

SAMPLES FROM BOTH CHAPTER ONE AND TWO...

Paul's Letter to the Romans, Chapter 1

With my own thoughts [in brackets] inserted into original scriptures.

Romans 1:1-3 Paul, a servant of Jesus Christ, called *to be* an apostle, separated [severed from Judaism of the Pharisees] unto the gospel of God, (Which he had promised afore by his prophets in the holy scriptures [i.e. prophesied and written about in the Old Testament].) Concerning his Son Jesus Christ our Lord, which was made of the seed of David according to the flesh.

Though Jesus was the literal Son of God, whose Father is the *ultimate* Father God, He naturally, also, had descended from King David through the lineage of Mary, His earthen mother. Though the Bible gives two “supposed” confusing lists of Jesus’ genealogy (in Matthew and Luke’s Gospel accounts), there just may be a simple solution as to how we can decipher them:

Poor Man’s Commentary, by Robert Hawker (published in 1805; public domain): I detain the Reader, at the very entrance on this genealogy concerning Christ, to call his particular attention to the manner in which Luke introduces Joseph, as the supposed father of Christ. Than which form of words, nothing can be stronger in proof, that it was a mere supposition only, and not in reality. And the insertion in Luke’s Gospel of the direct descent of Christ after the flesh, in a regular order from Adam to Joseph, as Matthew had before done from Abraham to Mary, was evidently intended for no other purpose than as a testimony to the great point, that Christ was the seed of the Woman. With Joseph, Christ had no connection. But it was a common mode of expression with the Jews, to call the man father which brought up a child. Hence Joseph became the supposed father. And if the Reader will compare...

Matthew 1:16 And **Jacob begat Joseph** the husband of Mary, of whom was born Jesus, who is called Christ.

...with what is said here:

Luke 3:23 And Jesus himself began to be about thirty years of age, being (as was supposed) **the son of Joseph, which was the son of Heli.**

...he will discover somewhat of this very custom. In Matthew, Joseph is said to have been begotten of Jacob, so that Jacob was his real father. But according to Luke, Heli was his father – and, so he was: that is, his “reputed” father, by virtue of Joseph being betrothed to Mary his daughter [i.e. Heli being, actually, Mary’s own, natural father]. So that these things explain the several expressions, according to Jewish customs.

Adam Clarke’s Commentary of the Bible (published in 1810-1826; public domain): Thus it appears that Joseph, son of Jacob, according to St. Matthew, was son-in-law of Heli, according to St. Luke.

John Wesley’s Notes on the Bible (1755-1766, public domain): The son of Heli - That is, the son-in-law: for Heli was the father of Mary.

Romans 1:4-7a And [Jesus was] declared *to be* the Son of God with power, according to the spirit of holiness, by the resurrection from the dead: By whom we have received grace and apostleship, for obedience to the faith among all nations, for his name: Among whom are ye also the called of Jesus Christ: **To all that be in Rome**, beloved of God, called *to be* saints...

Though addressed to *ALL* that be in Rome, he was not meaning everybody who had lived in Rome, nor to everyone who was born in Rome, but was speaking to Roman Christians, who consisted of both Jews and Gentiles.

John Wesley’s Notes on the Bible: To all that are in Rome - Most of these were heathens by birth, Romans 1:13 “...that I might have some fruit among you also, even as among OTHER Gentiles...”, though with Jews mixed among them. They were scattered up and down in that large city...

Although some may feel that Jews were *not* mixed in this mentioning by Paul here, but that, instead (and, as John Wesley had quoted from Romans 1:13), the Gentiles *only* were meant; for, surely, there was a time, in and around AD 50 to 54, that all Jews were expelled from Rome:

Acts 18:1-2 After these things Paul departed from Athens, and came to Corinth; And found a certain Jew named Aquila, born in Pontus, lately come from Italy, with his wife Priscilla; **(because that Claudius [a Caesar ruling from AD 41 to 54] had commanded all Jews to depart from Rome:)** and came unto them.

But, even so, that certainly didn't mean that nobody of the Jewish lineage ever stepped foot into Rome again!

Adam Clarke's Commentary of the Bible: This decree, which was made, not by the senate, but by the emperor himself, continued only in force during his life, if so long; for in a short time after this, Rome again abounded with Jews.

Again, I feel that Paul's greetings here may best be explained to have been addressed to both Gentiles by birth, and also to Jews by birth, but all of them were actual Christians . . . But, even so, let's speak more, a little quickly, on this expulsion of Jews from Rome at that time:

John Gill's Exposition of the Bible (1748-1763 & 1809, public domain): Because that Claudius had commanded all Jews to depart from Rome; of which edict Suetonius [AD 69 until after AD 122 – a Roman historian] makes mention, who says, that Claudius "expelled the Jews from Rome, who were continually making tumults, being moved thereunto by one Chrestus," who is generally understood to be Christ; and it is thought that the reason of this edict was, that the Jews in Rome continually opposing and disputing with the Christians, about Jesus being the Messiah, Claudius, who was of a timorous disposition, was afraid of a tumult, and that it might issue in his detriment, and therefore banished all the Jews, with whom the Christians were involved; for by the Heathens they were all called Jews, the first Christians being Jews: though others say the reason was, that the Jews had contracted an acquaintance with Agrippina, the wife of Claudius, and had drawn her into Judaism: but be it as it will, such an edict was made, on account of which Aquila and Priscilla were obliged to leave Rome, and come to Corinth . . . This Claudius was the "fifth" emperor of Rome; and this decree passed in the "ninth", or, as [says] others, in the "eleventh" year of his reign, and about the year of Christ 51, or, as others [say], 54.*

