to meditate beforehand how to answer, 15 for I will give you a mouth and wisdom, which none of your adversaries will be able to withstand or contradict... 18 But not a hair of your head will perish. 19 By your endurance you will gain your lives.

Some of the greatest promises of the Bible are given in the context of the suffering of the believers. "But not a hair of your head will perish." The greatest art of Christian apologetics is not born in the study of the professor but in the hearts and on the tongues of simple Christians who risk their lives because they love Jesus. That is the power of the Holy Spirit in Mark 13:11 and Christ himself in Luke 21:15.

The subject of persecution is found throughout the New Testament especially as part of the prophecies of Revelation (see Rv 6:9-11; 11:3-12; 12:4-6; 12:12-18; 13:5-11; 14:12-13; 16:15).

9. Proclamation of the gospel to all nations

The great commission of Jesus is to evangelize all nations (Mt 28:18-20; Lk 24:44-49; Mk 16:15-20; Acts 1:8). This is fulfilled and will be fulfilled while the disciples of Jesus are persecuted and hated all over the world. While the world targets the disciples, the Holy Spirit evangelizes the world (Mt 24:14; Mk 13:10). It seems that some of the writers of the New Testament have already felt that the gospel is a world wide entity. Compare Acts 1:8 with Acts 28:28-31. Paul definitely thought this (Col 1:5-6):

5 ... Of this you have heard before in the word
of the truth, the gospel, 6 which has come to you,
as indeed in the whole world it is bearing fruit and
growing—as it also does among you, since the day
you heard it and understood the grace of God in truth...

One interesting question can be asked with regard to "all nations" which should be evangelized (Mt 28:19).¹⁷⁶ The table of nations in Genesis 10 gives 70 grandsons of Noah which have been understood as 70 tribes of mankind in Jewish tradition.¹⁷⁷ Today we know of the existence of thousands of "nations" or "tribes". So how could you tell that all nations have been reached with the gospel? Do you take 70 tribes or nations from Gn 11 or do you take some modern number? There is one helpful text in the New Testament, and indeed in the Olivet discourse to help us understand what "all nations" could mean in this context (Lk 21:24) which is at the same time a context of the first century:

176. πορευθέντες οὖν μαθητεύσατε πάντα τὰ ἔθνη

177. See F. Keil C. F.; Delitzsch, *The Pentateuch*, Martin, James <trans> (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Eerdmans, 1986), p. 172.

They will fall by the edge of the sword and be led captive among all nations, and Jerusalem will be trampled underfoot by the Gentiles, until the times of the Gentiles are fulfilled.¹⁷⁸

The statement of Jesus in Greek that the Jews will "be led captive among all nations" is an equivalent to the other statement in Mt 24:12 that the gospel will be preached "as a testimony to all nations".¹⁷⁹ When the Jewish war was lost which culminated in the destruction of Jerusalem and the temple in 70 C.E. many Jews were sold as slaves and had to go into a worldwide captivity fulfilling the words that the Jews will "be led captive among all nations". But, of course, we have to think of a world wide captivity according to the understanding of the first century.

We can compare Paul's statement about the gospel being worldwide with Luke's statement of worldwide captivity of the Jews. Nowadays the gospel has to be preached and spread amongst all nations which are known to us in the 21st century. The task is commanded and the task is clear.

But when we go through church history, it is interesting to see that many generations of Christians could view the world with a worldwide gospel, as Paul already did in the first century (compare also Mk 16:20 with 16:15). What I want to say with this is that we are not the ones who have to decide whether the task has been fulfilled, it will be God according to Rom 11:25:

Lest you be wise in your own conceits, I want you

178. καὶ πεσοῦνται στόματι μαχαίρης καὶ αἰχμαλωτισθήσονται εἰς τὰ ἔθνη πάντα, καὶ Ἱερουσαλὴμ ἔσται πατουμένη ὑπὸ ἐθνῶν, ἄχροι οὖν πληρωθῶσιν καιροὶ ἐθνῶν.

179. καὶ κηρυχθήσεται τοῦτο τὸ εὐαγγέλιον τῆς βασιλείας ἐν ὅλῃ τῇ οἰκουμένῃ εἰς μαρτύριον πᾶσιν τοῖς ἔθνεσιν.

to understand this mystery, brothers: a partial hardening has come upon Israel, until the fullness of the Gentiles has come in.¹⁸⁰

God will decide "when the fullness of the Gentiles has come in" or not. When the fullness has come in according to his measure, Christ will come back. We have already touched on the subject of the destruction of Jerusalem and the temple and the captivity of Israel. This is our next subject which we shall have to look at in detail.

10. The destruction of Jerusalem and the sufferings of the Jewish nation

The question about the destruction of Jerusalem is answered in the second part of the Olivet discourse, the Jerusalem and Israel specific part (Mt 24:15-28; Mk 13:14-23; Lk 21:20-24). The disciples had asked what the "sign" would be that Jerusalem and the temple would be destroyed. Jesus does not use the word "sign" in his answer but points to very significant events which would show his disciples that the time had come. It will be helpful to compare the beginning of all three versions in a table:

180. Οὐ γὰρ θέλω ὑμᾶς ἀγνοεῖν, ἀδελφοί, τὸ μυστήριον τοῦτο, ἵνα μὴ ᾔτε ἑαυτοῖς φρόνιμοι, ὅτι πώρως ἀπὸ μέρους τῷ Ἰσραὴλ γέγονεν ἄχρι οὗ τὸ πλήρωμα τῶν ἐθνῶν εἰσέλθῃ

Mt 24

15 So when you see the abomination of desolation spoken of by the prophet Daniel, standing in the holy place (let the reader understand),

16 then let those who are in Judea flee to the mountains.

17 Let the one who is on the housetop not go down to take what is in his house,

18 and let the one who is in the field not turn back to take his cloak.

Mk 13

14 But when you see the abomination of desolation standing where it ought not to be (let the reader understand),

then let those who are in Judea flee to the mountains.

15 Let the one who is on the housetop not go down, nor enter his house, to take anything out,

16 and let the one who is in the field not turn back to take his cloak.

Lk 21

20 But when you see Jerusalem surrounded by armies, then know that its desolation has come near.

21 Then let those who are in Judea flee to the mountains, and let those who are inside the city depart, and let not those who are out in the country enter it.

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It is crystal clear that all three have the same message. Jesus urges the disciples to flee immediately to the mountains without any delay as soon as they see what happens in Mt 24:15, Mk 13:14 or Lk 21:20. There is no time to be lost. They can not fetch money,

jewelry or any precious belongings, not even the cloak which lies a few meters down the field. Seconds will decide about life or death. Now we are very fortunate that Luke has rendered the more literal and cryptic words of Jesus as we have them in the versions of Matthew (24:15)¹⁸¹ and Mark (13:14)¹⁸² in easy understandable words for his friend Theophilus (Lk 24:20)¹⁸³. The "abomination of desolation spoken of by the prophet Daniel, standing in the holy place" in Matthew is "the abomination of desolation standing where it ought not to be" in Mark and this is "Jerusalem surrounded by armies" in Luke indicating its imminent "desolation". Therefore the Christians could have understood in the ongoing Jewish war¹⁸⁴ which started in 66 C.E. that this time it was not a good idea to flee to Jerusalem for safety, but on the contrary to flee from there as fast as one could. It is interesting that Eusebius tells us in his history of the church¹⁸⁵ that the Christians actually fled before the destruction of Jerusalem:

But the people of the church in Jerusalem had been commanded by a revelation, vouchsafed to approved men there before the war, to leave the city and to dwell in a certain town of Perea called Pella.

181. "Όταν οὖν ἴδῃτε τὸ βδέλυγμα τῆς ἐρημώσεως τὸ ῥηθὲν διὰ Δανιὴλ τοῦ προφήτου ἐστὸς ἐν τόπῳ ἁγίῳ, ὁ ἀναγινώσκων νοεῖτω

182. "Όταν δὲ ἴδῃτε τὸ βδέλυγμα τῆς ἐρημώσεως ἐστηκότα ὅπου οὐ δεῖ, ὁ ἀναγινώσκων νοεῖτω

183. "Όταν δὲ ἴδῃτε κυκλομένην ὑπὸ στρατοπέδων Ἱερουσαλήμ, τότε γινώτε ὅτι ἤγγικεν ἡ ἐρήμωσις αὐτῆς.

184. For a first century account of this war see Flavius Josephus, *The Works of Flavius Josephus, Volume I: The Wars of the Jews*, Whiston, William <trans> (Grand Rapids, Michigan, 1988).

185. Schaff, NPNF2-01. Eusebius Pamphilus: *Church History, Life of Constantine, Oration in Praise of Constantine*, p. 188-189 (h.e. 3.5.3).

Luke alone tells us that the disciples should flee as fast as possible "for these are days of vengeance, to fulfill all that is written" (Lk 21:22).¹⁸⁶ This presents the coming destruction of the temple and Jerusalem as a judgment of God in agreement with the prophecies of scripture. We remember that Mt 24:15 had especially pointed to the prophet Daniel. Let us continue to look at the threefold witness of this discourse:

Mt 24

19 And alas for women who are pregnant and for those who are nursing infants in those days!

20 Pray that your flight may not be in winter or on a Sabbath.

21 For then there will be great tribulation, such as has not been from the beginning of the world until now, no, and never will be.

Mk 13

17 And alas for women who are pregnant and for those who are nursing infants in those days!

18 Pray that it may not happen in winter.

19 For in those days there will be such tribulation as has not been from the beginning of the creation that God created until now, and never will be.

Lk 21

23 Alas for women who are pregnant and for those who are nursing infants in those days!

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For there will be great distress upon the earth and wrath against this people.

Jesus now speaks about some special difficulties during the days of the tribulation of Jerusalem and Israel. It will be especially

186. ὅτι ἡμέραι ἐκδικήσεως αὐταί εἰσιν τοῦ πληροῦναι πάντα τὰ γεγραμμένα.

difficult for pregnant women and for nursing women. Jesus advises the disciples to pray that the timing of the flight will be guided by God in a way that they do not have to run in winter or on a Sabbath.

The winter is mentioned in Matthew and Mark, but the Sabbath is only in Matthew. Luke does not have any similar statement. This is in agreement with the tendency of Matthew of giving us often the more Jewish tenor of the Gospel, in spite of the fact that his book was not only written for Jews.¹⁸⁷

While Matthew¹⁸⁸ and Mark¹⁸⁹ speak of a great "tribulation" without any equal before or afterwards, Luke speaks of "great distress upon the earth and wrath against this people"¹⁹⁰ which makes it clear that the great tribulation has to do with the Jewish nation. The word wrath will have to be understood as the "wrath of God".¹⁹¹

The phrase "upon the earth" can also be understood more locally as "in the country" (of Judea or of Israel). Speaking of the "great tribulation" we have to note here that it is unique. It will

187. The way Matthew speaks in Mt 28:15 about the Jews makes it clear that many of his potential readers were Gentiles.

188. ἔσται γὰρ τότε θλίψις μεγάλη οἷα οὐ γέγονεν ἀπ' ἀρχῆς κόσμου ἕως τοῦ νῦν οὐδ' οὐ μὴ γένηται.

189. ἔσονται γὰρ αἱ ἡμέραι ἐκείναι θλίψις οἷα οὐ γέγονεν τοιαύτη ἀπ' ἀρχῆς κτίσεως ἢν ἔκτισεν ὁ θεὸς ἕως τοῦ νῦν καὶ οὐ μὴ γένηται.

190. ἔσται γὰρ ἀνάγκη μεγάλη ἐπὶ τῆς γῆς καὶ ὁργὴ τῷ λαῷ τούτῳ

191. The words of Paul in 1 Thes 2:14-16 are quite remarkable because they had been written years before the start of the Jewish war: "14 For you, brothers, became imitators of the churches of God in Christ Jesus that are in Judea. For you suffered the same things from your own countrymen as they did from the Jews, 15 who killed both the Lord Jesus and the prophets, and drove us out, and displease God and oppose all mankind 16 by hindering us from speaking to the Gentiles that they might be saved—so as always to fill up the measure of their sins. But God's wrath has come upon them at last!" We must remember however that the same Paul also wrote Rom 9:1-5 giving us a great testimony of his deep love for his fellow countrymen.

happen only once. This Jewish great tribulation has never happened like this before and will never happen like this afterwards. It is very remarkable that the Jewish historian Josephus uses very similar language to describe the first century Jewish war with the Romans:¹⁹²

Accordingly it appears to me, that the misfortunes of all men, from the beginning of the world, if they be compared to these of the Jews, are not so considerable as they were; while the authors of them were not foreigners neither.

The question of the disciples was related to the destruction of the temple which happened in 70 C.E. If this great tribulation is related to this war and this destruction, it can not happen again. Otherwise it would be not unique, but double or triple etc. There will always be tribulations and persecutions for the believers as we have seen before in this discourse, but the words of Jesus do not permit us to see this unique great tribulation of Israel in the future. It has already happened in the past. There might be more tribulations for the Jews ahead, but they will be of a different kind. There will also be more tribulations ahead for the believers of all nations, but they belong into a different category.

It has become customary to speak of the time of the rapture of the church (1 Thes 4:17) in relationship with the term "tribulation". Those who think that the rapture will happen before the tribulation have a pre-tribulation view of the rapture or are "pre-trib". Those who think that the rapture will happen at some time in

192. See Josephus, *The Works of Flavius Josephus*, Volume I: *The Wars of the Jews*, p. 5 (Preface, Section 4).

the midst of the tribulation have a mid-tribulation view or are "mid-trib". Those who think of the rapture happening after the tribulation have a post-tribulation view of the rapture or are "post-trib". Because we think that this unique tribulation has already happened, we are "post-trib".

Mt 24:22 (and similarly Mk 13:20) points to God's grace in the midst of this calamity:

And if those days had not been cut short, no human being would be saved. But for the sake of the elect those days will be cut short.

As we understand this verse to relate to the siege and destruction of Jerusalem, it talks of God's mercy to shorten the days of tribulation so that there would be some survivors and that out of their numbers God would continue to elect people for his purpose of salvation.¹⁹³

Another possibility to understand Mt 24:22 is given by D. A. Carson. He understands "those days" in 24:22 as not referring to 24:15-21 specifically but to "the general period of distress introduced by vv. 4-14 and that therefore 'those days' refers to the entire period of which vv. 15-21 are only one part - the 'great distress' (v. 21)".¹⁹⁴

The sufferings of the Jewish nation are further described in the version of Luke (22:24):

193. John Calvin, *A Harmony of the Gospels Matthew, Mark and Luke - Volume II*, Calvin's Commentaries, Torrance, D. W.; Torrance, Th. F. <ed>; Parker, T. H. L. <trans> (Edinburgh, 1972), p. 88-89.

194. Gaebelien, *The Expositors Bible Commentary: Matthew, Mark, Luke*, p. 502.

They will fall by the edge of the sword and be led captive among all nations, and Jerusalem will be trampled underfoot by the Gentiles, until the times of the Gentiles are fulfilled.¹⁹⁵

This is another reason why this tribulation was so great and unique: The damaging consequences would last much longer than those of any other war the Jews had experienced before and the captivity would be worldwide covering all nations. But there is also a hint in this verse that the time of suffering for Jerusalem and the Jews would come to an end. The times of the Gentiles will come to an end and with it the time of Gentile domination over Jerusalem. A direct parallel of Lk 21:24 is Rv 11:1-2:

1 Then I was given a measuring rod like a staff, and I was told, “Rise and measure the temple of God and the altar and those who worship there, 2 but do not measure the court outside the temple; leave that out, for it is given over to the nations, and they will trample the holy city for forty-two months.”¹⁹⁶

Paul reminds us that the time will come when all of Israel will recognize their Lord and Savior (Rom 11:25-27):

25 Lest you be wise in your own conceits, I want you to understand this mystery, brothers: a partial

195. καὶ πεσοῦνται στόματι μαχαίρης καὶ αἰχμαλωτισθήσονται εἰς τὰ ἔθνη πάντα, καὶ Ἱερουσαλὴμ ἔσται πατουμένη ὑπὸ ἐθνῶν, ἄχρι οὗ πληρωθῶσιν καιροὶ ἐθνῶν.

196. 2 καὶ τὴν αὐλὴν τὴν ἔξωθεν τοῦ ναοῦ ἔκβαλε ἔξωθεν, καὶ μὴ αὐτὴν μετρήσης, ὅτι ἐδόθη τοῖς ἔθνεσιν, καὶ τὴν πόλιν τὴν ἁγίαν πατήσουσιν μῆνας τεσσαράκοντα δύο.

hardening has come upon Israel, until the fullness of the Gentiles has come in. 26 And in this way all Israel will be saved, as it is written, “The Deliverer will come from Zion, he will banish ungodliness from Jacob”;¹⁹⁷ 27 “and this will be my covenant with them when I take away their sins.”

The coming of the Savior will also be the coming of the Savior for Israel, for all of Israel. The second coming of Christ will coincide with the repentance and salvation of all living Jews. Or as Paul says in Rom 11:15 it will coincide with the resurrection of the dead:

For if their rejection means the reconciliation of the world, what will their acceptance mean but life from the dead?¹⁹⁸

11. The heavens and the earth will pass away. The water ecosystem will become catastrophic.

That the heavens and the earth will pass away is clearly stated in Mt 24:35 (similarly Mk 13:31; Lk 21:33):

Heaven and earth will pass away, but my words will not pass away.¹⁹⁹

197. 25 Οὐ γὰρ θέλω ὑμᾶς ἀγνοεῖν, ἀδελφοί, τὸ μυστήριον τοῦτο, ἵνα μὴ ᾗτε ἑαυτοῖς φρόνιμοι, ὅτι πῶρως ἀπὸ μέρους τῷ Ἰσραὴλ γέγονεν ἄχρι οὗ τὸ πλήρωμα τῶν ἐθνῶν εἰσέλθῃ, 26 καὶ οὕτως πᾶς Ἰσραὴλ σωθήσεται• καθὼς γέγραπται• “Ἦξει ἐκ Σιών ὁ ῥυόμενος, ἀποστρέψει ἀσεβείας ἀπὸ Ἰακώβ.

198. εἰ γὰρ ἡ ἀποβολὴ αὐτῶν καταλλαγὴ κόσμου, τίς ἡ πρόσλημις εἰ μὴ ζωὴ ἐκ νεκρῶν;

199. ὁ οὐρανὸς καὶ ἡ γῆ παρελεύσεται, οἱ δὲ λόγοι μου οὐ μὴ παρέλθωσιν.

Of course, the emphasis of this statement is less on the passing away of heaven and earth but more on the fact that the words of Jesus Christ will stay for eternity, but nevertheless Jesus teaches here the end of this world. The answer to the question when this will happen is given in Mt 24:29, Mk 13:24-25, and Lk 21:25-26:

Mt 24

29 Immediately after the tribulation of those days the sun will be darkened, and the moon will not give its light, and the stars will fall from heaven,

and the powers of the heavens will be shaken.

Mk 13

24 But in those days, after that tribulation, the sun will be darkened, and the moon will not give its light, 25 and the stars will be falling from heaven,

and the powers in the heavens will be shaken.

Lk 21

25 And there will be signs in sun and moon and stars, and on the earth distress of nations in perplexity because of the roaring of the sea and the waves, 26 people fainting with fear and with foreboding of what is coming on the world.

For the powers of the heavens will be shaken.