*Who is generally understood to be Christ... Though, that belief is divided – for, some think that it may have been some riotous Christian actually named Chrestus. However, and due to the teachings of Jesus (assuming, that is, that the Jews mentioned by Suetonius were even of the Christian sect), it just may have been Jesus the Christ Himself being so named Chrestus since Christians in general were not known to have been of a riotous nature. But, if that sect were of Judaism instead, with no Christian being involved in this incident, then there's no telling who had caused Claudius this grief; or even of whom this Chrestus really was . . . However, and even so, it may really be best to say that this Chrestus really was Christ, for at this time (again, between AD 51 and 54) the non-Christian Jews were not at odds with the Roman state in Rome itself, but only in Jerusalem, with small pockets of rebels trying to get their Holy Lands back from foreign rule. And, since the followers of Jesus weren't typically riotous, but that they were certainly at odds with the religious Jews who were not for Christ (again, those of Judaism in general), this would explain why Claudius was afraid of a violent contention between the two factions, and therefore didn't want any of them in his general territory during the remainder of his ruling . . . For a more detailed outlook about whom these "Jews" in Rome may have been, and about the entire incident concerning this expulsion from Rome, please refer to this webpage: https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Claudius%27_expulsion_of_Jews_from_Rome.

Romans 1:7b ...Grace to you and peace from God our Father, and the Lord Jesus Christ.

As I had explained, during my Commentary on the Gospel of John, in every one of Paul's letters (*except for Hebrews – since its format is rather different than the others*), when Paul greets his audience, he not only greets them himself, but he greets them, also, with the Gods of whom he serves. But (and, not only with our Romans' reference here [in verse 1:7b]), in these other letters of his, too, we should take

special note that he does not give any greetings from the Holy Ghost – as I’m fixing to show . . . In the Godhead debate (*of how many Gods there actually are in Heaven*), one should be aware that this little incident (which is not caught by everyone) is very hard to ignore in trying to consider if the Holy Ghost is an actual Being or not; or, if the Holy Ghost is (as Paul actually mentions in another part of his letters) simply the Spirit of the Father Himself:

1 Thessalonians 4:8 He therefore that despiseth, despiseth not man, but God [i.e. the Father], **who hath also given unto us HIS holy Spirit.**

That is, of it being, perhaps, the “life-force,” or the “life-essence” of the Father Himself, and not another Being, at all . . . But, even so, let’s go ahead and view the greetings in these other letters:

1 Corinthians 1:3 Grace *be* unto you, and peace, **from God our Father, and *from* the Lord Jesus Christ.**

2 Corinthians 1:2 Grace *be* to you and peace **from God our Father, and *from* the Lord Jesus Christ.**

Galatians 1:3 Grace *be* to you and peace **from God the Father, and *from* our Lord Jesus Christ.**

Ephesians 1:2 Grace *be* to you, and peace, **from God our Father, and *from* the Lord Jesus Christ.**

Philippians 1:2 Grace *be* unto you, and peace, **from God our Father, and *from* the Lord Jesus Christ.**

Colossians 1:2 To the saints and faithful brethren in Christ which are at Colosse: Grace *be* unto you, and peace, **from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.**

1 Thessalonians 1:1 Paul, and Silvanus, and Timotheus, unto the church of the Thessalonians *which is* in **God the Father and in the Lord Jesus Christ:** Grace *be* unto you, and peace, **from God our Father, and the Lord Jesus Christ.**

2 Thessalonians 1:1-2 Paul, and Silvanus, and Timotheus, unto the church of the Thessalonians **in God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ:** Grace unto you, and peace, **from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.**

1 Timothy 1:2 Unto Timothy, *my* own son in the faith: Grace, mercy, *and* peace, **from God our Father and Jesus Christ our Lord.**

2 Timothy 1:2 To Timothy, *my* dearly beloved son: Grace, mercy, *and* peace, **from God the Father and Christ Jesus our Lord.**

Titus 1:4 To Titus, *mine* own son after the common faith: Grace, mercy, *and* peace, **from God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ our Saviour.**

Philemon 1:3 Grace to you, and peace, **from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.**