Carson connects the "immediately after the tribulation of those days" of Mt 24:29 with the tribulation in Mt 24:9 and not with the great

tribulation of Mt 24:15-21.²⁰⁰

There are several Old Testament texts related to the day of the Lord which use similar language (Is 13:9-10; 34:4; Joel 2:31; 3:15). But the closest parallel is found in Rv 6:12-17:

12 When he opened the sixth seal, I looked, and behold, there was a great earthquake, and the sun became black as sackcloth, the full moon became like blood, 13 and the stars of the sky fell to the earth as the fig tree sheds its winter fruit when shaken by a gale. 14 The sky vanished like a scroll that is being rolled up, and every mountain and island was removed from its place.²⁰¹ 15 Then the kings of the earth and the great ones and the generals and the rich and the powerful, and everyone, slave and free, hid themselves in the caves and among the rocks of the mountains, 16 calling to the mountains and rocks, "Fall on us and hide us from the face of him who is seated on the throne, and from the wrath of the Lamb, 17 for the great day of their wrath has come, and who can stand?"

The language of the sixth seal is taken from the Olivet discourse and from Is 34:4; 2:10.19 and Mal 3:2. If we remember that the apostle John was one of the four original hearers of this teaching of Jesus, we have a good interpreter of it in the form of the book of Revelation.

200. Gaebelein, *The Expositors Bible Commentary: Matthew, Mark, Luke*, p. 504.

201. Compare the very similar statement in 16:20: "And every island fled away, and no mountains were to be found."

The sun may lose its light more than once in history as happened on Good Friday (Mt 27:45). But the stars can not fall from heaven and history is still going on. The time when the stars will fall, is the time of the end of the world. This is the case in Rv 6:12-17 where all government is dissolved because all kings and leaders and just everyone is trying to jump into a hole to hide himself from God coming to judge the earth. The mountains are gone, the islands are gone, the heavens are gone. "The great day of their wrath has come", it is the end of the world. The passing away of heaven and earth is again mentioned in Rv 20:11:

Then I saw a great white throne and him who was seated on it. From his presence earth and sky fled away, and no place was found for them.

The fourth and fifth trumpet are also related to things happening with sun, moon and the stars of heaven (8:12; 9:1-2):

8:12 The fourth angel blew his trumpet, and a third of the sun was struck, and a third of the moon, and a third of the stars, so that a third of their light might be darkened, and a third of the day might be kept from shining, and likewise a third of the night. 13 Then I looked, and I heard an eagle crying with a loud voice as it flew directly overhead, "Woe, woe, woe to those who dwell on the earth, at the blasts of the other trumpets that the three angels are about to blow!" 9:1 And the fifth angel blew his trumpet, and I saw a star fallen from heaven to earth, and he was given the key to the shaft of the bottomless pit. 2 He opened the shaft of the bottomless pit, and from the shaft rose smoke like the smoke of a great furnace, and the sun and the air were darkened with the smoke from the shaft.

Likewise the fourth and fifth bowl are related to things happening with the lights of heaven (Rv 16:8-11):

8 The fourth angel poured out his bowl on the sun, and it was allowed to scorch people with fire. 9 They were scorched by the fierce heat, and they cursed the name of God who had power over these plagues. They did not repent and give him glory. 10 The fifth angel poured out his bowl on the throne of the beast, and its kingdom was plunged into darkness. People gnawed their tongues in anguish 11 and cursed the God of heaven for their pain and sores. They did not repent of their deeds.

The statement that "the powers of the heavens will be shaken"²⁰² has a further parallel in Heb 12:26-27:

26 At that time his voice shook the earth, but now he has promised, "Yet once more I will shake not only the earth but also the heavens." 27 This phrase, "Yet once more," indicates the removal of things that are shaken—that is, things that have been made—in order that the things that cannot be shaken may remain.²⁰³

Here the author interprets Hg 2:6 in a way that God will shake the earth and the heavens in a one time action with the purpose to exchange the temporary creation with an eternal state of affairs which he calls in 12:28 a "kingdom that cannot be shaken".²⁰⁴ It is rea-

202. καὶ αἱ δυνάμεις τῶν οὐρανῶν σαλευθήσονται.

203. 26 οὗ ἡ φωνὴ τὴν γῆν ἐσάλευσεν τότε, νῦν δὲ ἐπὶγγελλται λέγων• "Ἐτι ἅπαξ ἐγὼ σείσω οὐ μόνον τὴν γῆν ἀλλὰ καὶ τὸν οὐρανόν. 27 τὸ δὲ "Ἐτι ἅπαξ δηλοῖ τῶν σαλευομένων μετάθεσιν ὡς πεποιημένων, ἵνα μείνῃ τὰ μὴ σαλευόμενα.

204. βασιλείαν ἀσάλευτον

sonable to see that "the powers of the heavens will be shaken" in the Olivet discourse in the same light of "the removal of things that are shaken".

In addition to John who received the book of Revelation we have another writing apostle who was a hearer of the same discourse of Jesus, namely Peter. It is highly relevant that he also expects the day of the Lord to be the day when the old heavens and earth will pass away to be replaced by new heavens and a new earth (2 Pt 3:5-13).

The water ecosystem will become catastrophic. In the Olivet discourse this is stated only in Luke 21:25-26:

25 And there will be signs in sun and moon and stars, and on the earth distress of nations in perplexity because of the roaring of the sea and the waves,²⁰⁵ 26 people fainting with fear and with foreboding of what is coming on the world. For the powers of the heavens will be shaken.

The second and third trumpet in Rv 8:8-10 hit the water system of the earth:

8 The second angel blew his trumpet, and something like a great mountain, burning with fire, was thrown into the sea, and a third of the sea became blood. 9 A third of the living creatures in the sea died, and a third of the ships were destroyed. 10 The third angel blew his trumpet, and a great star fell from

205. 25 Καὶ ἔσονται σημεῖα ἐν ἡλίῳ καὶ σελήνῃ καὶ ἄστροις, καὶ ἐπὶ τῆς γῆς συνοχὴ ἐθνῶν ἐν ἀπορίᾳ ἤχους θαλάσσης καὶ σάλου

heaven, blazing like a torch, and it fell on a third of the rivers and on the springs of water. 11 The name of the star is Wormwood. A third of the waters became wormwood, and many people died from the water, because it had been made bitter.

Somehow the sixth trumpet influences the river Euphrates:

13 Then the sixth angel blew his trumpet, and I heard a voice from the four horns of the golden altar before God, 14 saying to the sixth angel who had the trumpet, “Release the four angels who are bound at the great river Euphrates.” 15 So the four angels, who had been prepared for the hour, the day, the month, and the year, were released to kill a third of mankind.

The power of the two witnesses in Rv 11 who resemble Moses and Elijah extends to the water ecosystem of the earth (Rv 11:6):

They have the power to shut the sky, that no rain may fall during the days of their prophesying, and they have power over the waters to turn them into blood and to strike the earth with every kind of plague, as often as they desire.

The second and third bowl hit the water ecosystem as well (16:3-6):

3 The second angel poured out his bowl into the sea, and it became like the blood of a corpse, and every living thing died that was in the sea. 4 The third angel poured out his bowl into the rivers and the springs of water, and they became blood. 5 And I heard the angel in charge of the waters say, “Just

are you, O Holy One, who is and who was, for you brought these judgments. 6 For they have shed the blood of saints and prophets, and you have given them blood to drink. It is what they deserve!"

Here a spiritual reason is given for the ecological catastrophe: The massive shedding of the blood of God's saints. This points straight back to the ten plagues of Egypt, especially the first in Ex 7:14-25 where the water of the Nile was turned into blood and became undrinkable. The water of the Nile had been used to drown the male children of the Israelites (Ex 1:22). The sixth bowl is related to the river Euphrates as was the sixth trumpet (16:12):

12 The sixth angel poured out his bowl on the great river Euphrates, and its water was dried up, to prepare the way for the kings from the east.

We learn from Rv 21:1 that not only the old heaven and earth pass away but also the old water ecosystem:

Then I saw a new heaven and a new earth, for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away, and the sea was no more.

12. The coming of Christ

This will be at the end of this age. The kingdoms of this world pass away and God's kingdom is revealed (Mt 24:30-31; Mk 13:26-27; Lk 21:27):

Mt 24

30 Then will appear
in heaven the sign
of the Son of Man,
and then all the
tribes of the earth
will mourn,

and they will see the
Son of Man coming
on the clouds of
heaven with power
and great glory.

31 And he will send
out his angels with a
loud trumpet call,
and they will gather
his elect from the
four winds, from
one end of heaven
to the other.

Mk 13

26 And then

they will see the
Son of Man coming
in clouds with great
power and glory.

27 And then he will
send out the angels

and gather his elect
from the four winds,
from the ends of the
earth to the ends of
heaven.

Lk 21

27 And then

they will see the Son
of Man coming in
a cloud with power
and great glory.

Only Matthew speaks of "the sign of the Son of Man"²⁰⁶ and of the "trumpet".²⁰⁷ The sign was a signal for the eyes and the trumpet for the ears to gather crowds in the Old Testament, for feasts and especially for battles in times of war (Jer 4:21; 6:1; 51:27; Is 18:3). I think that the background of the words of Jesus according to Matthew is to be found in Is 11:10-12 and 27:12-13, both texts speak of the gathering of the people of God at the end of times. Let us first look at Is 11:10-12:

206. καὶ τότε φανήσεται τὸ σημεῖον τοῦ υἱοῦ τοῦ ἀνθρώπου ἐν τῷ οὐρανῷ

207. καὶ ἀποστελεῖ τοὺς ἀγγέλους αὐτοῦ μετὰ σάλπιγγος μεγάλης

10 In that day the root of Jesse, who shall stand as a signal for the peoples—of him shall the nations inquire, and his resting place shall be glorious. 11 In that day the Lord will extend his hand yet a second time to recover the remnant that remains of his people, from Assyria, from Egypt, from Pathros, from Cush, from Elam, from Shinar, from Hamath, and from the coastlands of the sea. 12 He will raise a signal for the nations and will assemble the banished of Israel, and gather the dispersed of Judah from the four corners of the earth.

According to Is 11:10 the "root of Jesse" who is the coming Messiah of the house of David, will himself be a sign or "a signal for the peoples" who seek him. When the same word²⁰⁸ is used in 11:12²⁰⁹ and it is said that God "will raise a signal for the nations and will assemble the banished of Israel" it is reasonable to assume that the same sign or signal is meant, that is, the Messiah. If we understand Matthew's "the sign of the Son of Man" as an exegetical genitive we can understand Jesus himself as the appearing sign for the gathering of the people of God from everywhere. The disciples had asked for the sign of his coming (24:3). Now they receive the answer: The sign of the coming of Christ is he himself visible to all, coming in the clouds of heaven. The gathering of God's people is also the subject of Is 27:12-13 where the trumpet is used:

Is 27:12 In that day from the river Euphrates to the Brook of Egypt the Lord will thresh out the grain,

208. The Hebrew word *nēs* נֶס is used for "signal" in 11:10 and 11:12.

209. The LXX of Is 11:12 reads (Rahlfs, Septuaginta): καὶ ἀρεῖ σημεῖον εἰς τὰ ἔθνη καὶ συνάξει τοὺς ἀπολομένους Ἰσραὴλ καὶ τοὺς διεσπαρμένους τοῦ Ἰουδα συνάξει ἐκ τῶν τεσσάρων πτερύγων τῆς γῆς.

and you will be gleaned one by one, O people of Israel. 13 And in that day a great trumpet will be blown, and those who were lost in the land of Assyria and those who were driven out to the land of Egypt will come and worship the Lord on the holy mountain at Jerusalem.

Matthew alone gives us the words of Jesus "and then all the tribes of the earth²¹⁰ will mourn"²¹¹ (Mt 24:30). This points back to Zec 12:10-12:

10 And I will pour out on the house of David and the inhabitants of Jerusalem a spirit of grace and pleas for mercy, so that, when they look on me, on him whom they have pierced, they shall mourn for him, as one mourns for an only child, and weep bitterly over him, as one weeps over a firstborn. 11 On that day the mourning in Jerusalem will be as great as the mourning for Hadad-rimmon in the plain of Megiddo. 12 The land shall mourn, each family by itself:²¹² the family of the house of David by itself, and their wives by themselves; the family of the house of Nathan by itself, and their wives by themselves...

The situation in Zec 12 is that God saves Israel from the attacks of the nations and that Israel sees and recognizes his God as the pierced one, under the influence of a great awakening and outpouring of the Holy Spirit who is called "a spirit of grace and pleas for mercy". This predicts a great prayer revival within Israel. The

210. Or: "all tribes of the country"

211. καὶ τότε κόψονται πᾶσαι αἱ φυλαὶ τῆς γῆς

212. The LXX reads here: καὶ κόπεται ἡ γῆ κατὰ φυλὰς φυλὰς

shocking realization that they themselves have pierced their God is the result of their pleas for mercy. Their eyes are opened and they see and recognize Jesus as their God (John 19:37). Every family will feel such a sorrow as if they had just lost their firstborn son by killing him themselves. It is a sorrow and a mourning beyond imagination, a whole country with every single family involved. It will be best to understand the words in Matthew in a background of this national repentance of Israel. It will be the fulfillment of Matthew 23:39:

For I tell you, you will not see me again, until
you say, 'Blessed is he who comes in the name of the
Lord.'²¹³

The other text in the New Testament which refers back to Zec 12:10-12 is Rv 1:7:

Behold, he is coming with the clouds, and every
eye will see him, even those who pierced him, and all
tribes of the earth will wail on account of him. Even
so. Amen.

"Every eye will see him" means every human being. "Even those who pierced him" is linked to the mourning Israelites in Zec 12:10 again. In that context "all tribes of the earth" could also be translated as "all tribes of the land (of Israel)". In other words Rv 1:7 can be understood as the same revival Zec 12:10-13:1 is talking about. The book of Revelation awaits the conversion of Jerusalem at the time of the end (Rv 11:5-13). The apostle John refers twice back

213. Cf. Rom 11:25-27.

to Zec 12:10-12, once in his gospel (John 19:37) and once in Revelation (1:7). It is possible that John had similar hopes for Israel's repentance as Paul had.

If the intension of John was to speak of all mankind when he wrote "and all tribes of the earth will wail on account of him", it is still possible to think of a divided mankind in the wailing or weeping: Some could weep with faith and get saved (as is presupposed in the original context of this saying in Zec 12:10-13:1), and others could wail without faith and hope, but with desperation. The teaching of Paul in Rom 11:25 implies an important distinction between Israel and the Gentiles at the time of the coming of Christ:

Lest you be wise in your own conceits, I want you to understand this mystery, brothers: a partial hardening has come upon Israel, until the fullness of the Gentiles has come in. 26 And in this way all Israel will be saved, as it is written, "The Deliverer will come from Zion, he will banish ungodliness from Jacob"; 27 "and this will be my covenant with them when I take away their sins."

The coming in of the Gentiles in fullness points to the end of the open door for them. This work and number is complete. When this has happened the partial hardening of Israel stops. All Israel recognizes Christ as the "deliverer", the Savior who forgives their sins. This fits absolutely to Zec 12:10-13:1. So even if all mankind weeps or wails at the coming of Christ, it is possible that the Israelites weep and wail within a revival and an awakening to receive salvation, while the Gentiles will wail facing destruction (Zec 12:9):

And on that day I will seek to destroy all the nations that come against Jerusalem.

The mood of all mankind at the day of the wrath of God is also pictured in Rv 6:15-17. At the time of the sixth seal the governments of the world cease to function because the people have other things to do and the world comes to a stand still:

15 Then the kings of the earth and the great ones and the generals and the rich and the powerful, and everyone, slave and free, hid themselves in the caves and among the rocks of the mountains, 16 calling to the mountains and rocks, "Fall on us and hide us from the face of him who is seated on the throne, and from the wrath of the Lamb, 17 for the great day of their wrath has come, and who can stand?"

There is no wailing mentioned here, but the mood is clear: Mankind is confronted with seeing Christ coming on his day and flees. At the time of the seventh trumpet the governments of this world come to an end as well and are replaced by the kingdom of God and his Christ (Rv 11:15-18):

15 Then the seventh angel blew his trumpet, and there were loud voices in heaven, saying, "The kingdom of the world has become the kingdom of our Lord and of his Christ, and he shall reign forever and ever." 16 And the twenty-four elders who sit on their thrones before God fell on their faces and worshiped God, 17 saying, "We give thanks to you, Lord God Almighty, who is and who was, for you have taken your great power and begun to reign. 18 The nations raged, but your wrath came, and the time for the dead to be judged, and for rewarding your servants, the prophets and saints, and those who fear your name,

both small and great, and for destroying the destroyers of the earth.”

The same change of power is implied in the above given parallel texts in Mt 24:30; Mk 13:26 and Lk 21:27. According to Mt 24:30 "they will see the Son of Man coming on the clouds of heaven with power and great glory."²¹⁴ The coming of Jesus "with power and great glory"²¹⁵ (Mt 24:20; Lk 21:27) or "with great power and glory"²¹⁶ (Mk 13:26) is clearly a coming to change the government of the world. Jesus takes over, he rules the world. That is also the background of the Old Testament text to which these verses refer (Dn 7:13-14):

13 I saw in the night visions, and behold, with the clouds of heaven there came one like a son of man, and he came to the Ancient of Days and was presented before him. 14 And to him was given dominion and glory and a kingdom, that all peoples, nations, and languages should serve him; his dominion is an everlasting dominion, which shall not pass away, and his kingdom one that shall not be destroyed.

Accordingly the coming of Christ with the clouds of heaven is the end of this age. The kingdoms of this world pass away and God's kingdom is revealed.

214. καὶ ὄψονται τὸν υἱὸν τοῦ ἀνθρώπου ἐρχόμενον ἐπὶ τῶν νεφελῶν τοῦ οὐρανοῦ μετὰ δυνάμεως καὶ δόξης πολλῆς•

215. μετὰ δυνάμεως καὶ δόξης πολλῆς.

216. μετὰ δυνάμεως πολλῆς καὶ δόξης

8.6 John Nelson Darby (1800-1882) and his Dispensationalism

J. N. Darby was a very important person amongst the Plymouth Brethren. But the influence of his ideas on the understanding of eschatology and the Bible generally has not been limited to this evangelical revival movement.²¹⁷ We will deal here with dispensationalist ideas as far as they concern our subject of eschatology and the second coming of Christ. A summary of certain key ideas is given in the main text and quotes from Darby's writings are added in the footnotes to give the opportunity to hear this impressive Bible teacher in his own words.

8.6.1 The distinction between different dispensations in history

In his article "The Apostasy Of The Successive Dispensations"²¹⁸ Darby seems to distinguish the following dispensations within the Bible about which he says they all failed from the outset. I have done the counting which is not found originally in his article and is, of course, open for discussion. Because he starts his counting

217. One important landmark was the publication of Cyrus Ingerson Scofield, *Scofield Reference Bible* (Oxford University Press, 1909) which had the King James Version as English Bible text and contained dispensationalist ideas of Darby in the footnotes. This edition of the Bible became so popular that millions of it were sold in the English speaking world and translations into other languages followed.

218. J.N. Darby and W. Kelly, "Ecclesiastical No. 1," chap. The Apostasy Of The Successive Dispensations, vol. 1, *The Collected Writings of J. N. Darby*, [accessed October 10, 2012] (239 Harrison Street, Oak Park, Ill.: Bible Truth Publishers, Reprint 1971), <http://www.plymouthbrethren.org/article/10886>

with Noah, I have given this dispensation the first entry, the state of paradise being mentioned by him as no real dispensation. The time of God incarnate being on earth is also not counted as a dispensation, so I have put it as an "extra remark". Then there is with the end of the millennium the time after all dispensations which will go on forever.