Is all this just mere coincidence? That Paul accidentally forgot to include the Holy Ghost in all these greetings? In these references alone, it could possibly prove-out that the Holy Ghost is not an actual Being; for (and, in continuing this present thought), if It/He were an actual Being, then Paul certainly would have included It/Him in all these greetings . . . But, and as for the letter to the Hebrews (*of which I also claim was written by Paul – Please see my Explanatory Note on this at the end of this chapter for that thought*), we do not find any such greetings. In fact, we don’t find any greeting, at all – which may simply mean that he either did not give one in Hebrews, or that it was just lost to the ravages of time . . . So, if all that I’ve been saying be really true, then that means that the only true Gods in existence are the Father and the Son – which it’s easy to prove that they two are actual Beings in scripture. However, and as to those who believe in the “Oneness” teachings about the Godhead (that is, that the Father God is Jesus; and, that there is no other God, at all), there are just

too many verses in the Bible which say otherwise; for, Jesus, at the end of all things, will eventually give-up His rule and authority and give-it on-over to the Father God – who is, and has always been, a greater God than He:

1 Corinthians 15:24 Then *cometh* the end, when he [Jesus] shall have delivered up the kingdom to God, even the Father; when he [Jesus] shall have put down all rule and all authority and power. [28] And when all things shall be subdued unto him [the Father], then shall the Son [Jesus] also himself be subject unto him [the Father] that put all things under him, that God [the Father] may be all in all.

And, this is *way after* He ascended back up to Heaven. It's Jesus Himself that tells us that He's not as great as the Father:

Matthew 19:17 And he [Jesus] said unto him, Why callest thou me good? ***there is none good but one, that is, God*** [i.e. the Father]...

John 5:19 Then answered Jesus and said unto them, Verily, verily, I say unto you, **The Son can do nothing of himself, but what he seeth the Father do: for what things soever he doeth, these also doeth the Son likewise.**

John 5:30-31 **I can of mine own self do nothing:** as I hear, I judge: and my judgment is just; **because I seek not mine own will, but the will of the Father which hath sent me** [i.e. just as the Father, the greater God, sent the Holy Ghost, Jesus did not send Himself.]. **If I bear witness of myself, my witness is not true.**

Besides all that, the very titles of these Gods (*Father and Son*) should actually denote their positions and hierarchy in Heaven for us quite plainly...

John 3:16a For God so loved the world, that he **GAVE** his only **begotten Son**...

Though, some could try and claim that Jesus was only referred to as a Son whilst He was here on earth, during His earthen ministry, we actually see, even after He resurrected and ascended unto Heaven (to sit at the Father's right hand – *being the Father's right-hand-man* – and, not the main occupant of the ultimate throne), He still kept the title of *Son* to differentiate Himself from the greater God:

Romans 1:4 And declared *to be* the Son of God [son of the Father] with power, according to the spirit of holiness, by the resurrection from the dead [not only *before* His resurrection, but afterwards did He proclaim this; that is, to be the SON of God].

Romans 1:9a For God [the Father] is my witness, whom I [currently] serve [the Son already being in Heaven – and still called a Son] with my spirit in the gospel OF HIS SON...

For, Paul also demonstrates this by telling us that the Father is Jesus' God, too; again, *after* He already ascended:

Ephesians 1:17 That **the God OF our Lord Jesus Christ**, the Father of glory, may give unto you the spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of him.

For, had Jesus changed His title back to being the Father only when He went back to Heaven (*assuming, again, that He and the Father are one and the same exact Being*), then Paul, here, would not have called the Father Jesus' God too; seeing, again, that Paul wrote this many years after the ascension of Jesus into Heaven.

Hebrews 1:8-9 But unto the Son *he* [the Father] *saith*, Thy throne, O God [the Father here calling His Son a God], is for ever and ever: a sceptre of righteousness is the sceptre of thy kingdom. Thou hast loved righteousness, and hated iniquity; therefore God [the Father God], *even* thy God [He's even Jesus' God, too – higher than Him in status], hath anointed thee with the oil of gladness [with His own Holy Spirit] above thy fellows [above any other prophet].

Therefore, there is only one God (i.e. one ultimate God), and there's one Lord (His Son Jesus) – *two* actual Beings.

1 Corinthians 8:6 But to us *there is but* one God, the Father, of whom *are* all things, and we in him; and one Lord Jesus Christ, by whom *are* all things, and we by him.

...and there is only one Spirit (Ephesians 4:4) – which issues forth *from* the Father (1st Thessalonians 4:8) – being His own life-essence; and, of which, dwells within everybody else, including His Son; for, if that is not so, then how can a single Being, known as the Holy Ghost, be in millions of people at the same exact time? That would be spreading a single entity just too far; for, and just like the mighty sun that illuminates the afternoon sky, it's one object, but it's felt by millions of people at once. Same as the Father, He's one Being, but his "rays" of Spirit are felt by millions at a time. This can be the only logical explanation of how the Holy Spirit can be everywhere at once, as a single Being cannot. Therefore, it would be best to describe the Holy Ghost as a *Spirit* rather than a *Spirit-Being* . . . And, though it's true that Jesus did say, in John 4:24, that "God [His Father] is a Spirit...", *not a Spirit-Being*, that doesn't make me wrong in what I've just said; for, surely, the Greek Word, from which this one English word had derived, has multiple meanings to it:

Spirit/Pneuma (pnyoo'-mah), G4151, from Strong's Greek Dictionary (Strong's Hebrew & Greek Dictionaries were Published in 1890, and are public domain): From G4154; a current of air, that is, breath (blast) or a breeze; by analogy or figuratively a spirit, that is, (human) the rational soul, (by implication) vital principle, mental disposition, etc., or (superhuman) an angel, daemon, or (divine) God, Christ's spirit, the Holy spirit: - ghost, life, spirit (-ual, -ually), mind.