0. About the state before the dispensations Darby says:

The paradisaical state cannot properly perhaps be called a dispensation in this sense of the word; but as regards the universal failure of man, it is a most important instance. It is too plain, too sadly known, to require much proof in detail, important as shewing that no condition of man set him free from the prevailing art of the great adversary. When he was innocent and untainted, surrounded by every mercy, and at the head of all blessing, he fell immediately.

1. According to Darby the dispensations start with Noah whose dispensation should have been characterized by "restraint and godliness", but the patriarch became drunk, his son mocked him and was cursed.
2. The dispensation of Abraham as a man "under the calling of grace" failed shamefully, because Abraham lied about his wife and brought plagues instead of blessings.
3. The dispensation of "obedience under the law by which life was to be" failed immediately, because Israel "a stiffnecked and rebellious people" committed idolatry with the golden calf while Moses was still on the mountain to bring "the two tables of testimony" to them.

4. The failure of the dispensation of priesthood is presented in this way:

The ordinance or dispensation of priesthood failed in like manner. Before Aaron and his sons had gone out from the door of the tabernacle of the congregation, because the anointing oil of the Lord was upon them, Nadab and Abihu had already offered strange fire and been consumed before the Lord.

5. and 6. seem to be the dispensation of the judges (which is not mentioned by name) and the kingly dispensation:

The kingly dispensation failed in the same way as did the nation under the previous ordering which made way for the king (see Judges 2), the Lord having failed in nothing; Joshua 23:14. David and Solomon having exhibited the royalty in victory and peace, Rehoboam and Jeroboam are but the witnesses of its utter failure, patience and mercy still going on, till the provocations of Manasseh set aside all hope of recovery or way of mercy in that dispensation.

7. Darby does not use the word dispensation for the next period, but perhaps this could be called "the dispensation of universal rule transferred to the Gentiles":

The same is true of universal rule transferred to the Gentiles: Nebuchadnezzar, the golden head, sets up the golden image, persecutes the faithful, and is turned into the image of a beast for his pride.

Extra remark without the name of dispensation for the time of God incarnate on earth:

The rejection of our blessed Lord proved that no present mercy and grace, no present interference of God in goodness here, would meet the wilful and persevering enmity of the human heart, but only shewed it in its true light. But this, never being set up as a dispensation, but only the manifestation of His Person (to faith), I pass by.

8. The present dispensation is according to Darby "the dispensation of the Spirit" and gets the longest explanation:

The last we have to notice, in a humbled sense of sin in us, is the present, where we are apt to take our ease in the world, as necessarily secure, but which, and the sin of which, the Lord sees and recognises, takes as much notice of, though not openly, as of others - the dispensation of the Spirit... And the facts shew us that it was ever at the outset the failure or apostasy took place... When the Lord was parting from the disciples, He gives them the commandment, "Go ye and disciple all nations." Where is the fulfilment of this by the apostles whom He had chosen? This was their special commission from Him, as risen and having all power in heaven and earth. The principle and value of the dispensation could not be altered. But where is the fulfilment by the twelve apostles? Scripture affords it not. There is no account of the twelve in Scripture going into all the world and preaching the gospel to every creature: nothing which Scripture recognises as the accomplishment of this command. This in itself would be sufficient to show that the command on which the dispensation

hung was, in the revealed testimony of God, unfulfilled by those to whom it was committed. But I further find (contrary to the word, “when they persecute you in one city, flee ye to the next”) that on the persecution which arose about the matter of Stephen, they were all scattered abroad except the apostles. But the testimony is not merely negative, for I find, in extraordinary grace, a new arrangement entirely made—an apostle of the Gentiles raised up, entirely distinct: “one born out of due time”; “not of man, nor by man”; who was neither apostle with them, nor from them, but asserts, as he proved, his own independent qualifications. And the Acts of the Apostles, as to ministry, are the acts of Peter, as one in whom God was mighty to the circumcision, and it was agreed that he should go to the circumcision, and Paul and Barnabas to the Gentiles; and so the acts of Paul, as one in whom the same God was mighty towards the uncircumcision. That is, we find an express special office of apostle to the Gentiles, and whatever work was done of the commission, “Go ye into all nations” (Gentiles) was done, as presented to us in Scripture, actually by somebody else specially and extraordinarily raised up for the purpose. Thus, whatever grace and power from Him that was glorified might effect, this dispensation as well as any other failed and broke off in the very outset; and in point of fact the gospel has never been preached in all the world, nor all nations disciplined to this day, but the church which was gathered has departed from the faith of the gospel, and gone away backward, so as to be as bad or worse than the

heathen.

9. The next and future dispensation seems to be the "dispensation of the Millennium" without being clearly called so:

When He is come who can bind Satan himself, so that his power in the world shall be set aside, and not merely the testimony of the Lord's power maintained there, then shall there be continuance, until, for the accomplishment of the purposes of God, and the final separation of evil and good, he be let loose again for a little season.

After the Millennium is the time after the dispensations:

And the close of all dispensation, and the end of all question and title of authority shall come, and, all being finished, God shall be all in all without question and without failure.

This article makes it clear that Darby views the dispensations in the Bible as being overshadowed by their immediate failure because of the sinfulness of man. God's grace and mercy still work on, but the failed dispensation is not restored. There may be revivals by God's grace, but not the restoration of a dispensation. This negative view of the failed dispensations must be noted as a marked characteristic of Darby's view of salvation history including present church history.

8.6.2 **The distinction between Israel and the Church**

Darby sees two nations of God, an earthly and a heavenly, and two kingdoms, an earthly and a heavenly. Israel as the people of

God who are destined to rule on earth and the assembly or church as the people of God who will be in heaven and rule with Christ from heaven. This is reflected again and again in his expositions of Scripture. Here are some examples. Explaining Mt 5:12 and other statements in Mt 5 he says:²¹⁹

Those who are put to death will go up to heaven, as Matthew v. 12 testifies, and the Apocalypse also. The others, who are thus conformed to Christ, as a suffering Jew, will be with Him on Mount Sion; they will learn the song which is sung in heaven, and will follow the Lamb whithersoever He goeth (on earth). We may also remark here, that in the beatitudes there is the promise of the earth to the meek, which will be literally fulfilled in the last days. In verse 12 a reward in heaven is promised to those who suffer for Christ, true for us now, and in some sort for those who shall be slain for His sake in the last days, who will have their place in heaven, although they were a part of the Jewish remnant and not the assembly.

The last quoted sentence makes it clear that people of the Jewish remnant normally would belong to the earthly kingdom and that the assembly (= church) would belong to the heavenly kingdom. But if a Jew suffers and is slain for Christ's sake, he can get a place in

219. John Nelson Darby, *Synopsis of the Books of the Bible*. Matthew - John, vol. 3, [accessed October 9, 2012] (London: G. Morrish, 1860), <https://ia600206.us.archive.org/9/items/DarbyWritingsNewTranslationNewTestamentSynopsisBooksBibleMulti/15.SynopBksBibNT.DarbyJN.v3.Mat-John.GMor.Lon.newdrev.newdrev.1860.pdf>, p. 58, footnote.

the heavenly kingdom. According to Darby the twelve apostles are destined to be part of the earthly kingdom:²²⁰

These instructions with regard to riches give rise to Peter's question, What shall be the portion of those who have renounced everything? This brings us back to the glory in chapter xvii. There would be a regeneration; the state of things should be entirely renewed under the dominion of the Son of man. At that time they should sit on twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel. They should have the first place in the administration of the earthly kingdom.

About the principles of the heavenly kingdom Darby explains:²²¹

These are the principles of the heavenly kingdom: perfect self-renunciation, to be contented in thorough devotedness; this is the fruit of love that seeketh not her own — the yieldingness that flows from the absence of self-seeking submission when despised; meekness and lowliness of heart.

8.6.3 **The distinction between a secret and a public coming of Christ**

Darby sees a secret coming of Christ for the assembly first and afterwards a public coming of Christ for the world. During the secret coming of Christ in the air, the assembly is taken up, raptured to

220. Darby, *Synopsis of the Books of the Bible*. Matthew - John, p. 142-143.

221. *ibid.*, p. 145.

him and will be with him forever in heaven. In his explanation of 2 Thes 2:1ff Darby states:²²²

The apostle had already instructed the Thessalonians with regard to this wicked one, when at Thessalonica; and in the former epistle he had taught them concerning the rapture of the church. In order that the Lord should come in judgment, iniquity must have reached its height, and open opposition to God have been manifested. But the truth had another and more precious side: the saints were to be in the same position as Christ, to be gathered together unto Him, before He could manifest Himself in glory to those outside.

Here Darby distinguishes the gathering of the believers to Christ as something which has to happen "before He could manifest Himself in glory to those outside".

8.6.4 **"What is restraining him" and "who now restrains it"**

in 2 Thes 2:6-7 are to be understood in one way or other as the Holy Spirit and the church who will be taken away from the earth at the time of the rapture. So Darby says for example commenting on 2 Thes 2:5-7:²²³

222. John Nelson Darby, *Synopsis of the Books of the Bible. Colossians - Revelation*, vol. 5, [accessed October 9, 2012] (London: G. Morrish, 1860), <https://ia600206.us.archive.org/9/items/DarbysWritingsNewTranslationNewTestamentSynopsisBooksBibleMulti/16.SynopBksBibNT.DarbyJN.v5.Col-Rev.GMor.Lon.newdrev.1860.pdf>, p. 117.

223. *ibid.*, p. 122-123.

That which hinders is therefore still present. But there is a person active in maintaining this hindrance. Here I think indeed that it is God in the Person of the Holy Ghost, who, during the time called "the things that are," restrains the evil and guards divine authority in the world. As long as that subsists, the unrestrained exaltation of wickedness cannot take place. Consequently I do not doubt but that the rapture of the saints is the occasion of the hindrance being removed and all restraint loosed, although some of the ways of God are developed before the full manifestation of the evil.

8.6.5 **God has not appointed us to wrath, but to obtain salvation.**

This idea is related to 1 Thes 1:10 and 5:9 as it is combined with the sections about God's wrath in Revelation. Darby explains that Christ has delivered us from the wrath to come according to 1 Thes 1:10.²²⁴

It is thus that God has reconciled us to Himself. By faith thus knowing God, we "turn from idols to serve the living and true God, and to wait for his Son from heaven." The living and true God is the object of our joyful service. His Son, whom we know, who knows us, who will have us to be where He is... "Which delivered us from the wrath to come." The work of Christ has perfectly sheltered us from this wrath; He

224. Darby, *Synopsis of the Books of the Bible. Colossians - Revelation*, p. 70.

took our place in responsibility on the cross to put away sin for us by the sacrifice of Himself.

Because the believers have converted from the idols to God, they now "wait for his Son from heaven". He is the one which "delivered us from the wrath to come". With regard to 1 Thes 5:9 Darby says:²²⁵

Consequently the apostle speaks thus: " For God hath not appointed us to wrath" (love is understood by faith, that which God wills - His mind respecting us), "but to obtain salvation." It is this which we hope for; and he speaks of salvation as the final deliverance "by our Lord Jesus Christ:" and he naturally adds, "who died for us, that whether we wake or sleep" (have died before His coming or be then alive), "we should live together with Him."

Coming to Darby's exposition of the book of Revelation we see that he assumes that the assembly is already taken up in heaven in chapter 4:1 before the passages take place where the "wrath"²²⁶ of God or the lamb is mentioned:²²⁷

But we have to consider where the fourth chapter commences God's ways... John is ... called up to heaven where all the ways of God are now carried on, and that towards the world, not the assembly... The

225. *ibid.*, p. 95.

226. The words used in Revelation for the wrath of God are either ὄργη ἡ ὀργή (Rv 6:16.17; 11:18; 14:10; 16:19; 19:15) or thymōs ὁ θυμὸς (Rv 14:19; 15:1.7; 16:1.19; 19:15). These words are found in chapters 6 to 19.

227. *ibid.*, p. 518-519.

kings and priests we read of in chapter i. are now on high... they are in heavenly places, seated on thrones, or worshipping, or presenting their censers full of incense... The saints then, who will be caught up to meet Christ, are seen only on high here; they belong to heaven, and are no longer dealt with on earth, but have their own place in heaven.

According to Darby's understanding, the time when the wrath of God will hit the earth is when the saints of the church are already caught up to heaven, represented by John's going up to heaven in Rv 4:1. Darby sees another hint to the rapture in Rv 12:5.²²⁸

Even in chapter xii., which remarkably confirms what I say, the rapture is only seen as identified with the catching up of the man-child, Christ Himself. Hence we have no specific relative epoch noted for the taking away the saints here, save that they are taken before the war in heaven which leads to the last three years and a half."

Later in his exposition of Rv 12 he gives further details:²²⁹

The first symbolical person, subject of the prophecy and result of all God's ways in it, is a woman clothed with the sun, having a crown of twelve stars, and the moon under her feet. It is Israel, or Jerusalem as its centre as in the purpose of God... She was travelling in childbirth, distressed, and in pain to be delivered: on the other hand Satan's power in the form

228. Darby, *Synopsis of the Books of the Bible. Colossians - Revelation*, p. 517-518

229. *ibid.*, p. 535-536.

of the Roman Empire... Satan, as the open infidel enemy of God and God's power in Christ, sought to devour the child as soon as born, who was to have the rule of the earth from God. But the child, Christ, and the assembly with Christ, is caught away to God and His throne... Christ and the assembly are all one. But the woman - the Jews, after this fly into the wilderness, where God has prepared a place for them, for the half-week. The assembly, or heavenly saints... go up to heaven to be out of the way. The Jews, or earthly ones, are protected by providential care upon earth... She that is to have glory and hold power in the earth is cast out. The child that is to have power, in and from heaven, is previously taken up there. This makes the position very clear.

8.6.6 **Jesus tells the church of Philadelphia**

that he will keep them "from the hour of trial that is coming on the whole world, to try those who dwell on the earth" (Rv 3:10). Darby comments on this promise:²³⁰

There was an hour of temptation coming upon all the world to try those who belonged to earth, who dwelt there as belonging to it. Some might be spared, victorious in the trial; but those who kept the word of Christ's patience would be kept from it. On the whole world it would come; and where were they ? - Out of the world. They had not belonged to it when in it. They had been waiting for Christ to take His power

230. *ibid.*, p. 514.

- waiting His time to have the world. They belonged to heaven, to Him who was there; and they would be taken to be with Him when the world was to be in the time of terrible trial.

8.6.7 **The Marriage of the Lamb**

Darby understands "the marriage of the Lamb" of Rv 19:7 as the "assembly" being united with Christ in heaven:²³¹

Chapter xix. 2 clearly shews the aspect in which she is judged - the great whore who corrupted; and God avenges the blood of His servants. This judgment of Rome is the great joy of heaven. Hallelujah and salvation are sung. The elders and four living creatures fall down and worship, and the voice of the multitude proclaims the bringing in of the marriage of the Lamb, when the false woman is set aside. Till then, though espoused, the assembly was not thus actually united in the heavenly marriage of the Lamb.

The judgment of the great whore Babylon is understood as the judgment of Rome. The setting aside of Rome happens first, and then the assembly is taken up to be united with Christ in heaven.

8.7 **Understanding 1 Thes 4:13-18**

This text has become so important for the understanding of the second coming of Christ that we should look at it in some detail:

231. Darby, *Synopsis of the Books of the Bible*. Colossians - Revelation, p. 552.

13 But we do not want you to be uninformed, brothers, about those who are asleep, that you may not grieve as others do who have no hope. 14 For since we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so, through Jesus, God will bring with him those who have fallen asleep. 15 For this we declare to you by a word from the Lord, that we who are alive, who are left until the coming of the Lord, will not precede those who have fallen asleep. 16 For the Lord himself will descend from heaven with a cry of command, with the voice of an archangel, and with the sound of the trumpet of God. And the dead in Christ will rise first. 17 Then we who are alive, who are left, will be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air, and so we will always be with the Lord. 18 Therefore encourage one another with these words.

8.7.1 Paul's purpose (4:13.18)

in writing this is stated very clearly in the first and the last verse of this section (4:13.18): He wants to give comfort and hope to those who have lost a loved one through death. Even when he continues the subject in 5:1-11 to talk about the "the times and the seasons" of the event he is explaining here, he closes again with the purpose that they should "encourage one another" with this teaching (5:11). This is of utmost importance.

We should use sections in the Bible according to the purpose of the author if clearly recognizable. If Paul wants to comfort believers who have lost relatives through death who were also believers, we should not use the section to scare people. The way some people have used this text to teach a kind of rapture where only the totally

committed Christians are taken up to Jesus, while others who are not good enough are "left behind" to go through a time of great tribulation in the world, is very scary.

I do not want to be misunderstood. I am in favor of commitment to the Lord. But not all Christians are equally committed. And some are not as confident as others. In the immediate context (5:14) Paul writes "... admonish the idle, encourage the faint-hearted, help the weak, be patient with them all". We should teach 4:13-18 specifically and the Gospel generally in a way that we "admonish the idle" and also "encourage the fainthearted".

8.7.2 **The example of Jesus (4:14)**

in his death and resurrection is the guarantee that the believers who have died ("fallen asleep") will also be resurrected through Jesus and brought with him.²³²

8.7.3 **A word from the Lord is explained (4:15-17)**

by Paul in these verses.²³³ This is another important key to understand this section. The main ideas go back to a word from the Lord Jesus.²³⁴ The living believers at the time of Christ's coming will not precede those who will have died before. First those who have died before, will be resurrected. Then these resurrected will be taken up together with those who had been still alive at Christ's coming to meet the Lord Jesus in the air and both united parts will always be with the Lord. If we look for relevant and fitting words

232. οὕτως καὶ ὁ θεὸς τοὺς κοιμηθέντας διὰ τοῦ Ἰησοῦ ἔξει σὺν αὐτοῖς.

233. τοῦτο γὰρ ὑμῖν λέγομεν ἐν λόγῳ κυρίου

234. For the word or words of the Lord see also Acts 20:35; 1 Thes 1:8; 2 Thes 3:1; 1 Tm 6:3.

in the Gospels, the nearest parallel is found in Mt 24:27.30-31:

15 For this we declare to you by a word from the Lord, that we who are alive, who are left until the coming of the Lord, will not precede those who have fallen asleep.

16 For the Lord himself will descend from heaven with a cry of command, with the voice of an archangel, and with the sound of the trumpet of God. And the dead in Christ will rise first.

17 Then we who are alive, who are left, will be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air, and so we will always be with the Lord.

27 For as the lightning comes from the east and shines as far as the west, so will be the coming of the Son of Man.

30 Then will appear in heaven the sign of the Son of Man, and then all the tribes of the earth will mourn, and they will see the Son of Man coming on the clouds of heaven with power and great glory.

31 And he will send out his angels with a loud trumpet call, and they will gather his elect from the four winds, from one end of heaven to the other.

The "coming of the Lord" and the "coming of the Son of Man" can be understood as the same coming of the same person. That he will "descend from heaven"²³⁵ or will come "on the clouds of heaven"²³⁶ can be seen as the same movement. The "descending from heaven" is written from Paul's perspective on earth at the time of writing his letter. Paul means that Christ will leave heaven and come to earth. The people who see "the Son of Man coming on the

235. καταβήσεται ἀπ' οὐρανοῦ

236. ὁψονται τὸν υἱὸν τοῦ ἀνθρώπου ἐρχόμενον ἐπὶ τῶν νεφελῶν τοῦ οὐρανοῦ

clouds of heaven" are also people on earth who consequently see the Son of Man coming their direction, coming to earth.