Which, as we can see, can mean "an air current" from outside – a "breeze;" a person's "breath;" a "spirit" – which can mean, amongst other, more spiritual things, a person's own spirit-of-life, or vitality; for, it continues to say "human, rational soul," and "vital principle, mental disposition, etc." Or, even, a superhuman, such as an angel from Heaven (which is also a Being); or, even a demonic spirit. Then, it says that it can simply be God Himself – meaning the Father God – such as we're actually seeing in our current verse of John 4:24, when Jesus had told the woman at the well that His Father is a Spirit. Meaning specifically, and like the heavenly angel that we just spoke-on, a *Spirit-Being* rather than just a breath, or simply the vitality of a Being. But, then, yes, Strong's does further say that this one word could also mean the Spirit *OF* Christ (as in the vitality of that God); for, it ends that particular thought on explaining what the Spirit of Christ actually is – *the Holy Ghost*. Of which thought I am in full agreeance with, since it paints a picture that the Holy Ghost is simply the life-force, or life-essence of God, rather than being an entity itself . . . So, with that, let's again revisit our first thought on the Holy Spirit, in that Paul had said, very plainly, that it was the Spirit (or, and much rather, *the Life-essence*) of the Father God:

1 Thessalonians 4:8b ...God, **who hath also given unto us HIS holy Spirit.**

And, which in turn, should remind us that Jesus said, concerning this Holy Spirit/Ghost, that on the *Day of Pentecost*, that the Father would be the one to send It/Him – showing us that the Holy Ghost was not capable of sending Himself/Itself:

John 14:26a But the Comforter, *which is* the Holy Ghost, **whom the Father WILL SEND...** Producing the thought, in turn, that if the Holy Ghost were an actual Being, that He should have been able to send Itself/Himself, instead of having to be sent . . . Though that thought can't be satisfactory to everybody, for Jesus even said that He Himself was sent by the Father, and we know that He was an actual Being...

John 20:21 Then said Jesus to them again, Peace *be* unto you: **as *my* Father hath sent me,** even so send I you.

However, the biggest difference in the Father sending the Son and the Holy Ghost is in the fact that nowhere, not even once, did the scriptures call Jesus as to being God's own Spirit! Which, and concerning the Holy Spirit, it did say that about It/Him...

Matthew 10:20 For it is not ye that speak, but **THE SPIRIT OF YOUR FATHER** which speaketh in you.

John 15:26 But when the Comforter is come, whom I will send unto you from the Father, *even* the Spirit of truth, **which proceedeth FROM the Father**, he shall testify of me.

Not just sent *by* the Father, but that which proceeds *from* the Father. Which thought can certainly mean that it, indeed, came from the Father's own Being – His own life-essence; His own life-force.

Romans 8:9a But ye are not in the flesh, but in the Spirit, if so be that the Spirit **OF** God [Spirit of the Father] dwell in you... [10b] ...the Spirit *is* life [the Father's life]... [11b] ...shall also quicken your mortal bodies by HIS Spirit [by the Father's Spirit] that dwelleth in you. [14] For as many as are led by the Spirit **OF** God, they are the sons of God. [15:19a] Through mighty signs and wonders, by the power of the Spirit **OF** God...

1 Corinthians 2:10a But God hath revealed *them* unto us by HIS Spirit [by *His* Spirit]... [11c] ...the Spirit **OF** God. [12] Now we have received, not the spirit of the world, but the spirit which is **OF** God; that we might know the things that are freely given to us of God. [6:11b] ...ye are justified in the name of the Lord Jesus, and by the Spirit **OF** our God.

Galatians 4:6 And because ye are sons, God hath sent forth **the Spirit of his Son** [the Spirit **OF** Jesus; which is also the Spirit of the Father as well – the Holy Ghost] into your hearts, crying, Abba, Father.

Etc., etc., etc . . . Of which smacks more of a “*rational soul*,” or, a “*vital principle*” (some of Strong's Dictionary meanings for “Spirit” – that is, a person's life-essence, or life-force) rather than being a Spirit-Being; or, that is, rather than being an entity of its own . . . But, still, what about when the scriptures seem to indicate, *beyond the shadow of a doubt*, that the Holy Ghost is an actual Being? Such as:

Hebrews 3:7-11 Wherefore (**AS THE HOLY GHOST SAITH**, To day if ye will hear his voice, Harden not your hearts, as in the provocation, in the day of temptation **IN THE WILDERNESS**: When your fathers tempted ME, proved ME, and saw MY works forty years. Wherefore I was grieved with that generation, and said, They do alway err in *their* heart; and they have not known MY ways. So I sware in MY wrath, They shall not enter into MY rest.)