The "sound of the trumpet"²³⁷ is according to Paul's statement 1 Cor 15:52 the sound of the "last trumpet". Therefore the "loud trumpet call"²³⁸ of Mt 24:31 can not be a trumpet call after the last trumpet otherwise the last trumpet would not be the last trumpet. It is better to understand it as the same trumpet call we have in 1 Thes 4:14 and 1 Cor 15:52 and Is 27:13.

All these texts speak about the gathering of God's people at the end of the end times. The being "caught up together"²³⁹ in 1 Thes 4:17 is in the passive voice giving no information of the agent or agents transporting the believers into Christ's presence. In Mt 24:31 the angels are doing this work of gathering the believers together.²⁴⁰

Again both movements can be understood as the same movement of the believers to Christ (compare Lk 21:36). Since Darby (see above) another movement has been put into the text, the movement of Christ and his gathered people from the air back to heaven to disappear. But this movement is not really part of the text, it is not mentioned.

When we think about the phrase of Paul "to meet the Lord in the air", there are two other texts in the New Testament where the same phrase is used which can help our understanding. We read in Acts 28:15:

And the brothers there, when they heard about us,

237. ἐν σάλπιγγι θεοῦ

238. μετὰ σάλπιγγος μεγάλης

239. ἔπειτα ἡμεῖς οἱ ζῶντες οἱ περιλειπόμενοι ἅμα σὺν αὐτοῖς ἁρπαγησόμεθα ἐν νεφέλαις εἰς ἀπάντησιν τοῦ κυρίου εἰς ἀέρα•

240. καὶ ἀποστελεῖ τοὺς ἀγγέλους αὐτοῦ μετὰ σάλπιγγος μεγάλης, καὶ ἐπισυνάξουσιν τοὺς ἐκλεκτοὺς αὐτοῦ

came as far as the Forum of Appius and Three Taverns to meet us.²⁴¹ On seeing them, Paul thanked God and took courage.

Paul was a prisoner and on his way to Rome. The Christians in Rome heard that he was coming. They decided to come "to meet" him and his team on the way. They did not come to disappear with him to some other place, but to encourage him and honor him on the last part of his journey to Rome. Paul understood their gesture and was encouraged. The other example is in Mt 25:6:

But at midnight there was a cry, 'Here is the bridegroom! Come out to meet him.'²⁴²

The virgins are called to hurry to meet the bridegroom for the last part of his way to meet his bride and the family of the bride. Again the idea is not to disappear with the bridegroom to some other place but to accompany him on the last part of his journey. The idea is to show that he is welcomed and honored and his coming very much desired.

These two parallel texts show very well what the intention of God is when he will gather the people of God to meet Jesus in the air. The movement of Jesus will be at that time to "descend" from heaven and to come down to the earth.²⁴³

The fact that the church will be taken up to meet Jesus in the air is a sign of welcome. They have been waiting for Jesus and desired his coming. Now they honor Jesus by being taken up to him and by becoming part of his royal court and an expression of his glory

241. ἦλθαν εἰς ἀπάντησιν ἡμῶν

242. Ἴδου ὁ νυμφίος, ἐξέρχεσθε εἰς ἀπάντησιν αὐτοῦ.

243. His destination seems to be the mount of olives according to Zec 14:4 (compare Acts 1:11-12).

(2 Thes 1:10). This is, of course, at the same time a great honor for the believers. To understand the coming of Christ and the gathering of his church to him in this way, is a great comfort for those who have lost loved ones (1 Thes 4:18).

8.8 Understanding the Apocalypse

8.8.1 Type of literature

The book of Revelation is also called the "Apocalypse" which is taken from the first word of the Greek text. The word denotes literally "the removal of a veil" or "revelation". It has become customary to speak of "apocalyptic literature" and Revelation is seen as such. But it is also a prophetic book (Rv 1:3; 22:10). And it has also clear marks of being a letter (Rv 1:4-6; 22:21).

Apocalyptic literature predicts an end of this world and a new world order to come. Because this world comes to an end, the last times before this end are crucial and have a special focus. Often a highly symbolic language is used, with symbolic numbers. Because of the complexity of the heavenly coded language, angelic beings may help the receiver of the apocalyptic visions as guides and interpreters.

Within the canon of the Bible "apocalyptic" material is normally found within prophetic books in the Old Testament (Is 24-27; 34-35; 65-66; Jer 30-33; Ez 36-39; Zec 9-14; Dn 2; 7-12) or in the New Testament within the prophetic book of Revelation or in the Gospels (Mt 24-25; Mk 13; Lk 21) or in the letters (2 Thes 2; 2 Pt 3; Heb 12).

My impression is that the border between the "normal prophetic"

and the "apocalyptic" is not clear cut.²⁴⁴ In the Olivet course Jesus speaks also as a prophet (Mt 21:11). The apostles Peter and Paul also seem to have been prophets at the same time (Acts 13:1; 5:3-4.9).

In interpreting the book of Revelation it is important to remember that it is a letter with a meaning for the seven churches in the first century, a prophecy which has to be heard and acted upon and an apocalypse with highly symbolic language.

8.8.2 Interpretive Schemes

There are mainly four different ways to interpret Revelation.²⁴⁵

Futurist

The predictions of Rv 4-22 are seen as something which will be fulfilled very close to the second coming of Christ at the end of this age.

Historicist

In this way of understanding the book the reader looks at history from the time of John up to his own time to recognize fulfillments

244. The LXX for example uses the Greek term *apōkalyptō* ἀποκαλύπτω in these texts to denote a divine activity of revealing something to someone: Nm 22:31; 24:4.16; 1 Sm 2:27; 3:7.21; 9:15; 2 Sm 7:27; Ps 98:2; 119:18; Is 53:1; 56:1; Dn 2:19.22.28; 2:29.30.47; 10:1; 11:35; Amos 3:7. Often it is said that "apocalyptic" literature originated in post-exilic Judaism. But what do we think of Is 24-27 or 34-35 and 65-66? If the book of Isaiah is seen as a unity and dated pre-exilic in the first half of the seventh century B.C. then these texts could be used to fix an earlier date of the origins of apocalyptic literature.

245. See Gaebelein, *The Expositor's Bible Commentary: Hebrews, James, 1,2 Peter, 1,2,3 John, Jude, Revelation*, p. 408-411.

of its content and to be prepared for further developments until the coming of Christ.

Preterist

According to this view the interpretation of Revelation is limited to the time of the author. Rv 4-22 describe exclusively events related to John's own time and outlook.

Idealist

Here heavy emphasis is put on the poetic, symbolic and spiritual nature of the book. This is done to such an extent that no specific historic events are seen as predicted.

All these four ways of interpretation have strengths and weaknesses. The futurist view severs the tie of the book to the seven churches of the first century which have received it in the first place. So it ignores totally the fact that Revelation is also a letter sent to the seven churches with meaning for those seven churches. But it is good that it encourages the church to look out for real future fulfillments of the prophecies and wait eagerly for Christ's coming. Many of the historicist interpreters have identified pagan and later papal Rome with "Babylon" and in addition to this have made other identifications of "fulfillments" where there is no real consensus. The preterist view stands in danger to ignore the prophetic character of the book with real predictions and expected fulfillments. But it is good that it tries to exhaust all possibilities of interpretations which fit into the real life setting of the first century. The idealist view does justice to the apocalyptic character of the book with its high symbolism but seems to overdo it with ignoring the specific predictive elements which are present as well.

8.8.3 An outline of Revelation

Apart from the prologue (1:1-8) and epilogue (22:10-21) there seem to be two recognizable larger sections within the main part (1:9-22:9) of the book: The first section deals with the state of the seven churches the book was written to in the first place (1:9-3:22): The title for this section can be taken from 1:19 "Write therefore the things that you have seen, those that are..." The second section from 4:1-22:9 deals according to 4:1 with future things:

Come up here, and I will show you what must take place after this.

This future part had already been mentioned in 1:19:

Write therefore the things that you have seen, those that are and those that are to take place after this.

It is interesting that both larger sections are introduced by a special experience of John in the Holy Spirit. 1:10 is part of the introduction of 1:9-3:22:

10 I was in the Spirit on the Lord's day, and I heard behind me a loud voice like a trumpet²⁴⁶ 11 saying, "Write what you see in a book and send it to the seven churches, to Ephesus and to Smyrna and to Pergamum and to Thyatira and to Sardis and to Philadelphia and to Laodicea."

And 4:2 is part of the introduction of 4:1-22:9:

246. ἐγενόμην ἐν πνεύματι ἐν τῇ κυριακῇ ἡμέρᾳ, καὶ ἤκουσα ὀπίσω μου φωνὴν μεγάλην ὡς σάλπιγγος

2 At once I was in the Spirit, and behold, a throne stood in heaven, with one seated on the throne.²⁴⁷

The words "I was in the Spirit" are identical in 1:10 and 4:2, in this translation in English, and in the Greek text. These sentences are found in the introduction of both larger sections. They are structural markers showing us that the two main parts of the book have been received through a special and deep experience of the Holy Spirit. The structure of the first major part is easily recognized because of the seven letters to the seven churches which can be counted. Seven is the number of fullness or completeness. The seven churches represent the worldwide church in her different states and aspects.

To come up with a valid structure of the second major part (4:1-22:9) needs a closer look at this body of text. One key to find the structure of Rv 4-22 are the three vision cycles of the seven seals, the seven trumpets and the seven bowls. These three sections are easily recognizable with their introduction and their closure because of the persistent counting to seven.

A further step to find the structure of 4-22 is to recognize that the visions of Rv 12-14 which are contained by the 7 trumpets and the 7 bowls on either side constitute one more coherent vision cycle which is introduced by the vision of a woman (12:1-3). This gives us four sections from 4:1 to 16:21.

Now it is possible to show that the remainder from 17:1 to 22:9 can be divided into three sections by discovering the structural markers in the form of the two angels who guide John to see "Babylon the great" in 17:1-19:10 and the "New Jerusalem" in 21:9-22:9. Both sections start and end in a very similar manner. First we compare the beginning of both sections:

247. εὐθέως ἐγενόμην ἐν πνεύματι• καὶ ἰδοὺ θρόνος ἔκειτο ἐν τῷ οὐρανῷ, καὶ ἐπὶ τὸν θρόνον καθήμενος,

17:1-3

1 Then one of the seven angels who had the seven bowls came

and said to me,

“Come, I will show you the judgment of the great prostitute who is seated on many waters, 2 with whom the kings of the earth have committed sexual immorality, and with the wine of whose sexual immorality the dwellers on earth have become drunk.”

3 And he carried me away in the Spirit into a wilderness, and I saw a woman sitting on a scarlet beast that was full of blasphemous names, and it had seven heads and ten horns.

21:9-11

9 Then came one of the seven angels who had the seven bowls full of the seven last plagues and spoke to me, saying, “Come, I will show you the Bride, the wife of the Lamb.”

10 And he carried me away in the Spirit to a great, high mountain, and showed me the holy city Jerusalem coming down out of heaven from God.

It is important that the two guiding angels who show John first Babylon and then the New Jerusalem are two of the seven angels with the seven bowls of God's wrath (Rv 15-16). This creates links between Rv 15-16, 17:1-19:10 and 21:9-22:9. The relationship can be well understood because the seventh bowl implies the judgment of Babylon (16:19). Perhaps the angel who is showing John the judgment of Babylon in 17:1-19:10 is the angel of the seventh bowl. We recognize further that the completed judgment of Babylon causes a fourfold "Hallelujah" in 19:1-10. The fourth and climactic Hallelujah in 19:6-8 points in a cryptic way forward to the "Bride of the Lamb" whose identity is then later revealed in the third section.

“Hallelujah!

For the Lord our God the Almighty reigns.

7 Let us rejoice and exult and give him the glory,
 for the marriage of the Lamb has come,
 and his Bride has made herself ready;
 8 it was granted her to clothe herself
 with fine linen, bright and pure” -
 for the fine linen is the righteous deeds of the saints.

If the reader gets curious about the identity of the Bride of the Lamb, he only has to read on to get the answer in 21:9-22:9. The Bride of the Lamb is the New Jerusalem coming down from heaven. When God will have rejected and destroyed the whore Babylon, the name of a city which has caused worldwide corruption, then the stage will be cleared for the coming down of the New Jerusalem which is the name of the city of God which causes worldwide conversion of all nations towards God.

Let us now have a look at the end of the two sections 17:1-19:10 and 21:9-22:9:

19:10

10 Then

I fell down at his feet to worship him,

but he said to me, “You must not do that!

I am a fellow servant with you and your brothers who hold to the testimony of Jesus.

Worship God.”

For the testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy.

22:8-9

8 I, John, am the one who heard and saw these things.

And when I heard and saw them, I fell down to worship at the feet of the angel who showed them to me, 9 but he said to me, “You must not do that!

I am a fellow servant with you and your brothers the prophets, and with those who keep the words of this book.

Worship God.”

It is quite evident that these closing texts of our two sections re-

semble each other closely. They are structural markers showing us the end of 17:1-19:10 and 21:9-22:9. These two sections then contain the section 19:11-21:8 in the middle of them as the sixth of seven vision cycles which stretch from 4:1 to 22:9.

In this sixth vision cycle the enemies of God are dealt with by being "thrown", ultimately into the lake of fire (Rv 19:20; 20:3.10.14.15). Having done away with his enemies (19:11-20:15) God then makes all things new (21:1-8).

The fact that the New Jerusalem is presented in the seventh vision cycle as the "Bride, the wife of the Lamb... coming down out of heaven from God" to stay forever is most fitting. Again the number seven is the number of fullness and completion. The ways of God are perfect. His plans have been fulfilled. God's dwelling is with man forever.

We now can present an outline of Revelation:²⁴⁸

248. This outline is similar to the one found in Michael Wilcock, *The Message of Revelation*, BST (Inter Varsity Press, 2000), p. 15-18.

1. Prologue 1:1-8
2. Main Part 1:9-22:9
 - (a) Seven Letters about Today 1:9 - 3:22
 - i. 1:9-20 A vision of Christ introduces the seven letters. "Write therefore the things that you have seen, those that are..." (1:19; 1:10).
 - ii. 2:1-3:22 The seven letters
 - A. To the angel of the church in Ephesus write... 2:1-7
 - B. And to the angel of the church in Smyrna write... 2:8-11
 - C. And to the angel of the church in Pergamum write... 2:12-17
 - D. And to the angel of the church in Thyatira write... 2:18-29
 - E. And to the angel of the church in Sardis write... 3:1-6
 - F. And to the angel of the church in Philadelphia write... 3:7-13
 - G. And to the angel of the church in Laodicea write... 3:14-22
 - (b) Seven Vision Cycles about the Future 4:1 - 22:9 "Write therefore ... those that are to take place after this" (1:19; 4:1-2).
 - i. The Scroll with the Seven Seals 4:1 - 8:1
 - ii. The Seven Trumpets 8:2 - 11:19
 - iii. The Woman, the Beasts, the Lamb and Judgment 12 - 14
 - iv. The Seven Bowls 15 - 16
 - v. The Whore Babylon 17:1 - 19:10
 - vi. The Enemies of God pass away, the New comes. 19:11- 21:8
 - vii. The Bride of the Lamb 21:9 - 22:9
3. Epilogue 22:10-21

8.8.4 **7 seals, trumpets and bowls**

The three vision cycles of the 7 seals, 7 trumpets and 7 bowls can be compared in a table:

| | 7 Seals | 7 Trumpets | 7 Bowls poured out on |
|----|--|--|--|
| 1. | White Horse: Conqueror | 1/3 of the earth is burnt. | the Earth: sores. |
| 2. | Fiery Red Horse: War | 1/3 of sea becomes blood. | the Sea: all blood, all dead. |
| 3. | Black Horse: Inflation | 1/3 of the waters are poisoned. | the Rivers + springs of water: blood. |
| 4. | Pale Horse: Death / Hades, 1/4 judgment | 1/3 of the light becomes dark. | the Sun: heat, no repentance. |
| 5. | Martyrs | 1st woe: The abyss is opened. Pain. | the beast's throne: no repentance, dark, pain. |
| 6. | Day of the Lord | 2nd woe: 4 Euphrates angels are freed. No repentance. 1/3 of mankind killed. | the Euphrates: Preparation for the Day of God. |
| | The 144000 Sealed and the uncountable crowd. | Seven thunders, two witnesses. | Waiting for Jesus |
| 7. | 1/2 Hour of Silence | 3rd woe: Day of judgment. | the Air: It is done. |

One specialty of the sixth item is that there is a kind of attachment to it showing the state of the people of God: Attached to the sixth seal is 7:1-17, to the sixth trumpet 10:1-11:13, to the sixth bowl 16:15.

The seven seals and the seven trumpets can be divided into four and three. The four first seals present four riders on four horses, so they belong together. This sets the other three seals aside. The last three trumpets belong together because they are called "the three woes". This sets the four first trumpets aside.

The seven trumpets and the seven bowls can be compared with regard to the areas which are affected: The first hit the earth, the second the sea, the third the drinking water, the fourth the light source, the fifth cause darkness and pain, the sixth are related to the Euphrates and the seventh bring completion in judgment. The difference is that judgment of the trumpets is often related to one third of the affected "area" and the judgment of the bowls hits the whole.

8.8.5 Chronological or repetitive?

One important question about the book of Revelation is: Should Rv 4-22 be understood as a sequence of events or a recapitulation of events? Many readers nowadays read it chronologically. What is written first, will be fulfilled first. What is written later, will be fulfilled later. They identify the sequence of the revelation of the visions with their future fulfillment. The recapitulation theory is an alternative to this understanding and is already found in the old commentary on Revelation by Victorinus of Pettau who died in the Diocletianic persecution 303-305 C.E. In his comments to Rv 7 he points to the judgment in the parable of the weeds in Mt 13:27-30 and says regarding Revelation:²⁴⁹

The Apocalypse here shows, therefore, that these reapers, and shepherds, and labourers, are the angels. And the trumpet is the word of power. And although the same thing recurs in the phials, still it is not said as if it occurred twice, but because what is decreed by the Lord to happen shall be once for all; for this cause it is said twice. What, therefore, He said too little in the trumpets, is here found in the phials.

We must not regard the order of what is said, because frequently the Holy Spirit, when He has traversed even to the end of the last times, returns again to the same times, and fills up what He had before failed to say. Nor must we look for order in the Apocalypse; but we must follow the meaning of those things

249. Schaff, ANF07. Fathers of the Third and Fourth Centuries: Lactantius, Venantius, Asterius, Victorinus, Dionysius, Apostolic Teaching and Constitutions, Homily, and Liturgies, p. 524-525

which are prophesied.

Therefore in the trumpets and phials is signified either the desolation of the plagues that are sent upon the earth, or the madness of Antichrist himself, or the cutting off of the peoples, or the diversity of the plagues, or the hope in the kingdom of the saints, or the ruin of states, or the great overthrow of Babylon, that is, the Roman state.