These are some very interesting scriptures, *having the Holy Ghost actually talking* (being an actual Person?). Or, is the matter easily explained in another way? What's curious about this is in *how* the scripture is phrased: "...as the Holy Ghost saith, To day if ye will hear his voice," almost as if the Holy Ghost is actually quoting another source, *quoting another God* – a God greater than He perhaps? I come to that conclusion with how the sentence actually reads; like this: “The Holy Ghost spoke, and said this: “Today, if you will hear *His* voice...” *another* God's voice . . . Or, we could say that The Holy Ghost is referring to Himself, and saying that He was the God of the wilderness that dealt with the children of Israel . . . Is the writer of Hebrews (which, again, I see as Paul) quoting an Old Testament source? Yes; in Psalms:

Psalms 95:1 O come, let us sing unto the LORD: let us make a joyful noise to the **ROCK of our salvation**.

Already, we're starting off here with a reference to, *not the Holy Ghost*, but to Jesus – who is definitely the Rock of our salvation. This, by the way, is the introduction to whom had worked with the Israelites in the wilderness wandering. That is, during their sojourning for 40 years (after their exodus from Egypt) before the promised land was ever reached.

Psalms 95:7b-11 ...To day if ye will hear his voice, Harden not your heart, as in the provocation, *and as in* the day of temptation **IN THE WILDERNESS**: When your fathers tempted me, proved me, and saw my work. Forty years long was I grieved with *this* generation, and said, It is a people that do err in their heart, and they have not known my ways: Unto whom I sware in my wrath that they should not enter into my rest.

But, again, the God that this Psalm was referring to was Jesus and not the Holy Ghost – as, again, we see evidence of in the very first verse: “...let us make a joyful noise to the ROCK of our salvation.”

1 Corinthians 10:1 Moreover, brethren, I would not that ye should be ignorant, how that all our fathers were under the cloud, and all passed through the sea [i.e. a definite reference to the wilderness wandering] [10:4 – continuing about the wilderness wandering] And did all drink the same spiritual drink: for they drank of THAT SPIRITUAL ROCK THAT FOLLOWED THEM [i.e. worked with them in the wilderness wandering]: **AND THAT ROCK WAS CHRIST** [i.e. *Jesus* – whom is identified as Jesus (*and, not to just the anointing Holy Ghost – as Christ is sometimes referred to in other instances of scripture*) when Paul, just a bit further down (in verse 16), connects “Christ” with Him whose body and blood are compared to the communion].

And, not only, but there are other hints and clues within Psalms 95 that continue to tell us about Jesus being the God of the wilderness wandering:

Psalms 95:3 For the LORD is a great God, and a great King above all gods.

Compared to...

Revelation 17:14a These shall make war with the Lamb [another reference for Jesus, the slain Lamb], and the Lamb shall overcome them: **for he is Lord of lords, and King of kings...**

And, also...

Psalms 95:5 The sea is his, and HE MADE IT: and HIS HANDS FORMED the dry land.

Compared to...

Colossians 1:12-16a Giving thanks unto the Father [i.e. the Father God], which hath made us meet to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light: Who hath delivered us from the power of darkness, and hath translated *us* into the kingdom of his dear Son [unto Jesus]: In whom [that is, Jesus] we have redemption through his blood [since He was the one who died on the cross], *even* the forgiveness of sins: Who is the image of the invisible God [i.e. He is the image of His Father, of whom He's the ambassador of for earth], the firstborn of every creature: For by him [again, Jesus] WERE ALL THINGS CREATED, that are in heaven, and that are in earth...

But if this is all true (that I am here contending) – that is, that Jesus was the God (and, as Psalms 95 tells us about) of the wilderness wandering, where the Hebrew children tempted Him, proved Him, and saw His work for forty-years (being grieved with that generation), and said (instead of the Holy Ghost saying): “It is a people that do err in their heart, and they have not known my ways: Unto whom I swear in my wrath that they should not enter into my rest,” then where does that leave us in our understandings concerning the Holy Ghost saying all these things? For, it may really seem that it was Paul himself who so names the God who spoke in Hebrews 3:7 as the Holy Ghost, saying: “Wherefore **as the Holy Ghost saith...**”, and, in turn, quoting Psalms 95 . . . Well, the whole thing may easily be explained in the fact that David (*if, indeed, he were the writer of this Psalm*) was writing in *inspiration* of the Holy Ghost – God speaking to Him *through* the Holy Ghost – *where we could say here, too, that it was the Holy Ghost speaking* – and, in turn, giving Paul free license to say that the Holy Spirit of God was speaking through David, but that it concerned events which took place in the wilderness wandering where Jesus was the God who was working with them during that day and time. For, Jesus was definitely the God of the Old Testament, of whom the Father God had worked through (of which we begin to see this when it was Jesus who had spoken to Moses in the burning bush – identifying Himself as the great I AM (in Exodus 3:14) – compared to Jesus calling Himself so in both John 8:58 (“Before Abraham was, I AM!”) and John 18:5-6 (see my explanation for John 18:5-6, and Jesus’ claims as to being the great I AM, in an upcoming *Explanatory Note* for Romans chapter 14, called: “*Italicized words in the Bible...*”). And, then, once Jesus got to earth, during His earthen ministry, He then, in turn, introduced the world to the Father, of whom they did not know until then (see Luke 10:22) . . . Therefore, I conclude, by all of what’s been said thus far, that I’m not seeing the Holy Ghost as an actual Being; but, instead, as the Spirit of the Father God.

Romans 1:8 First, I thank my God through Jesus Christ for you all, that your faith is spoken of throughout the whole world.

Perhaps not just the “known” world – which known world would have been the entire domain of Rome at that time (which also included all of Greece, too), but also included the world of the barbarians – *uncivilized peoples, perhaps?* – of which barbarians may or may not have been set outside the massive boundaries of Roman and Greek borders . . . Let’s see:

Romans 1:14 I am debtor both to the Greeks, **and to the Barbarians**; both to the wise, and to the unwise.

Barbarian/Barbaros (bar'-bar-os), G915, Strong's Greek Dictionary: Of uncertain derivation; a foreigner (that is, non Greek): - barbarian (-rous).

But, apparently, and depending on whom you may have asked back in the ancient world, a barbarian could've meant one of several things. To the Romans, it did designate folks who were foreign and unruly; hence, Webster's Dictionary (*published 1828, public domain*):

...The Romans applied this word [Barbaric] to designate things foreign...

But, to the Greeks, who had prided themselves on being of higher attainment in life, and of a more refined nature and education, had considered *any* non-Greek to be barbaric:

*Albert Barnes' Notes on the Bible (published 1847-85, public domain): **Barbarians – All who were not included under the general name of Greeks.** Thus, Ammonius* says that “all who were not Greeks were barbarians.” This term “barbarian,” Βάρβαρος Barbaros, properly denotes one who speaks a foreign language, a foreigner, and the Greeks applied it to all who did not use their tongue; compare 1st Corinthians 14:11, “I shall be unto him that speaketh, a barbarian,” etc. that is, I shall speak a language which he cannot understand. The word did not, therefore, of necessity denote any rusticity of manners, or any lack of refinement. [*Ammonius: More than likely, Albert Barnes is referring to Ammonius Saccas (175 AD – 242 AD); whom Wikipedia calls a Hellenistic, self-taught philosopher from Alexandria.]*

Therefore, our reference by Paul had perhaps meant this latter statement – namely, of whom was a non-Greek individual; and, pointing a finger specifically to the Romans themselves (natives of that country); and, perhaps, even, to the Jews of that land, too, as being these “barbarians.”

Romans 1:9a For God is my witness, whom I serve with **MY SPIRIT** in the gospel of his Son...

This was another one of those topics that I had previously covered during the Commentary on the Gospel of John, in that Paul was actually referring to his personal “*Inward-Man*” with that statement. A topic that we will definitely cover during our quest of Roman's epistle as well. So, stay tuned for more on this Inward-Man, and of why I am saying that Paul's term “my spirit” had referred to himself and not to God's own, personal Spirit. And, especially will this be covered in Romans chapter 8's lesson.

Romans 1:9b-11 ...that without ceasing I make mention of you always in my prayers; Making request, if by any means now at length I might have a prosperous journey by the will of God to come unto you. For I long to see you, that I may impart unto you some spiritual gift, to the end ye may be established.

Albert Barnes' Notes on the Bible: “Some spiritual gift” – Some have understood this as referring to “miraculous gifts,” which it was supposed the apostles had the power of conferring on others. But this interpretation is forced and unnatural. There is no instance where this expression denotes the power of working miracles. Besides, the apostle in the next verse explains his meaning...

Romans 1:12 That is, that I may be comforted together with you by the mutual faith both of you and me.

Albert Barnes continued: From this it appears that he desired to be among them to exercise the office of the ministry, to establish them in the gospel and to confirm their hopes. He expected that the preaching of the gospel would be the means of confirming them in the faith; and he desired to be the means of doing it. It was a wish of benevolence, and accords with what he says respecting his intended visit in Romans 15:29, "And I am sure that when I come, I shall come in the fullness of the blessing of the gospel of Christ." To make known to them more fully the blessings of the gospel, and thus to impart spiritual gifts, was the design he had in view.

Romans 1:13 Now I would not have you ignorant, brethren, that oftentimes I purposed to come unto you, (but was let hitherto,) that I might have some fruit among you also, even as among other Gentiles.

John Gill's Exposition of the Bible: "Have some fruit among you" – The edification of saints, and the fruitfulness of believers in grace and works.

Paul was the one who had introduced to the world, and had broken-down a list for us, of what sorts of good "Fruits" there are in the Kingdom of God:

Galatians 5:22-23 But the **fruit of the Spirit** is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, Meekness, temperance: against such there is no law.
Though Jesus was the one who even first mentioned about those Fruits within a New Testament environment, but without so naming them:

Matthew 7:20 Wherefore by their **fruits** ye shall know them.

Indicating that there were also "bad" Fruits, just as certain as there are "good" Fruits. *And, so there are!* For, just before Paul's list of "good" Fruits, he had given us a list of "bad" Fruits. Or, that is, and as the King James Version expresses it for us, the "*workings*" of the flesh:

Galatians 5:19-21 Now the **works** of the flesh are manifest, which are *these*; Adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lasciviousness, Idolatry, witchcraft, hatred, variance, emulations, wrath, strife, seditions, heresies, Envyings, murders, drunkenness, revellings, and such like: of the which I tell you before, as I have also told *you* in time past, that they which do such things shall not inherit the kingdom of God.