Following Victorinus it is possible to show several things repeated in Rv 4-22 where it is not probable that the events are supposed to happen twice or thrice etc.:

1. The heavens disappear (6:14 sixth seal; 20:11 before the great white throne).
2. Mountains and islands move away (6:14 sixth seal; 16:20 seventh bowl).
3. The dead are judged (11:18 seventh trumpet; 20:12 judgment before the great white throne).
4. Babylon is fallen through God's judgment (14:8; 16:19; 17:5; 18:2.10.21).

In all these cases it is evident that the same thing is meant. So there is some proven kind of repetition in Rv 4-22.

Of course, it is possible that we have to combine the idea of progress with the idea of some recapitulation. The seals for example contain the idea of a judgment which affects a fourth of the earth (6:8), while the trumpets repeatedly signal that a third of something is destroyed (8:7-12; 9:15). The bowls poured out mean more complete destruction (16:3-4). There is clearly also a kind of progress in the sequence of these three vision cycles.

Perhaps we can say that they do not start at the same time, but they lead to the same end. The seven seals can be read quite parallel to the Olivet discourse of Jesus in Mt 24 which speaks in favor of the assumption that both chapters cover the whole time between the first and the second coming of Jesus Christ. Perhaps the trumpets blow later in history and the bowls present the climax of the end of the end times. But all three series of seven seem to end with the day of the Lord which includes the visible coming of Christ into power (6:17 and 8:1; 11:15-19; 16:15-21).

8.8.6 Views on the Millennium

Within the Bible there is only one text which speaks of a thousand year reign (millennium)²⁵⁰ and that is Revelation 20:1-10. Within church history three main views have developed to understand this notoriously difficult section: premillennialism, postmillennialism, and amillennialism.

Premillennialists believe in the coming of Christ before (pre) the thousand year reign. Postmillennialists see Jesus coming after (post) the thousand years. The name amillennialists seems to imply that these people do not believe in a thousand year reign because the prefix "a-" points to the negation of something. But this name is not quite correct because they believe in the millennium and identify it with the time of the church until the second coming of Christ.

Premillennialism

According to premillennialism the second coming of Christ comes first, then the millennium and then the eternal state. It is possible

250. "Millennium" comes from the Latin for a "thousand years".

to distinguish within premillennialism between the "historic premillennialism" and the modern "dispensational premillennialism" or "pretribulational premillennialism". The "historic premillennialism" had supporters throughout church history.²⁵¹

The "dispensational premillennialism" came up with John Nelson Darby and the Brethren movement (see section 8.6). The new idea in "dispensational premillennialism" or "pretribulational premillennialism" was that the church would be taken up into heaven through the rapture before the "great tribulation" and that then a special time for Israel would start with a great tribulation, God's special protection and salvation of Israel through this difficult time and then a millennium for Israel as a climax.

One of the oldest witnesses for historic premillennialism in history is Papias writing in his five books "Interpretations of the Sayings of the Lord"²⁵² as reported by Eusebius. Latter says in his Church History (III,39,12-13) about Papias:²⁵³

12. To these belong his statement that there will be a period of some thousand years after the resurrection of the dead, and that the kingdom of Christ will be set up in material form on this very earth.²⁵⁴ I suppose

251. A modern supporter is Grudem. See Grudem, Systematic Theology. An Introduction to Biblical Doctrine, p. 1127.

252. Λογίων Κυριακῶν ἐξηγήσεις According to Heussi, Kompendium der Kirchengeschichte, §10a this work was written between 120 and 160 C.E.

253. Schaff, NPNF2-01. Eusebius Pamphilus: Church History, Life of Constantine, Oration in Praise of Constantine, p. 252.

254. ἐν οἷς καὶ χιλιάδα τινὰ φησιν ἑτῶν ἔσεσθαι μετὰ τὴν ἐκ νεκρῶν ἀνάστασιν, σωματικῶς τῆς Χριστοῦ βασιλείας ἐπὶ ταυτησί τῆς γῆς ὑποστηρομένης• Eusebius, Kirchengeschichte Eusebius εκκλησιαστικης ιστοριας, Schwartz, E. <ed> (Leipzig: J. C. Hinrichs'sche Buchhandlung, 1908), 442 pp, p. 121.

he got these ideas through a misunderstanding of the apostolic accounts, not perceiving that the things said by them were spoken mystically in figures. 13. For he appears to have been of very limited understanding, as one can see from his discourses.

According to Eusebius Papias was of the opinion that the kingdom of Christ will be "after the resurrection ... on this very earth" and for "a period of some thousand years". It is clear that Eusebius does not favor the premillennialism of Papias deeming him of "very limited understanding", but still we have to be grateful that Eusebius reports the words of Papias about this subject because his books have been lost and are only available through the quotes of others.

Since Papias, premillennialism has been promoted throughout church history with e.g. the following arguments. The first is that this seems to be the straightforward reading of Rv 20:1-10 within the context of Revelation. At the end of Rv 19 the beast and the false prophet are captured in war and "thrown alive into the lake of fire that burns with sulfur" (19:20).

In 20:1-3 Satan is seized, chained²⁵⁵ and thrown into the bottomless pit, which is shut with a key and sealed for a thousand years.

After the thousand years Satan is "released from his prison" and deceives the nations to organize an attack on the "beloved city", probably Jerusalem. The attackers are consumed by fire and the devil is thrown into the lake of fire to join the other two, the beast and the false prophet, who had already been there for a thousand years. After this the three of them will be tormented for their sins in the lake of fire for ever and ever (20:7-10).

It is acknowledged that the millennium as a period of a thousand years is only mentioned in Rv 20:1-10 within the Bible but

255. καὶ ἔδησεν αὐτὸν χίλια ἔτη

at the same time there are also texts in the Old Testament which seem to imply an intermediate kingdom of God between the second coming of Christ and the eternal state (Is 65:20; 11:6-11; Ps 72; Zec 14:5-17).²⁵⁶

Among the New Testament passages quoted in favor of premillennialism are the promise for the believers to rule the nations with a rod of iron in Rv 2:26-27²⁵⁷, Paul's sequence of three resurrections in 1 Cor 15:23-25 (first Christ, then those who belong to Christ, then the end).

Postmillennialism

According to postmillennialism the millennium comes first, then the second coming of Christ and then the eternal state.²⁵⁸ One key idea of postmillennialism is that the Great Commission in Mt 28:18-20 is not only a commandment but will be put into action by the church through the power of the Holy Spirit until the second coming of Christ. The kingdom of God is compared to the mustard seed starting small and growing big and to the leaven working slowly but surely and finally affecting everything (Mt 13:31-33).²⁵⁹

256. Grudem, *Systematic Theology. An Introduction to Biblical Doctrine*, p. 1127-1129.

257. Cf. Ps 2:9; Rv 12:5-6; 19:15.

258. According to Greg L. Bahnsen, "The Prima Facie Acceptability of Postmillennialism," [accessed February 22, 2013], 1977, <http://www.cmfnow.com/articles/pt031.htm> John Calvin could possibly be viewed as a postmillennialist, as well as Martin Bucer and Theodore Beza and other later theologians of reformed theology such as Jonathan Edwards, B. B. Warfield and A. Hodge.

259. See Grudem, *Systematic Theology. An Introduction to Biblical Doctrine*, p. 1122.

Christ sits at the right hand of God until all his enemies are put under his feet (1 Cor 15:20-26.57-58).

Amillennialism

According to amillennialism²⁶⁰ the millennium has already started with the first coming of Christ, his death and resurrection, his ascension to heaven and his sitting at the right hand of God the Father. The number 1000 is not understood in a literal sense, but in a symbolic sense of a long period of time.²⁶¹

The second coming of Christ is the closure of the millennium and ushers in the eternal state. The passing away of the old heavens and earth, the coming of the new heavens and earth, judgment day, and the resurrection of the good and of the wicked all happen at the same time. The binding of Satan in Rv 20:1-3 is understood in the sense of the words of Jesus in Mt 12:28-29:

28 But if it is by the Spirit of God that I cast out demons, then the kingdom of God has come upon you.
29 Or how can someone enter a strong man's house and plunder his goods, unless he first binds the strong man? Then indeed he may plunder his house.²⁶²

260. One early and influential supporter of amillennialism was Augustine of Hippo 354-430. Heussi, *Kompendium der Kirchengeschichte*, §33g. For Augustine's exposition on the subject see *City of God*, book XX, chapter 7-14, Schaff, NPNF1-02. St. Augustin's *City of God and Christian Doctrine*, p. 608-620.

261. The same symbolic understanding of the number 1000 is true for many postmillennialists and some premillennialists as well.

262. Mt 12:29 ἢ πῶς δύναται τις εἰσελθεῖν εἰς τὴν οἰκίαν τοῦ ἰσχυροῦ καὶ τὰ σκεύη αὐτοῦ ἁρπάσαι, ἐὰν μὴ πρῶτον δῇσῃ τὸν ἰσχυρόν; καὶ τότε τὴν οἰκίαν αὐτοῦ διαρπάσει.

There are other passages in the New Testament which proclaim a great defeat of Satan related to the first coming of Christ, his death, resurrection and ascension (Lk 10:18; Jn 12:23-24.31-33; Col 2:14-15; Heb 2:14; Rv 12:5-11).

The first resurrection of Rv 20:4-6 is understood to be the martyrs who reign with Christ during the time of the church:

4 Then I saw thrones, and seated on them were those to whom the authority to judge was committed. Also I saw the souls of those who had been beheaded for the testimony of Jesus and for the word of God, and who had not worshiped the beast or its image and had not received its mark on their foreheads or their hands. They came to life and reigned with Christ for a thousand years.²⁶³ 5 The rest of the dead did not come to life until the thousand years were ended. This is the first resurrection. 6 Blessed and holy is the one who shares in the first resurrection! Over such the second death has no power, but they will be priests of God and of Christ, and they will reign with him for a thousand years.

Here the first resurrection is understood as a spiritual resurrection and not a bodily one. The time of the resurrection of the body is understood to be the same for the good and for the wicked on the day of judgment (Jn 5:28-29; Acts 24:15; Dn 12:2).

The main ideas of Rv 20:1-10

It is possible to perceive the main ideas of Rv 20:1-10 and appreciate them in the context of Rv 19:11-21:8. We have seen that the

263. καὶ ἔζησαν καὶ ἐβασίλευσαν μετὰ τοῦ χριστοῦ χίλια ἔτη.

main idea of this sixth vision cycle is "The Enemies of God pass away, the New comes." (see subsection 8.8.3) and the enemies of God are dealt with by being "thrown", ultimately into the lake of fire (Rv 19:20; 20:3.10.14.15). Having done away with his enemies (19:11-20:15) God then makes all things new (21:1-8).

The development of thought within 20:1-10 progresses in three steps:

1. 20:1-3 Satan is bound for a thousand years like a dangerous criminal in a high security prison.
2. 20:4-6 Those who preferred death to the sin of worshipping the beast who is the accomplice of Satan, are rewarded with eternal life as priests of God and Christ, ruling as kings for the thousand years while Satan is in prison.
3. 20:7-10 After a thousand years the criminal Satan is released, but he has not used the time in prison to change and repent. He continues in his sinful rebellion against God, deceives the nations again and is punished by being thrown into the lake of fire to be tormented for ever and ever.

So far this text can be understood and appreciated and is also quite clear.

Waiting for answers

But there are also questions which are difficult to answer at this time. For example who is Gog and Magog and "the nations that are at the four corners of the earth"?²⁶⁴ At what time are they at the

264. 20:8 καὶ ἐξελεύσεται πλανῆσαι τὰ ἔθνη τὰ ἐν ταῖς τέσσαρσι γωνίαις τῆς γῆς, τὸν Γὼγ καὶ Μαγὼγ, συναγαγεῖν αὐτοὺς εἰς τὸν πόλεμον, ὧν ὁ ἀριθμὸς αὐτῶν ὡς ἡ ἄμμος τῆς θαλάσσης.

four corners of the earth? At the time of writing? At the end of the thousand years? Where do these nations come from at the time of the attack? From the four corners of the earth? Or together with Satan out of the abyss? Are the thousand years literally a thousand years or is this a symbolical number and points to a long time? When do the thousand years start?

Regarding prophecy we can say that the best interpretation of prophecy is its fulfillment. Sometimes people of one age were told to write their book and go to rest, so that people of a later age may understand the prophecy (see e.g. Dn 12:4.8.9). We can argue, we can try to explain, but we should not separate over the issue of the right exposition of Rv 20:1-10.²⁶⁵ What faith can understand today, one should grasp and cling to. Faith does not fight love, but strengthens it.

8.9 Life after Death

The Holy Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments teach that the human personality does not cease to exist after the physical death of the body, but that the soul or the spirit of the dead leave the body and still have a conscious existence and wait for the day of the resurrection of the body.

8.9.1 In the Old Testament

A hint about a future life after death is the way the Pentateuch speaks of the death of the great men of faith. They are gathered to

265. A very interesting book and recommended for further reading is J. Webb Mealy, *After the Thousand Years. Resurrection and Judgment in Revelation 20*, JSNT 70 (Sheffield: JSOT, 1992).

their fathers or ancestors: Abraham (Gn 25:7-9); Isaac (Gn 35:28-29); Jacob (Gn 49:29-50:14; Aaron (Nm 20:24-26; Moses (Nm 27:13; Dt 32:50).²⁶⁶

The best way to understand this seems to be a kind of family reunion.²⁶⁷

In this context a special section in Isaiah is of interest where the same Hebrew for the "gathering" is used for going from this life to the next state. Their state after death is described as "peace" and "rest" (Is 57:1-2):

1 The righteous man perishes,
and no one lays it to heart;
devout men are taken away,²⁶⁸
while no one understands.
For the righteous man is taken away from calamity;
2 he enters into peace;
they rest in their beds who walk in their uprightness.

The orders Joseph gave for his funeral and what should happen when Israel moved to the promised land show not only his faith that God would fulfill his promises, but also that Joseph wanted to have a personal share in it (Gn 50:24-26).

In 1 Kgs 17:21 Elijah asks for the life or soul²⁶⁹ of the son of the widow to return into the child. This can be understood in a way that the soul had left the body and should return into it.

266. See also Jgs 2:10; 2 Kgs 22:20; 2 Chr 34:28; Ps 27:10; Is 24:21-23.

267. Compare Philip S. Johnston, *Shades of Sheol. Death and Afterlife in the Old Testament* (Downers Grove, Illinois: Inter Varsity Press, 2002), p. 34: "More likely, 'gathered to his peoples' indicates joining one's ancestors in the afterlife."

268. וְאִנְשֵׁי־חַסֵּד נֶאֱסָפִים

269. תָּשָׁב גַּם נַפְש־הַיָּלֵד הַזֶּה עַל־קִרְבּוֹ:

In the OT it was strictly forbidden to contact the spirits of the dead (Dt 18:11), but it was still practiced throughout the OT (1 Sm 28:7-19; Is 8:19). It was a sin, it was wrong, but still it testifies to the belief of the Israelites that there was a life or an existence after death and even that those spirits would know things which the living do not know. The way the story is written in 1 Sm 28:7-19 seems to indicate that it was really the deceased prophet Samuel who was delivering the judgment speech to the apostate Saul and soon everything he said was fulfilled.

Some Psalms reflect on the life after death. In Ps 73 this is the key answer to the temptation of Asaph seeing that the temporal life of the wicked is healthy and good: They are rejected in death (73:17-20) yet he (Asaph) is accepted into God's presence in glory (Ps 73:23-26). Ps 49:15 contains a very similar idea.

8.9.2 **In the New Testament**

Jesus teaches that people who believe in him, do not really die, even if they die according to the body (Jn 11:25-26). Therefore they should not fear men who only can kill the body but not the soul, but they should fear only God (Mt 10:28). Poor Lazarus in the great story about the change after death is comforted in Abraham's bosom, while the rich and heartless man is in great pain (Lk 16:24-25).

One of the two criminals who were crucified with Christ came to faith in Jesus Christ as the coming king and asked Jesus to remember him when He came into power. The answer of Jesus was a promise of Paradise (Lk 23:43):

Truly, I say to you, today you will be with me in Paradise.

This shows us that the spirit of Christ went to Paradise after his death and that the converted criminal's spirit would join Jesus there on that same day. What grace!

In the same way Paul knew that his death would bring him to Christ (Phil 1:23; 2 Cor 5:1-10, esp. 6-8) who is in the heavenly new Jerusalem and gathers all the spirits of the deceased believers into his city (Gal 4:26; Heb 12:22-24; Heb 11:10.16; Rv 3:12; 6:9-11; 21:2).

A good biblical definition of the death of the body can be found in Jas 2:26: As creation in Gn 2:7 was the uniting of body from the earth with the breath of life given from God's Spirit, so death is the separation of the spirit of man from his body.

The angels are called spirits "sent out to serve for the sake of those who are to inherit salvation" (Heb 1:14). So it is interesting that Jesus mentioned that Lazarus "was carried by the angels to Abraham's side" after his death (Lk 16:22).

It seems that the coming of Christ brought big changes into the invisible world, especially his death and his resurrection (Heb 2:14-16):

14 Since therefore the children share in flesh and blood, he himself likewise partook of the same things, that through death he might destroy the one who has the power of death, that is, the devil, 15 and deliver all those who through fear of death were subject to lifelong slavery.

There are other verses which show that the death and the resurrection of Christ were powerful in bringing real change to the spiritual world (Jn 12:31-32; Col 2:14-15; Rv 1:17-18; Eph 4:8-10; 1 Cor 15:45).

8.10 **Resurrection**

8.10.1 **In the Old Testament**

In the song of Moses, God is presented as the one and only true God, without any competition. One of his qualities is that he can make alive from death (Dt 32:39):

See now that I, even I, am he,
and there is no god beside me;
I kill and I make alive;
I wound and I heal;
and there is none that can deliver out of my hand.

Hannah's faith was very similar (1 Sm 2:6):

The Lord kills and brings to life; he brings down to
Sheol and raises up.

At the end of the famous Ps 22 all nations come and worship the true God. Even those who had died, come and eat and worship God (Ps 22:29). Is 25:6-8 contains a promise of God to overcome death "on this mountain":

He will swallow up death forever;
and the Lord God will wipe away tears from all faces,

Is 26:14 presents the normal experience that dead people do not live. But the dead whom God wants to live, will come to life (Is 26:19). Hos 6:1-2 may be a prophetic relecture of Dt 32:39 proclaiming that God will make repenting Israel alive again after two days, raise them up on the third day. Towards the end of the book Hos 13:14 can be understood as a promise of God to save from Sheol (see the LXX, compare also Paul's use of it in 1 Cor 15:55).

Ez 37:1-14 presents the renewal of dead Israel under the picture of the resurrection of a mighty army.

Dn 12:2-3 presents the idea of a double resurrection of the dead either for eternal life or for eternal shame:

And many of those who sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake, some to everlasting life, and some to shame and everlasting contempt. 3 And those who are wise shall shine like the brightness of the sky above; and those who turn many to righteousness, like the stars forever and ever.

8.10.2 **In the New Testament**

An important part of the teaching of the New Testament about resurrection has already been discussed in "Christ's Resurrection and its Importance" in section 4.8.

The teaching of Jesus about the future resurrection.

In John 5:28-29 Jesus teaches a "resurrection of life" and a "resurrection of judgment". As in Dn 12:3 the resurrection of the righteous will be glorious (Mt 13:43; Lk 11:36). There will be a reward "at the resurrection of the just" (Lk 14:14).

The time of the resurrection is on the last day when also the judgment will happen. When Jesus tells Martha, that Lazarus will rise again, she answers that "he will rise again in the resurrection on the last day" (Jn 11:23-24). Martha probably reflects here on some former teaching of Jesus (cf. Jn 6:39.40.44.54). The judgment is also on this last day (Jn 12:48).

On the day of judgment some Gentile believers will "rise up at the judgment with this generation and condemn it", namely the

men of Niniveh (Mt 12:41; Lk 11:32) and the queen of the South (Mt 12:42; Lk 11:31).

Some wrong teachings about the resurrection and their refutation.

To understand the teaching of Jesus and the apostles about the resurrection better, let us look at some wrong ideas about this subject which are pointed out in the New Testament. Then we can see how they are refuted.

There is no resurrection.

The party of the Sadducees denied the idea of a resurrection (Mt 22:23.28; Mk 12:18.23; Lk 20:27.33; Acts 4:2; Acts 23:6.8; Acts 24:21; cf. also Acts 26:8).

Jesus, asked about the resurrection by the Sadducees, used Ex 3:6 to prove the idea of resurrection as implied in the law of Moses. God calls himself the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob hundreds of years after their deaths. God is not a God of the dead, but of the living (Mt 22:31-32; Mk 12:26-27; Lk 20:37-38). "For all live to him" (Lk 20:38). This last phrase only reported by Luke may imply that God and his invisible world is not subject to time. Even if Abraham, Isaac and Jacob would be resurrected later in history, "they live for God", because for God there is not time restriction and he may see the future from afar as presence.

There is no married life for those who join in the resurrection of life and there is no death for them. They are like angels (Mt 22:30; Mk 12:25; Lk 20:35-36).

In Corinth there were some people, probably influenced by Greek philosophy, who denied the idea of a resurrection. Paul has to argue against this. Paul commits a whole chapter to the purpose of showing that the resurrection is essential for salvation and the Christian faith (1 Cor 15).

He first gives proof of the resurrection of Christ as an essential part of the Gospel (15:1-11). Then he explains that our faith without the real resurrection of Christ is ineffective and damaging, one big lie (1 Cor 15:12-19).

He moves on and insists that the fact of the resurrection of Christ totally changes the course of history and will bring all powers in heaven and on earth under the feet of Christ. The last enemy to be defeated will be death at the time of the second coming of Christ (15:20-28; see 15:54-57).

In 15:29-34 Paul seems to talk about certain local circumstances in Corinth and admonishes them to get sober and stop sinning.

In 15:35-49 Paul answers the question "How are the dead raised? With what kind of body do they come?" (15:35). The old body is like a seed sown into the ground being buried, the resurrection is what comes out of the seed, but is different (15:42-44):

So is it with the resurrection of the dead.

What is sown is perishable;

what is raised is imperishable.

43 It is sown in dishonor;

it is raised in glory.

It is sown in weakness;

it is raised in power.

44 It is sown a natural body;

it is raised a spiritual body.

The key to all this is Christ. The risen Christ is the "firstfruits"

(15:23). He is the prototype of the new mankind, as Adam was the prototype of the old mankind (15:45-49). This means, with the risen Christ we have the first proof of the new world to come. The first creation started with the creation of the heavens and the earth and ended with the creation of man, especially his in-breathing of the spirit of life (Gn 2:7; 1 Cor 15:45). The new creation starts with the last part of the old creation, with a new man, with the risen Christ, who is also God and imparts spiritual life to others, making their spirits alive, breathing into them His Spirit (1 Cor 15:45; John 20:22).

In his last part Paul shares a mystery with the Corinthians (1 Cor 15:50-58): There will be one generation of believers which does not have to die, but who will be transformed at the time of the last trumpet (see Is 27:13; Mt 24:31; 1 Thes 4:16; Rv 11:15.18; 2 Cor 5:4.)

Jesus is a risen prophet or John the Baptist. While Jesus was preaching and healing, there were people who thought him to be a resurrected prophet (Lk 9:19; Mk 6:15; Lk 9:8); especially John the Baptist (Mt 14:2; Mk 6:14.16; Lk 9:7.9). Within the gospels this is only a prelude to the confession of Peter and the disciples that Jesus is "the Christ, the Son of the living God" (Mt 16:16; cf. Mk 8:29; Lk 9:20).

The resurrection has already happened. This idea of Hymenaeus and Philetus is rejected by Paul as damaging the faith (2 Tm 2:18). Probably their ideas belonged to gnostic teachings in which the material body was rejected or despised and consequently the idea of a resurrection spiritualized and anticipated (cf. 1 Tm 4:1-5; 6:20-21).

Confession of the resurrection of the beast. According to Rv 13:3,14 the beast seems to imitate the suffering and the resurrection of Jesus Christ (cf. Rv 5:6) and is consequently seen as divine and worshiped by the whole earth, by "everyone whose name has not been written before the foundation of the world in the book of life of the Lamb that was slain" (Rv 13:8).

Some more apostolic teaching about the future resurrection.

The teaching about the resurrection belongs to the fundamental teachings of Christianity (Heb 6:2). The better resurrection is the resurrection to live forever. Some people who have been raised from death, later had to die again (Heb 11:35). This is true for the resurrections during the time of the Old Testament and also for some resurrections performed at the time of Jesus. Paul confesses his faith before Felix at Caesarea that "there will be a resurrection of both the just and the unjust" (Acts 24:15). The first resurrection in Rv 20:4-6 is a resurrection of the martyrs to rule with Christ for thousand years and be priests of God and Christ at the same time.

8.11 Judgment

8.11.1 The Time of Judgment

We have already talked about God's judgment in several places before. We have seen that the day of judgment is the last day or the day of the Lord:

the day of judgment²⁷⁰ (Mt 10:15; 11:22,24; 12:36; 2 Pt 2:9; 3:7; 1

270. In Greek ἐν ἡμέρᾳ κρίσεως or εἰς ἡμέραν κρίσεως καὶ ἀπωλείας τῶν ἀσεβῶν ἀνθρώπων or ἐν τῇ ἡμέρᾳ τῆς κρίσεως

John 4:17)

the day when God judges²⁷¹ (Rom 2:16)

the judgment of the great day²⁷² (Jude 1:6)

According to the six uses of 'the last day' in John²⁷³ (John 6:39.40.44.54; 11:24; 12:48) two things happen on that day: The resurrection of the believers to life and the judgment of the unfaithful who have rejected the word of Jesus (compare John 5:28-29).

The judgment will happen on that day so that some are saved and rewarded and others are condemned and punished (Mt 7:22; 10:15; 11:22.24; 12:36; Lk 10:12; 17:24-37; John 12:48; Acts 2:21; Rom 2:5-10.16; 1 Cor 1:8; 5:5; 2 Cor 1:14; Phil 1:10; 2:16; 1 Thes 5:3; 2 Thes 2:8; 2 Tm 1:18; 4:8; 2 Pt 2:9; 3:7; 1 John 4:17; Jude 1:6).

8.11.2 The Way of Judgment

Throughout the Bible the idea is that God judges men "according to their works"²⁷⁴ and pays them back (Ps 28:4; Jer 32:19; 50:29; Prv 24:12; Lam 3:64; Rom 2:6; Rom 2:7; 2 Cor 11:15; 2 Tm 4:14; 1 Pt 1:17; Jude 1:15; Rv 2:23; 18:6; 20:12; 20:13).

Even in Mt 25:31-46 the idea is that all of mankind is as different as sheep and goats. They are recognized by their behavior or by their fruits (Mt 7:16). They good fruits (works) do not make the tree good, but the good tree produces the good fruits. The judgment will be easy, because it will be obvious. Their deeds and their words (Mt 12:36-37) will show what kind of person each one is.

271. In Greek ἐν ἡμέρᾳ ὅτε κρίνει ὁ θεὸς

272. In Greek εἰς κρίσιν μεγάλης ἡμέρας

273. In Greek τῇ ἐσχάτῃ ἡμέρᾳ or ἐν τῇ ἐσχάτῃ ἡμέρᾳ

274. κατὰ τὰ ἔργα

8.11.3 **The Result of Judgment**

There will be a divided and separated mankind. The wicked will suffer for ever, the redeemed will live for ever (Mt 25:46). See the following sections.

8.12 **Hell and Eternal Suffering**

To understand the concept of "hell" better we have to look at a few words which are related to the underworld and to the future place of punishment.

8.12.1 **ὁ ᾗδης Hades**

In the Old Testament

In the Old Testament the Hebrew word Sheol is translated in the LXX with Hades. Both words are used for the realm of the dead (Ps 49:14; Is 14:9). In Ez 31:15-18 it is called a 'world' or a 'country' below. Jacob thinks that he will join his dead son Joseph in Sheol or Hades (Gn 37:35). It was a very special punishment that the group around Korah went down alive to Hades (Nm 16:30.33). Some Israelites at the time of Isaiah thought themselves to be in a covenant with Sheol (Is 28:15; 57:9).

Dt 32:22 speaks of a fire kindled by God's anger that burns to the depths of Sheol. The Lord can lead down to Hades and up again (1 Sm 2:6) and redeem from there (Hos 13:14).

In the New Testament

Because Capernaum had not repented, it would not be exalted to heaven, but brought down to Hades (Mt 11:23; Lk 10:15). In the

spiritual war between the church of Christ and Hades the "the gates of Hades shall not prevail against it" (Mt 16:18). The rich man suffered great pain in Hades while he could see Lazarus being with Abraham (Lk 16:23). He could not leave this place of pain, and nobody could come to ease his pain (Lk 16:26).

Fulfilling Ps 16:10, Jesus was not left in Hades and did not see corruption, but rose from the dead on the third day (Acts 2:27.31). He has "the keys of Death and Hades" (Rv 1:18. "Death and Hades" are a pair mentioned often in Revelation, to be finally thrown into the lake of fire (Rv 6:8; Rv 20:13; Rv 20:14).

Looking at all these verses, Hades can be a place of pain as it is in Lk 16:23, but it is not the final place of punishment. Hades itself is thrown into this final place according to Rv 20:14.

8.12.2 ἡ ἄβυσσος *abyssōs Abyss*

The abyss is the place where the demons do not want to go (Lk 8:31), perhaps of fear to be tormented before the time (Mt 8:29).

In Rom 10:7 it is the place of the dead. In Rv 9:1, 9:2 and 9:11 the abyss is mentioned in connection with the fifth trumpet. The beast coming out of the abyss will kill God's two witness of Rv 11 (Rv 11:7; 17:8). The abyss is also the place where Satan is bound for a thousand years (Rv 20:1.3).

The abyss seems to be a place of pain for the demons, because they do not want to go there. As far as the abyss is also a place for dead people, it seems to overlap with Hades or Sheol. In most of the places in the NT it is related to demons, or Satan or the angel of the bottomless pit.

8.12.3 ἡ γέεννα *gěenna Gehenna*

The word *gěenna* is the Greek form of the Hebrew גֵּי-הִנּוֹם for "Valley of Hinnom" (Jo 15:8; 18:16; Neh 11:30) or גֵּי בֶן-הִנּוֹם for "the Valley of the Son of Hinnom" (Jo 15:8; 18:16; 2 Chr 28:3; Jer 7:32; 2 Kgs 23:10), a valley south of Jerusalem.²⁷⁵

Gehenna or "hell" is a word for the place of the future eternal punishment of the wicked. It is the "Gehenna" (Mt 5:29; 5:30; 10:28; Lk 12:5; Mt 23:15; 23:33; Mk 9:45) or the "Gehenna of fire" (Mt 5:22; 18:9).

This fire of hell is "unquenchable" Mk 9:43. Jesus warns people not to sin with the following drastic words (Mk 9:47-48):

47 And if your eye causes you to sin, tear it out.
It is better for you to enter the kingdom of God with
one eye than with two eyes to be thrown into hell,
48 'where their worm does not die and the fire is
not quenched.'

The worm which does not die and the everlasting fire point to the everlasting punishment and torture of the wicked in hell. The words are taken from Is 66:24.

When James wants to warn the believers to be careful how they use their tongue, he speaks of the wicked use of one's tongue as a fire coming from hell (Jas 3:6).

275. Bauer, Wörterbuch zum Neuen Testament, p. 303-304.

8.12.4 ἡ λίμνη τοῦ πυρός **The Lake of Fire.**

There is a special lake²⁷⁶ of fire mentioned in Revelation which seems to be the equivalent of the phrase "Gehenna of fire" which we have looked at before. The beast and the false prophet were thrown alive into the lake of fire that burns with sulfur (Rv 19:20). In Rv 20:10 they are joined by "the devil who ... was thrown into the lake of fire and sulfur where the beast and the false prophet were, and they will be tormented day and night forever and ever."

Rv 20:14-15 reveals that this will be the final place for many:

14 Then Death and Hades were thrown into the lake of fire. This is the second death, the lake of fire. 15 And if anyone's name was not found written in the book of life, he was thrown into the lake of fire.

Rv 21:8 gives a list of people who are to be found there:

But as for the cowardly, the faithless, the detestable, as for murderers, the sexually immoral, sorcerers, idolaters, and all liars, their portion will be in the lake that burns with fire and sulfur, which is the second death.

8.12.5 **Eternal Suffering or Eternal Punishment**

We have already seen in the discussion of the words for the final place of punishment (Gehenna and lake of fire) that there will be

276. The word for lake is also used in other places in the NT for a normal lake of water (Lk 5:1; Lk 5:2; Lk 8:22; Lk 8:23; Lk 8:33).

an ongoing punishment of the wicked for ever and ever. The fire tormenting them will not be quenched. The worm biting them will not die. They burn without being annihilated (Rv 19:20; 20:20).

The same words are used for eternal life and eternal punishment (Mt 25:46):

And these will go away into eternal punishment,
but the righteous into eternal life.²⁷⁷

Sometimes people speculate about a future end of aeons taking 1 Cor 10:11 as a proof text:

Now these things happened to them as an example,
but they were written down for our instruction,
on whom the end of the ages has come.²⁷⁸

What does Paul mean with "the end of the ages"? He does not speak here about the future end of the ages after the second coming of Christ and after some "eternities", but he thinks of the end of this time of the world which happens at the second coming of Christ. 1 Cor 10:11 can not be understood as a proof that there will be an end of the aeons or ages of the New Heavens and the New Earth. The plural in this case is used to show us that the ages will go on perpetually.

The phrase which is used quite often for this future unfolding "eternity" is "forever and ever", for example Rv 11:15:

The kingdom of the world has become the kingdom
of our Lord and of his Christ, and he shall reign
forever and ever.²⁷⁹

277. καὶ ἀπελεύσονται οὗτοι εἰς κόλασιν αἰώνιον, οἱ δὲ δίκαιοι εἰς ζωὴν αἰώνιον.

278. εἰς οὓς τὰ τέλη τῶν αἰώνων κατήντηκεν.

279. βασιλεύσει εἰς τοὺς αἰῶνας τῶν αἰώνων.

The idea is that the kingdom of Christ will be without end (Is 9:6-7; Dn 7:13-14). The same phrase is used for God who will live for ever and ever (Rv 10:6). The very same phrase is used in Rv 20:10 telling us that the devil and the beast and the false prophet "will be tormented day and night forever and ever".

The punishment of the wicked is eternal in the sense of being without end. The theory of "Universalism" is unbiblical which teaches that all sinners will be saved in the end because God's will in 1 Tm 2:4 will triumph over the sinful will of men.

The time to repent is now in this life time. We believe with Peter (2 Pt 3:9) that there will be no chance of repentance after the coming of the day of the Lord.

8.13 **New Heavens, New Earth, New Jerusalem**

8.13.1 **In the Old Testament**

There are some Old Testament predictions that the old heavens and the old earth would pass away (Ps 102:25-27; Is 24:19-20; 34:4; 51:6) and that God would create new heavens and a new earth and on it a new Jerusalem as a place of eternal joy (Is 51:16; 65:17-18; 66:13,22; see also Is 49:14ff; 54:1-17; 60; 62).

8.13.2 **In the New Testament**

The apostle Paul calls the heavenly Jerusalem our mother (Gal 4:26) and speaks of "our citizenship ... in heaven"²⁸⁰ (Phil 3:20). According to Hebrews 11:10,16) Abraham, Isaac and Jacob were already

280. ἡμῶν γὰρ τὸ πολίτευμα ἐν οὐρανοῖς ὑπάρχει

looking forward to the city built by God. This city is the heavenly Jerusalem (Heb 12:22-24):

But you have come to Mount Zion and to the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, and to innumerable angels in festal gathering, 23 and to the assembly of the firstborn who are enrolled in heaven, and to God, the judge of all, and to the spirits of the righteous made perfect, 24 and to Jesus, the mediator of a new covenant, and to the sprinkled blood that speaks a better word than the blood of Abel.

The "spirits of the righteous made perfect" are already gathered there (including the martyrs, see Rv 6:9-11). We learn from Mt 25:34 that the kingdom was already prepared for them from the foundation of the world.²⁸¹ According to Heb 11:16 God already had a city prepared for the patriarchs when he called himself "the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob" (Ex 3:6).

Peter writes in his second letter about the great change after the passing away of the old heavens and the old earth (2 Pt 3:13):

But according to his promise we are waiting for new heavens and a new earth in which righteousness dwells.

Peter puts greater emphasis on the passing of the old because of the scoffers denying any future change or judgment. But still the one thing which makes a great difference is the righteousness dwelling in the new future creation.

In Rv 21:1-5 we see a vision of everything made new:

281. κληρονομήσατε τὴν ἡτοιμασμένην ὑμῖν βασιλείαν ἀπὸ καταβολῆς κόσμου.

1 Then I saw a new heaven and a new earth, for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away, and the sea was no more. 2 And I saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband. 3 And I heard a loud voice from the throne saying, "Behold, the dwelling place of God is with man. He will dwell with them, and they will be his people, and God himself will be with them as their God. 4 He will wipe away every tear from their eyes, and death shall be no more, neither shall there be mourning nor crying nor pain anymore, for the former things have passed away." 5 And he who was seated on the throne said, "Behold, I am making all things new." Also he said, "Write this down, for these words are trustworthy and true."

The New Jerusalem of Revelation seems to be identical with Paradise. Because the tree of life is in Paradise (Rv 2:7; cf. Gn 2:9; 3:22) and also in the New Jerusalem (Rv 22:2). Consequently we can assume in 2 Cor 12:2-4 that the New Jerusalem and Paradise are in the third heaven.

The cubic form of the New Jerusalem (Rv 21:16) and the alternate name "the dwelling place of God with man"²⁸² (Rv 21:3) link this city with the other dwelling places of God amongst men: the tabernacle (Ex 25:8; 26:1) and the temple (1 Kgs 6:20).

The fact that the most holy place had cubic form in the temple and the same form is chosen for the New Jerusalem only with bigger measures conveys an enormous truth: The city needs no temple to

282. ἡ σκηνὴ τοῦ θεοῦ μετὰ τῶν ἀνθρώπων

meet God there, because God himself is at home in the whole city (Rv 21:22). In tabernacle and temple God was separated from the normal people, in the New Jerusalem God and all his people meet freely and see each other directly (Rv 22:4).

Bauer reckons one stadion²⁸³ equals 192 meters. We calculate there are 2304 kms for the 12,000 stadia in Rv 21:16. This means the city is 2304 kms long, 2304 kms wide and 2304 kms high, if we understand this literally. The same John who received the Revelation, informs us in the Gospel that Jesus said: "In my Father's house are many rooms" (Jn 14:2).