However, and even though it did not call them the "Fruits" of the flesh, the thought, nevertheless, was intended; for, the Greek definitions of Paul's actual words declare it to be such:

"Works," Ergon [from Galatians 5:19], G2041, from Strong's Greek Dictionary: From ergo (a primary but obsolete word; to work); toil (as an effort or occupation); by implication an act: - deed, doing, labour, work.

*"Fruits," Karpos [from Galatians 5:22], G2590, from Strong's Greek Dictionary: Probably from the base of **G726; fruit (as plucked)**, literally or figuratively: - fruit.*

The base word, apparently, for Karpos (fruit) is Harpazō:

*Harpazō, G726, from Strong's Greek Dictionary: From a derivative of G138; to seize (in various applications): - catch (away, up), **pluck**, pull, take (**by force**).*

Which, in and of itself, "plucking" fruit is a *work*; because, one is reaching for, plucking, pulling, or even taking by force, this fruit. But, even if we don't want to consider the base word (again, *Harpazō*) in our current investigation, Karpos (Paul's original word for Fruit) said itself that it can certainly mean the Fruit when it's being "plucked" – the "*action*" and not only the Fruit itself. In other words, the "*work*" of being plucked; the workings of the flesh . . . But, even so, what does that have to do with our current thought on verse 13? Paul wanted to have some fruit among them when he got there to Rome. Surely, we shouldn't imagine this to have been from the "bad" tree of *knowledge of good and evil* (as is seen in Genesis 2:9), but of the "good" Fruits from the Tree of Life (also seen in Genesis 2:9) – i.e. the "divine nature" of Christ being bestowed upon him from those folks, from their comforting, during

all those trying times of those particular days of persecutions (*see Romans 5:3; 2nd Thessalonians 1:4-5; Ephesians 3:13; and, etc.*). Or, as John Gill had expressed it (which I had listed just above): “*The edification of saints, and the fruitfulness of believers in grace and works.*”

Romans 1:14 I am debtor both to the Greeks, and to the Barbarians; both to the wise, and to the unwise.

As we’ve already covered just above, this small list probably included Greeks, Romans and Jews.

Romans 1:15 So, as much as in me is, I am ready to preach the gospel to you that are at Rome also.

That is, imparting unto them some spiritual gift(s).

Romans 1:16 For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ: for **IT** is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth; to the Jew first, and also to the Greek.

If this is really so (that is, that it’s the Gospel of Jesus Christ being this power of God unto salvation), then we’d best learn of what the true Gospel really is! And, Paul had already been covering it up until this point anyway – even as I had myself have already expressed – which is to be found amongst the “good” Fruits of the Spirit; which, in turn, hangs from that wonderful Tree of Life – of what was first seen in the Paradise/Garden of God way back in Genesis. Of which Tree, by the way, was still going strong and thriving for those Christians in the early church age (“To him that overcometh will I give to eat of the tree of life, which **IS** [presently, during John’s day] in the midst of the paradise of God.” – Revelation 2:7b), just as well as it still survives for us today! The Tree of whose Fruits alone we should devour. A Tree, that is, which Paul was actually speaking of during the first 15 verses of this letter when mentioning the “spiritual gift,” and of the “fruits” . . . When it all boils down to the surface of the matter, what we are seeing is true, Agape Godly Love, one toward another, being this very Gospel of Christ. And, though that simplistic meaning will not satisfy everybody, a deep investigation into the scriptures will reveal, at the end of the day, that that’s what God truly desires from us (*an obtaining of this divine nature* – 2nd Peter 1:4); which will, in turn, help us to gain eternal life . . . *How?* . . . It’s as John the Apostle/Revelator had simply put it – of which declaration is stronger than what most folks may even realize:

1 John 3:14-15 We know that **we have passed from death unto life, because we love the brethren.** He that loveth not *his* brother abideth in death. Whosoever hateth his brother is a murderer: and ye know that no murderer hath eternal life abiding in him.

In a dissecting of these two very important verses, in 1st John, it should reveal to the reader that we are staring right in the face of both the true Gospel of Jesus Christ, and of its effect upon the one who observes this rule in complete submission to it . . . *So, let’s break it down . . .* Passing from death unto life, as one should know (and, as was seen on the very first line of verse 14 in John’s first letter) is an actual, *though spiritual*, resurrection. Yes, I am speaking of an actual resurrection here. For, what else is a resurrection if not a *passing from death unto life*? And, even though one may think me overzealous in overanalyzing this verse (*in them thinking that this is just a poetical expression which simply means that we’re living in the life of God if we observe this rule*), then I ask the reader to consider other areas of scripture that paints such a picture for us, too; and, in also calling this “rule” the actual New Law of life; a law after Christ – rather than the Old Law after Moses from the Old Testament:

Galatians 6:2 Bear ye one another’s burdens [Love one another], and so **fulfil** the law of Christ.