That "the names of the twelve tribes of the sons of Israel" are inscribed on the twelve gates and that the "names of the twelve apostles of the Lamb" are on the twelve foundations of the city wall (21:14) shows us the truth here that all believers from Israel and from all nations from all times are one kingdom of God and one people (Cf. Jn 10:16; Eph 2:19-22; Mt 8:11).

The New Jerusalem is the bride of the Lamb and comes down from heaven to earth (21:9-11; 19:7). This is an indication that at the time of the consummation of all things the great distance and differences between heaven and earth have ceased to exist. In Eccl 5:2 we read that "God is in heaven and you are on earth". But then the heavens have come down on earth in the form of the heavenly city and God dwells with men. The Paradise of Gen 2 has not only been restored but is much bigger and more glorious. Eternal joy rules mankind in the presence of God and the Lamb.

283. Bauer, Wörterbuch zum Neuen Testament, p. 1513.

Appendix A

Creeds of the Church

A.1 The Apostles' Creed

Symbolum Apostolicum. Forma Recepta.

The Apostles' Creed. Received Text.

The clauses in brackets of the English text¹ are the later additions according to Philip Schaff. For the pre-history of the Greek text² given here see Schaff.³

Regarding the historical background of this creed Schaff states:

We know the Latin text from Rufinus (390), and

1. Given according to Schaff, *Creeds of Christendom, with a History and Critical notes. Volume I. The History of Creeds.*, p. 47-50.

2. Given according to Schaff, *Creeds of Christendom, with a History and Critical notes. Volume II. The Greek and Latin Creeds, with Translations*, p. 79-81.

3. Schaff, *Creeds of Christendom, with a History and Critical notes. Volume I. The History of Creeds.*, p. 33-43 and Schaff, *Creeds of Christendom, with a History and Critical notes. Volume II. The Greek and Latin Creeds, with Translations*, p. 28-75.

the Greek from Marcellus of Ancyra (336–341). The Greek text is usually regarded as a translation, but is probably older than the Latin, and may date from the second century, when the Greek language prevailed in the Roman congregation... If we regard, then, the present text of the Apostles' Creed as a complete whole, we can hardly trace it beyond the sixth, certainly not beyond the close of the fifth century, and its triumph over all the other forms in the Latin Church was not completed till the eighth century, or about the time when the bishops of Rome strenuously endeavored to conform the liturgies of the Western churches to the Roman order. But if we look at the several articles of the Creed separately, they are all of Nicene or ante-Nicene origin, while its kernel goes back to the apostolic age. All the facts and doctrines which it contains, are in entire agreement with the New Testament.⁴

While the text as we have it now is relatively late, the origins of this tripartite creed go back to at least the second century. The three articles confess faith in God the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit.

4. Schaff, *Creeds of Christendom, with a History and Critical notes*. Volume I. *The History of Creeds.*, p. 37-38.

English

1. I believe in God the Father
Almighty,
(Maker of heaven and earth).
2. And in Jesus Christ,
his only Son, our Lord;

3. Who was (conceived) by the
Holy Ghost,
Born of the Virgin Mary;

4. (Suffered) under Pontius Pilate,
was crucified (dead), and buried;

(He descended into Hades);

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

6. He ascended into heaven,
And sitteth on the right hand of
(God) the Father (Almighty);

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

8. And (I believe) in the Holy
Ghost;

9. The holy (catholic) Church;
(The communion of saints);

10. The forgiveness of sins;

11. The resurrection of the flesh
(body);

12. (And the life everlasting).

Greek

Πιστεύω εἰς ΘΕΟΝ ΠΑΤΕΡΑ,
παντοκράτορα,
ποιητὴν οὐρανοῦ καὶ γῆς.
Καὶ (εἰς) ἸΗΣΟΥΝ ΧΡΙΣΤΟΝ,
υἷόν αὐτοῦ τὸν μονογενῆ, τὸν
κύριον ἡμῶν,

τὸν συλληφθέντα ἐκ πνεύματος
ἀγίου,
γεννηθέντα ἐκ Μαρίας τῆς
παρθένου,

παθόντα ἐπὶ Ποντίου Πιλάτου,
σταυρωθέντα, θανόντα, καὶ
ταφέντα,

κατελθόντα εἰς τὰ κατώτατα,
τῇ τρίτῃ ἡμέρᾳ ἀναστάντα ἀπὸ
τῶν νεκρῶν,
ἀνελθόντα εἰς τοὺς οὐρανοὺς,
καθεζόμενον ἐν δεξιᾷ θεοῦ πατρὸς
παντοδυνάμου,
ἐκαῖθεν ἐρχόμενον
κρίναι ζῶντας καὶ νεκρούς.

Πιστεύω εἰς τὸ ΠΝΕΥΜΑ ΤΟ
ἍΓΙΟΝ,

ἁγίαν καθολικὴν ἐκκλησίαν,
ἁγίων κοινωνίαν,
ἄφεσιν ἁμαρτιῶν,
σαρκὸς ἀνάστασιν,

ζωὴν^a αἰώνιον. Ἀμήν.

^a Correction by Lanz. Schaff, *Creeds of Christendom, with a History and Critical notes. Volume II. The Greek and Latin Creeds, with Translations*, p. 81 has ζωὴν instead.

A.2 Nicaeno-Constantinopolitanum

Symbolum Nicaeno-Constantinopolitanum. Forma Recepta Ecclesiæ Orientalis. A.D. 381.

The Nicene Creed, as Enlarged A.D. 381. The Received Text of the Greek Church.

According to Schaff the words of the English text⁵ in brackets are Western changes. The Greek text⁶ is the received text of the Greek Church.

| English | Greek |
|--|---|
| 1. We (I) believe in one God the Father Almighty, Maker of heaven and earth, And of all things visible and invisible. | Πιστεύομεν εἰς ἓν ΘΕΟΝ ΠΑΤΕΡΑ παντοκράτορα, ποιητὴν οὐρανοῦ καὶ γῆς, ὁρατῶν τε πάντων καὶ ἀοράτων. |
| 2. And in one Lord Jesus Christ, the only-begotten Son of God, Begotten of the Father before all worlds; (God of God), Light of Light. Very God of very God, Begotten, not made, Being of one substance with the Father; By whom all things were made; | Καὶ εἰς ἓνα κύριον ἸΗΣΟΥΝ ΧΡΙΣΤΟΝ, τὸν υἱὸν τοῦ θεοῦ τὸν μονογενῆ, τὸν ἐκ τοῦ πατρὸς γεννηθέντα πρὸ πάντων τῶν αἰώνων, φῶς ἐκ φωτός, θεὸν ἀληθινὸν ἐκ θεοῦ ἀληθινοῦ, γεννηθέντα, οὐ ποιηθέντα, ὁμοούσιον τῷ πατρί• δι' οὗ τὰ πάντα ἐγένετο• |

5. Given according to Schaff, *Creeds of Christendom, with a History and Critical notes*. Volume I. *The History of Creeds.*, p. 47-50.

6. Given according to Schaff, *Creeds of Christendom, with a History and Critical notes*. Volume II. *The Greek and Latin Creeds, with Translations*, p. 98-99.

3. Who, for us men,
 and for our salvation,
 came down from heaven,
 And was incarnate by the Holy
 Ghost
 of the Virgin Mary,
 And was made man
 4. He was crucified for us
 under Pontius Pilate;
 And suffered and was buried;
 5. And the third day he rose again,
 According to the Scriptures;
 6. And ascended into heaven,
 And sitteth on the right hand of the
 Father;
 7. And he shall come again, with
 glory,
 to judge the quick and the dead;
 Whose kingdom shall have no end.
 8. And (I believe) in the Holy
 Ghost,
 The Lord, and Giver of life;
 Who proceedeth from the Father
 (and the Son);
 Who with the Father and the Son
 together is worshiped and glorified;

 Who spake by the Prophets.
 9. And (I believe) in one holy
 catholic and
 apostolic Church;
 10. We (I) acknowledge one
 baptism
 for the remission of sins;
 11. And we (I) look for the
 resurrection of the dead;
 12. And the life of the world to
 come.

τὸν δι' ἡμᾶς τοὺς ἀνθρώπους
 καὶ διὰ τὴν ἡμετέραν σωτηρίαν
 κατελθόντα ἐκ τῶν οὐρανῶν
 καὶ σαρκωθέντα ἐκ πνεύματος
 ἁγίου
 καὶ Μαρίας τῆς παρθένου
 καὶ ἐνανθρωπήσαντα,
 σταυρωθέντα τε ὑπὲρ ἡμῶν
 ἐπὶ Ποντίου Πιλάτου,
 καὶ παθόντα καὶ ταφέντα,
 καὶ ἀναστάντα τῇ τρίτῃ ἡμέρᾳ
 κατὰ τὰς γραφάς,
 καὶ ἀνελθόντα εἰς τοὺς οὐρανοὺς,
 καὶ καθεζόμενον ἐκ δεξιῶν τοῦ
 πατρὸς,
 καὶ πάλιν ἐρχόμενον μετὰ δόξης

 κρίναι ζῶντας καὶ νεκρούς•
 οὗ τῆς βασιλείας οὐκ ἔσται τέλος.
 Καὶ εἰς τὸ ΠΝΕΥΜΑ ΤΟ ἍΓΙΟΝ,

 τὸ κύριον, (καὶ) τὸ ζωοποιόν,
 τὸ ἐκ τοῦ πατρὸς ἐκπορευόμενον,
 -
 τὸ σὺν πατρὶ καὶ υἱῷ
 συνπροσκυνούμενον καὶ
 συνδοξαζόμενον,
 τὸ λαλήσαν διὰ τῶν προφητῶν•
 εἰς μίαν, ἁγίαν, καθολικὴν

 καὶ ἀποστολικὴν ἐκκλησίαν•
 ὁμολογοῦμεν ἓν βάπτισμα

 εἰς ἄφεσιν ἁμαρτιῶν•
 προσδοκῶμεν
 ἀνάστασιν νεκρῶν,
 καὶ ζωὴν τοῦ μέλλοντος αἰῶνος.
 Ἀμήν.

A.3 The Symbol of Chalcedon

Symbolum Chalcedonense - The Symbol of Chalcedon.

Oct. 22d, 451. The words of the English and of the Greek text are given according to Schaff.⁷

| English | Greek |
|---|--|
| We, then, following the holy Fathers, | Ἐπόμενοι τοίνυν τοῖς ἁγίοις πατράσιν |
| all with one consent, teach men to confess one and the same Son, our Lord Jesus Christ, | ἓνα καὶ τὸν αὐτὸν ὁμολογεῖν υἱὸν τὸν κύριον ἡμῶν Ἰησοῦν Χριστὸν συμφώνως ἅπαντες ἐκδιδάσκομεν, |
| the same perfect in Godhead and also perfect in manhood; | τέλειον τὸν αὐτὸν ἐν θεότητι καὶ τέλειον τὸν αὐτὸν ἐν ἀνθρωπότητι, |
| truly God and truly man, | θεὸν ἀληθῶς καὶ ἄνθρωπον ἀληθῶς τὸν αὐτὸν, |
| of a reasonable [rational] soul and body; | ἐκ ψυχῆς λογικῆς καὶ σώματος, |
| consubstantial [coessential] with the Father | ὁμοούσιον τῷ πατρὶ |
| according to the Godhead, | κατὰ τὴν θεότητα, |
| and consubstantial with us according to the Manhood; | καὶ ὁμοούσιον τὸν αὐτὸν ἡμῖν κατὰ τὴν ἀνθρωπότητα, |
| in all things like unto us, without sin; | κατὰ πάντα ὅμοιον ἡμῖν χωρὶς ἁμαρτίας• |
| begotten before all ages of the Father | πρὸ αἰώνων μὲν ἐκ τοῦ πατρὸς γεννηθέντα |
| according to the Godhead, | κατὰ τὴν θεότητα, |

7. Schaff, *Creeds of Christendom, with a History and Critical notes*. Volume II. *The Greek and Latin Creeds, with Translations*, p. 103-108

and in these latter days,
for us and for our salvation,

born of the Virgin Mary,
the Mother of God,
according to the Manhood;
one and the same Christ,
Son, Lord, Only-begotten,
to be acknowledged in two natures,
inconfusedly, unchangeably,
indivisibly, inseparably;

the distinction of natures being

by no means taken away by the
union,
but rather the property of each
nature being preserved,
and concurring in one Person and
one Subsistence,
not parted or divided into two
persons,
but one and the same Son,
and only begotten,
God the Word, the Lord Jesus
Christ,
as the prophets from the beginning
(have declared) concerning him,
and the Lord Jesus Christ himself
has taught us,
and the Creed of the holy Fathers
has handed down to us.

ἐπ' ἐσχάτων δὲ τῶν ἡμερῶν
τὸν αὐτὸν δι' ἡμᾶς καὶ διὰ τὴν
ἡμετέραν σωτηρίαν
ἐκ Μαρίας τῆς παρθένου
τῆς θεοτόκου
κατὰ τὴν ἀνθρωπότητα,
ἕνα καὶ τὸν αὐτὸν Χριστόν,
υἱόν, κύριον, μονογενῆ,
ἐκ δύο φύσεων [ἐν δύο φύσεσιν],
ἀσυγχύτως, ἀτρέπτως,
ἀδιαρέτως, ἀχωρίστως
γνωριζόμενον•
οὐδαμοῦ τῆς τῶν φύσεων
διαφορᾶς
ἀνηρημένης διὰ τὴν ἕνωσιν,

σωζομένης δὲ μᾶλλον τῆς
ιδιότητος ἐκατέρας φύσεως
καὶ εἰς ἓν πρόσωπον καὶ μίαν
ὑπόστασιν συντρεχούσης,
οὐκ εἰς δύο πρόσωπα μεριζόμενον
ἢ διαιρούμενον,
ἀλλ' ἕνα καὶ τὸν αὐτὸν υἱὸν
καὶ μονογενῆ,
θεὸν λόγον, κύριον Ἰησοῦν
Χριστόν•
καθάπερ ἄνωθεν οἱ προφῆται
περὶ αὐτοῦ
καὶ αὐτὸς ἡμᾶς ὁ κύριος Ἰησοῦς
Χριστὸς ἐξεπαίδευσε
καὶ τὸ τῶν πατέρων ἡμῶν
παραδέδωκε^b σύμβολον.

^b Correction by Lanz. *ibid.*, p. 108, has *καραδέδωκε* instead.

Symbolum Chalcedonense. Versio Latina.

The Symbol of Chalcedon in Latin. Oct. 22d, 451.⁸

Sequentes igitur sanctos patres, unum eundemque confiteri Filium et Dominum nostrum Jesum Christum consonanter omnes docemus, eundem perfectum in deitate et eundem perfectum in humanitate; Deum verum et hominem verum eundem ex anima rationali et corpore; consubstantialem Patri secundum deitatem, consubstantialem nobis eundem secundum humanitatem; 'per omnia nobis similem, absque peccato' (Heb. iv.): ante secula quidem de Patre genitum secundum deitatem; in novissimis autem diebus eundem propter nos et propter nostram salutem ex Maria virgine, Dei genitrice secundum humanitatem; unum eundemque Christum, filium, Dominum, unigenitum, in duabus naturis inconfuse, immutabiliter, indivise, inseparabiliter agnoscendum: nusquam sublata differentia naturarum propter unionem, magisque salva proprietate utriusque naturæ, et in unam personam atque subsistentiam concurrente: non in duos personas partitum aut divisum, sed unum eundemque Filium et unigenitum, Deum verbum, Dominum Jesum Christum; sicut ante prophetæ de eo et ipse nos Jesus Christus erudit et patrum nobis symbolum tradidit.

A.4 **The Athanasian Creed.**

Symbolum Quicumque

The Athanasian Creed. Old Translation Revised.⁹

8. Given according to Schaff, *Creeds of Christendom, with a History and Critical notes. Volume II. The Greek and Latin Creeds, with Translations*, p. 109.

9. According to *ibid.*, p. 109-114.

1. Whosoever will be saved: before
all things it is necessary that he
hold the Catholic Faith:

2. Which Faith except every one do
keep whole and undefiled: without
doubt he shall perish everlastingly.

1. Quicumque vult salvus esse: ante
omnia opus est, ut teneat
catholicam fidem.

2. Quam nisi quisque integram
inviolatamque servaverit: absque
dubio in æternum peribit.

- | | |
|---|--|
| 3. And the Catholic Faith is this: That we worship one God in Trinity, and Trinity in Unity; | 3. Fides autem catholica hæc est: ut unum Deum in Trinitate, et Trinitatem in Unitate veneremur; |
| 4. Neither confounding the Persons: nor dividing the Substance (Essence). | 4. Neque confundentes personas: neque substantiam separantes. |
| 5. For there is one Person of the Father: another of the Son: and another of the Holy Ghost. | 5. Alia est enim persona Patris: alia Filii: alia Spiritus Sancti. |
| 6. But the Godhead of the Father, of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost, is all one: the Glory equal, the Majesty coeternal. | 6. Sed Patris et Filii et Spiritus Sancti una est divinitas: æqualis gloria, coæterna majestas. |
| 7. Such as the Father is: such is the Son: and such is the Holy Ghost. | 7. Qualis Pater: talis Filius: talis [et] Spiritus Sanctus. |
| 8. The Father uncreate (uncreated): the Son uncreate (uncreated): and the Holy Ghost uncreate (uncreated). | 8. Increatus Pater: increatus Filius: increatus [et] Spiritus Sanctus. |
| 9. The Father incomprehensible (unlimited): the Son incomprehensible (unlimited): and the Holy Ghost incomprehensible (unlimited, or infinite). | 9. Immensus Pater: immensus filius: immensus [et] Spiritus Sanctus. |
| 10. The Father eternal: the Son eternal: and the Holy Ghost eternal. | 10. Æternus Pater: æternus Filius: æternus [et] Spiritus Sanctus. |
| 11. And yet they are not three eternals: but one eternal. | 11. Et tamen non tres æterni: sed unus æternus. |
| 12. As also there are not three uncreated: nor three incomprehensibles (infinities), but one uncreated: and one incomprehensible (infinite). | 12. Sicut non tres increati: nec tres immensi: sed unus increatus: et unus immensus. |
| 13. So likewise the Father is Almighty: the Son Almighty: and the Holy Ghost Almighty. | 13. Similiter omnipotens Pater: omnipotens Filius: omnipotens [et] Spiritus Sanctus. |
| 14. And yet they are not three Almighties: but one Almighty. | 14. Et tamen non tres omnipotentes: sed unus omnipotens. |
| 15. So the Father is God: the Son is God: and the Holy Ghost is God. | 15. Ita deus Pater: deus Filius: deus [et] Spiritus Sanctus. |
| 16. And yet they are not three Gods: but one God. | 16. Et tamen non tres dii: sed unus est Deus. |

17. So likewise the Father is Lord:
the Son Lord: and the Holy Ghost
Lord.
18. And yet not three Lords: but
one Lord.
19. For like as we are compelled by
the Christian verity: to
acknowledge every Person by
himself to be God and Lord:
20. So are we forbidden by the
Catholic Religion: to say, There be
(are) three Gods, or three Lords.
21. The Father is made of none:
neither created, nor begotten.
22. The Son is of the Father alone:
not made, nor created: but begotten.
23. The Holy Ghost is of the Father
and of the Son: neither made, nor
created, nor begotten: but
proceeding.
24. So there is one Father, not three
Fathers: one Son, not three Sons:
one Holy Ghost, not three Holy
Ghosts.
25. And in this Trinity none is
afore, or after another: none is
greater, or less than another (there
is nothing before, or after: nothing
greater or less).
26. But the whole three Persons are
coeternal, and coequal.
27. So that in all things, as
aforesaid: the Unity in Trinity, and
the Trinity in Unity, is to be
worshiped.
28. He therefore that will be saved,
must (let him) thus think of the
Trinity.
17. Ita dominus Pater: dominus
Filius: dominus [et] Spiritus
Sanctus.
18. Et tamen non tres domini: sed
unus [est] Dominus.
19. Quia sicut singulatim
unamquamque personam Deum ac
Dominum confiteri, Christiana
veritate compellimur:
20. Ita tres deos, aut [tres] dominos
dicere, catholica religione
prohibemur.
21. Pater a nullo est factus: nec
creatus, nec genitus.
22. Filius a Patre solo est: non
factus, nec creatus: sed genitus.
23. Spiritus Sanctus a Patre et filio:
non factus, nec creatus, nec genitus:
sed procedens.
24. Unus ergo Pater, non tres
patres: unus Filius, non tres filii:
unus Spiritus Sanctus, non tres
spiritus sancti.
25. Et in hac Trinitate nihil prius,
aut posterius: nihil majus, aut
minus.
26. Sed totæ tres personæ coæternæ
sibi sunt, et coæquales.
27. Ita, ut per omnia, sicut jam
supra dictum est: et Unitas in
Trinitate, et Trinitas in Unitate,
venerenda sit.
28. Qui vult ergo salvus esse, ita de
Trinitate sentiat.

29. Furthermore it is necessary to everlasting salvation: that he also believe rightly (faithfully) the Incarnation of our Lord Jesus Christ.

30. For the right Faith is, that we believe and confess: that our Lord Jesus Christ, the Son of God, is God and Man;

31. God, of the Substance (Essence) of the Father; begotten before the worlds: and Man, of the Substance (Essence) of his Mother, born in the world.

32. Perfect God: and perfect Man, of a reasonable soul and human flesh subsisting.

33. Equal to the Father, as touching his Godhead: and inferior to the Father as touching his Manhood.

34. Who although he be (is) God and Man; yet he is not two, but one Christ.

35. One; not by conversion of the Godhead into flesh: but by taking (assumption) of the Manhood into God.

36. One altogether; not by confusion of Substance (Essence): but by unity of Person.

37. For as the reasonable soul and flesh is one man: so God and Man is one Christ;

38. Who suffered for our salvation: descended into hell (Hades, spirit-world): rose again the third day from the dead.

29. Sed necessarium est ad æternam salutem: ut incarnationem quoque Domini nostri Jesu Christi fideliter credat.

30. Est ergo fides recta, ut credamus et confiteamur: quod Dominus noster Jesus Christus Dei Filius, Deus [pariter] et homo est;

31. Deus [est] ex substantia Patris, ante secula genitus: et homo ex substantia matris, in seculo natus.

32. Perfectus Deus: perfectus homo, ex anima rationali et humana carne subsistens.

33. Aequalis Patri secundum divinitatem: minor Patre secundum humanitatem.

34. Qui licet Deus sit et homo; non duo tamen, sed unus est Christus.

35. Unus autem, non conversione divinitatis in carnem: sed assumptione humanitatis in Deum.

36. Unus omnino; non confusione substantiæ: sed unitate personæ.

37. Nam sicut anima rationalis et caro unus est homo: ita Deus et homo unus est Christus.

38. Qui passus est pro nostra salute: descendit ad inferos: tertia die resurrexit a mortuis.

39. He ascended into heaven, he sitteth on the right hand of the Father God (God the Father) Almighty.

40. From whence (thence) he shall come to judge the quick and the dead.

41. At whose coming all men shall rise again with their bodies;

42. And shall give account for their own works.

43. And they that have done good shall go into life everlasting: and they that have done evil, into everlasting fire.

44. This is the Catholic Faith: which except a man believe faithfully (truly and firmly), he can not be saved.

39. Ascendit ad [in] cœlos: sedet ad dexteram [Dei] Patris [omnipotentis].

40. Inde venturus [est] judicare vivos et mortuos.

41. Ad cujus adventum omnes homines resurgere habent cum corporibus suis;

42. Et reddituri sunt de factis propriis rationem.

43. Et qui bona egerunt, ibunt in vitam æternam: qui vero mala, in ignem æternum.

44. Hæc est fides catholicæ: quam nisi quisque fideliter firmiterque crediderit, salvus esse non poterit.

Appendix B

Chronology of Kings, Prophets

according to Merrill.¹

| Israel | | Judah | | Prophets |
|----------|---------|-------------|----------|----------|
| | | David | 1011-971 | |
| | | Solomon | 973-931 | |
| Jeroboam | 931-910 | Rehoboam | 931-913 | |
| Nadab | 910-909 | Abijah | 913-911 | |
| Baasha | 909-886 | Asa | 911-870 | |
| Elah | 886-885 | | | |
| Zimri | 885 | | | |
| Omri | 885-874 | | | |
| Ahab | 874-853 | Jehoshaphat | 873-848 | |
| Ahaziah | 853-852 | | | |

1. For the chronology of the kings see Merrill, Kingdom of Priests - A History of Old Testament Israel, p. 244; 248; 320. For the prophets see p. 382f; 421f; 454f; 482f; 495f.

| | | | | |
|--------------|---------|------------|---------|-------------------------------|
| Joram | 852-841 | Jehoram | 848-841 | |
| Jehu | 841-814 | Ahaziah | 841 | Obadiah 2. half of 9th cent.? |
| | | Athalja | 841-835 | Joel betw. 852 and 841? |
| Jehoahaz | 814-798 | Joash | 835-796 | |
| Jehoash | 798-782 | Amaziah | 796-767 | |
| Jeroboam 2nd | 793-753 | Uzziah | 792-740 | Amos betw. 767 and 753 |
| | | | | Jonah betw. 772 and 755 |
| Zechariah | 753 | | | Hosea Uzziah-Hiskia/Jer.II |
| Shallum | 752 | | | Isaiah Uzziah-Hiskia |
| Menahem | 752-742 | Jotham | 750-731 | Micah Jotham, Ahas, Hiskia |
| Pekahiah | 742-740 | | | |
| Pekah | 752-732 | Ahaz | 735-715 | |
| Hoshea | 732-722 | Hezekiah | 729-686 | |
| | | Manasseh | 696-642 | |
| | | Amon | 642-640 | Nahum betw. 640 and 627? |
| | | Josiah | 640-609 | Zephaniah Josiah |
| | | Jehoahaz | 609 | Jeremiah 627 till after 586 |
| | | Jehoiakim | 608-598 | Habakkuk betw. 608 and 605? |
| | | Jehoiachin | 598-597 | Daniel 605 till after 537 |
| | | Zedekiah | 597-586 | Ezekiel 593 - |
| | | | | Haggai 520 |
| | | | | Zechariah 520- |
| | | | | Malachi betw. 433 and 425? |

Appendix C

The Hebrew Alphabet

| Name | Letter | Tran- scrip-tion | IPA Pro- nunciation |
|-------|--------|---------------------|------------------------|
| 'āleṗ | א | ' | [ʔ] or Ø |
| bêṭ | ב | b | [b] |
| | בּ | b̥ | [v] |
| gîmel | ג | g | [g] |
| | גּ | g̥ | [g] |
| dāleṭ | ד | d | [d] |
| | דּ | d̥ | [ð] |
| hē | ה | h | [h] or Ø |
| wāw | ו | w | [w] |
| zayin | ז | z | [z] |
| ḥêṭ | ח | ḥ | [H] |
| ṭêṭ | ט | ṭ | [t] |
| yōḏ | י | y | [j] or Ø |
| kaṗ | כ | k | [k] |
| | כּ | k̥ | [x] |
| lāmed | ל | l | [l] |
| mēm | מ | m | [m] |

| | | | |
|-------|-----|----|------|
| nûn | נ ן | n | [n] |
| sāmek | ס | s | [s] |
| ‘ayin | ע | ‘ | [ʕ] |
| pēh | פ ף | p | [p] |
| | פ ף | p̄ | [f] |
| ṣāḏēh | צ ץ | ṣ | [ts] |
| qōp | ק | q | [q] |
| rēš | ר | r | [r] |
| śîn | ש | ś | [s] |
| šîn | שׁ | š | [ʃ] |
| tāw | ת | t | [t] |
| | ת | t̄ | [θ] |

| Vowel | Signs | | | |
|--------------|-------------|-----------|-----------|--------|
| Name | simple | + m. l. ך | + m. l. ך | + m. |
| paṭaḥ | ב ba | y | w | l. ה h |
| qāmeš | ב bā or bo | - | - | - |
| ḥîreq | ב bi or bî | ב bā | - | ב bē |
| ṣērê | ב bē | ב bî | - | - |
| səḡōl | ב be | ב bē | - | ב bî |
| ḥôlem | ב bō | ב bē | - | ב bî |
| qibbûš/šûreq | ב bu qibbûš | - | ב bō | ב bî |
| | | | ב bû | - |
| | | | šûreq | |
| šəwā | ב bə | | | |
| ḥāṭēp paṭaḥ | ב ḥā | | | |
| ḥāṭēp səḡōl | ב ḥě | | | |
| ḥāṭēp qāmeš | ב ḥō | | | |

Appendix D

The Greek Alphabet

| | | | | |
|---|-----|----|---------|----------|
| A | α | a | Alpha | Ἄλφα |
| B | β | b | Bēta | Βῆτα |
| Γ | γ | g | Gamma | Γάμμα |
| Δ | δ | d | Delta | Δέλτα |
| E | ε | ě | Epsílon | Ἔ ψιλόν |
| Z | ζ | z | Zēta | Ζῆτα |
| H | η | ē | Ēta | Ἡτα |
| Θ | θ | th | Thēta | Θῆτα |
| I | ι | i | Iōta | Ἰῶτα |
| K | κ | k | Kappa | Κάππα |
| Λ | λ | l | Lambda | Λά(μ)βδα |
| M | μ | m | Mȳ | Μῦ |
| N | ν | n | Nȳ | Νῦ |
| Ξ | ξ | x | Xî | Ξî |
| O | ο | ö | Ömikron | Ὠ μικρόν |
| Π | π | p | Pî | Πî |
| P | ρ | r | Rhō | Ῥῶ |
| Σ | σ,ς | s | Sigma | Σίγμα |

| | | | | |
|---|---|------|----------------|---------|
| T | τ | t | Tau | Ταϑ |
| Υ | υ | y,u | Ypsilon | Υ ψιλόν |
| Φ | φ | ph | Phî | Φι |
| X | χ | ch | Chî | Χι |
| Ψ | ψ | ps | Psî | Ψι |
| Ω | ω | ō | Ōměga | Ω μέγα |
| Ἀ | ᾰ | h(a) | Spiritus Asper | |
| Ἄ | ἄ | (a) | Spiritus Lenis | |

Appendix E

Abbreviations

| | |
|--------------------|-----------------------|
| 1 Chron. or 1 Chr | 1 Chronicles |
| 1 Cor. or 1 Cor | 1 Corinthians |
| 1 Esd. | 1 Esdras |
| 1 John or 1 Jn | 1 John (Epistle) |
| 1 Kings or 1 Kgs | 1 Kings |
| 1 Macc. or 1 Mc | 1 Maccabees |
| 1 Pet. or 1 Pt | 1 Peter |
| 1p | First person plural |
| 1 Sam. or 1 Sm | 1 Samuel |
| 1s | First person singular |
| 1 Thess. or 1 Thes | 1 Thessalonians |
| 1 Tim. or 1 Tm | 1 Timothy |
| 2 Chron. or 2 Chr | 2 Chronicles |
| 2 Cor. or 2 Cor | 2 Corinthians |
| 2 Esd. | 2 Esdras |

| | |
|--------------------|--------------------------------------|
| 2 John or 2 Jn | 2 John (Epistle) |
| 2 Kings or 2 Kgs | 2 Kings |
| 2 Macc. or 2 Mc | 2 Maccabees |
| 2 Pet. or 2 Pt | 2 Peter |
| 2p | Second person plural |
| 2 Sam. or 2 Sm | 2 Samuel |
| 2s | Second person singular |
| 2 Thess. or 2 Thes | 2 Thessalonians |
| 2 Tim. or 2 Tm | 2 Timothy |
| 3 John or 3 Jn | 3 John (Epistle) |
| 3p | Third person plural |
| 3s | Third person singular |
| A. or Acc. | accusative case |
| abl. | ablative |
| Act. or Act | Active Voice |
| Acts | Acts of the Apostles |
| A.D. | anno domini, in the year of the Lord |
| adj. | adjective |
| adv. | adverb |
| Amos or Am | Amos |
| anom. | anomalous |
| Aor. | Aorist |
| Apoc. | Apocrypha |
| Arab. | Arabic |
| ARV | American Revised Version |
| ASV | American Standard Version |
| AT | American Translation |
| AV | Authorized (King James) Version |
| Bar. or Bar | Baruch |
| B.C. | Before Christ |

| | |
|-----------------|--------------------------------|
| BHS | Biblia Hebraica Stuttgartensia |
| Caus. | Causal |
| c. | case |
| ca. | circa |
| cent. | century |
| C.E. | Christian Era |
| CEV | Contemporary English Version |
| cf. | confer, compare |
| ch. | chapter |
| Col. or Col | Colossians |
| Cond. | Conditional |
| conj. or conj | conjunction |
| cons. | consonant |
| Dan. or Dn | Daniel |
| D. or Dat. | dative case |
| Decl. | Declension |
| Deut. or Dt | Deuteronomy |
| dimin. | diminutive |
| du. | dual number |
| DV | Douay Version |
| Eccles. or Eccl | Ecclesiastes |
| Ecclus. | Ecclesiasticus (= Sirach) |
| ed. | edition |
| e.g. | exempli gratia, 'for example' |
| Eph. or Eph | Ephesians |
| ERV | English Revised Version |
| esp. | especially |
| Esther or Est | Esther |
| ESV | English Standard Version |
| et al. | and others |

| | |
|--------------|--|
| etym. | etymology |
| EV | English version(s) |
| Exod. or Ex | Exodus |
| Ezek. or Ez | Ezekiel |
| Ezra or Ezr | Ezra |
| f. | feminine gender |
| fig. | figuratively |
| Fut. | Future |
| Gal. or Gal | Galatians |
| Gen. or Gn | Genesis |
| G. or genv | genitive case |
| Gk. | Greek |
| gov. | governing |
| Gr. | grammar |
| Hab. or Hb | Habakkuk |
| Hag. or Hg | Haggai |
| HB | Hebrew Bible |
| Heb. or Heb | Hebrews |
| Hosea or Hos | Hosea |
| ib. or ibid. | ibidem or 'in the same place or book or text' as the preceding |
| ident. | identical |
| id. | idem or 'the same meaning as that of a preceding word' |
| i.e. | id est, that is |
| impers. | impersonal or used impersonally |
| Impf. | imperfect |
| Impv. | imperative |
| ind. | indeclinable |
| indic. | indicative |

| | |
|--------------|--|
| Inf. | infinitive mood |
| instr. | instrumental |
| Intens. | Intensive |
| interj. | interjection |
| interpol. | interpolation |
| intrans. | intransitive (without accusative object) |
| Introd. | Introduction |
| IPA | International Phonetic Alphabet |
| irr. | irregular |
| Isa. or Is | Isaiah |
| James or Jas | James |
| JB | Jerusalem Bible |
| Jer. or Jer | Jeremiah |
| Job or Jb | Job |
| Joel or Jl | Joel |
| John or Jn | John (Gospel) |
| Jon. or Jon | Jonah |
| Josh. or Jo | Joshua |
| Jth. or Jdt | Judith |
| Jude | Jude |
| Judg. or Jgs | Judges |
| KJV | King James Version |
| Lam. or Lam | Lamentations |
| Lat. | Latin |
| Lev. or Lv | Leviticus |
| lit. | literally |
| loc. | locative |
| log. | logic |
| Luke or Lk | Luke |
| LXX | Septuagint |

| | |
|-------------|---|
| Mal. or Mal | Malachi |
| Mark or Mk | Mark |
| 𐤌𐤎 | Masoretic text |
| Matt. or Mt | Matthew |
| Med. or Med | Medium Voice |
| metron. | metronymic |
| Mic. or Mi | Micah |
| m. | masculine gender |
| Mod. | modern |
| MS. | manuscript |
| MSS. | manuscripts |
| MT | Masoretic Text |
| NAB | New American Bible |
| Nah. or Na | Nahum |
| NEB | New English Bible |
| neg. | negative |
| Neh. or Neh | Nehemiah |
| NETS | A New English Translation of the Septuagint |
| NJB | New Jerusalem Bible |
| n. | neuter gender |
| N. or Nom. | nominative case |
| NRSV | New Revised Standard Version |
| NT | New Testament |
| ntr. | neuter gender |
| Num. or Nm | Numbers |
| Obad. or Ob | Obadiah |
| obs. | obsolete |
| opt. | optative |
| orig. | originally |

| | |
|-------------------------------|--|
| OSMHB | Open Scriptures Morphological Hebrew Bible |
| OT | Old Testament |
| par. | parallel |
| partic. | particular |
| part. or part | participle |
| Pass. or Pass | Passive voice |
| perh. | perhaps |
| Pf. or Pf | perfect tense |
| Philem. or Phlm | Philemon |
| Phil. or Phil | Philippians |
| Pl. or Pl | Plural |
| pl. | plural |
| poet. | poetry or poetic |
| p. or p | page |
| prec. | preceding |
| prep. | preposition |
| pres. or pres | present tense |
| priv. | privative |
| prob. | probably |
| Pr. of Man. | Prayer of Manasses (= Manasseh) |
| pronom. | pronominal |
| pron. | pronoun |
| Prov. or Prv | Proverbs |
| Ps. (pl.Pss.) or Ps (pl. Pss) | Psalms |
| redupl. | reduplicated |
| Reflex. | Reflexive or used reflexively |
| Rev. or Rv | Revelation (= Apocalypse) |
| rhet. | rhetoric |
| Rom. or Rom | Romans |

| | |
|------------------------|---|
| RSV | Revised Standard Version |
| rt. | root |
| rts. | roots |
| Ruth or Ru | Ruth |
| RV | Revised Version |
| seq. | sequens |
| sev. | several |
| Sg. or Sg | Singular |
| Sir | Sirach (= Ecclesiasticus) |
| Song of Sol. or Song | Song of Solomon (= Song of Songs) |
| Song of Three Children | Song of the Three Holy Children |
| Subj. | subjunctive |
| subst. | substantive |
| suff. | suffix |
| superl. | superlative degree |
| Sus. | Susanna |
| Syr. | Syriac |
| Titus or Ti | Titus |
| Tob. or Tb | Tobit |
| TR | Textus Receptus (Received Text) |
| trans. | transitive (with accusative object) |
| vb. | verb |
| v.l. | varia lectio, different (variant) reading |
| vow. | vowel |
| Vulg. | Vulgate |
| V. or Voc. | vocative case |
| WEB | World English Bible |
| Wisd. of Sol. | Wisdom of Solomon (= Wisdom) |
| WLC | Westminster Leningrad Codex |
| Ws | Wisdom (= Wisdom of Solomon) |

Zech. or Zec
Zeph. or Zep

Zechariah
Zephaniah

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He was
manifested in the flesh,
vindicated by the Spirit,
seen by angels,
proclaimed
among the nations,
believed on in the world,
taken up in glory.