This is not the same law that Moses had presented to the people during the Old Testament; for, the law, at the beginning of the New Testament, had actually *changed*:

Hebrews 7:12 For the priesthood being changed [From Aaron and Levi unto Melchisedec], there is made of necessity a change also of the law.

And, this New Law, as opposed to the Old Law, is based upon, and is designed for an entirely new creature – rather than an old, fleshly creature. That is, instead of being a law designed for an Old,

Outer Man – *such as the Law of Moses was so designed* – this New Law is for a New Man, a new creature:

Romans 7:22 For I delight in the law of God AFTER THE INWARD MAN.

And, in order for us to even obtain such a Law, of such a higher status, then all things must become new – *that is, ourselves!*

2 Corinthians 5:17 Therefore if any man *be* in Christ, *he* is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new.

Which means, basically, that we have to experience an *inner* resurrection, and pass from what we once were into what God intends, now, for us to become – a new creation in Christ! But, the key to it all, and as I've been saying, is living in and practicing this New Law, which says now to love one another, instead of saying an eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth, *etc.*

Romans 13:8b-10 ...love one another: for he that loveth another hath fulfilled the [old] law. For this, Thou shalt not commit adultery, Thou shalt not kill, Thou shalt not steal, Thou shalt not bear false witness, Thou shalt not covet; and if *there be* any other commandment, it is briefly comprehended in this saying, namely, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself. Love worketh no ill to his neighbour: therefore love *is* the fulfilling of the law.

And, if that wasn't enough, then Paul slips into his "*metaphorical language*" to try and describe, much deeper, what he's meaning – right in the very next verse:

Romans 13:11 And that, knowing the time, that now *it is* high time to **awake out of sleep** [this inner resurrection, that is; or, rather, having had been asleep to deep, Godly truths – and, not literally taking a nap; nor even of being actually dead in a graveyard]: for now *is* our salvation nearer than when we [first] believed.

As I had pointed-out during that last quote, we must realize that this "awakening out of sleep" is another description of this spiritual resurrection – *from an Old Man unto a New Man* – a creation that's birthed by God and not from our natural parents; a creation that's no mere philosophy, but is an actual Being who looks like and acts like its Father. Again, not our natural dad, but our *spiritual* Dad, who lives in the heavenly Abode . . . This topic, on the Inward-Man – *that I'm certainly not through dealing with herein* – I am but simply introducing to my readers here in chapter one. Even though I went thoroughly over this New Creature (*as an actual Being*) in my Gospel of John Commentary, I will certainly do so again in here, for it's a very important subject – especially (and, as I had mentioned just a few moments ago) we will see this investigated pointedly in Romans chapter 8; *so, stay tuned!* . . . In the meantime, let's let settle what I've just expressed; and, I'll reveal, step by step, the entire topic of our inner resurrection, unto this actual spiritual Being, as we plod along here in Romans . . . But, before we continue on with verse 17 (*our very next verse to explore here in Romans chapter one*), allow me to quickly repeat verse 16 again first:

Romans 1:16-17 For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ: for IT [and, nothing else] is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth; to the Jew first, and also to the Greek. [17] For therein is the righteousness of God revealed from faith to faith [from an old faith – as was so described in the Old World, the Old Testament – unto a new faith, within the confines of New Testament grace]: as it is written, The just shall live by faith.

Faith is another topic that we'll delve into here, for it can take upon the face of a couple of aspects. Of which, one, can be a person's *doctrinal outlook* upon the scriptures; and, indeed, upon life itself; but, can certainly, also, take upon a person's blind obedience to God's Word, in trying to live everyday life for Him without questioning God's wisdom and purpose. In fact, we'll learn that faith in God is so important, that without it, we can't even please our Lord:

Hebrews 11:6 But without faith *it is* impossible to please *him*: for he that cometh to God must believe that he is, and *that* he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him.

And, we'll even be convicted of sin by not embracing it:

Romans 14:23b ...for whatsoever is not of faith is sin.

However, the expression that Paul had used here in verse 17, “*from faith to faith*,” is quite plain in my opinion – and, of which, he speaks similarly on (*again, in my opinion*) in 2nd Corinthians:

2 Corinthians 3:18 But we all, with open face beholding as in a glass [a mirror] the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image **from glory to glory**, *even* as by the Spirit of the Lord.

Of which complete and full topic (of what 2nd Corinthians is really talking about) I do want to save for my investigations into that other letter by Paul; but, I’ll presently say that I’m seeing a similar subject there as I am seeing here in Romans, verses 16-17, in that in going from faith to faith (as also from glory to glory), that they are both speaking about (*ultimately, that is!*) going from being an Old-Man (whose heyday, really, was during the Old Testament, under that Old Law – *though, in our modern times, it can also reflect us being in a base and carnal man-made religion* – as I’ll also get into during this letter) unto being a New-Man (whose heyday now is during a New Testament Kingdom, under the New Law) . . . Besides, such a thought ties-in perfectly with what I’ve already been talking about anyway – being a continuation of *the cause and effect* of loving one another, the true Gospel of Jesus Christ:

Romans 1:16-17a For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ [loving one another]: for it is the power of God unto salvation [from death unto life] to every one that believeth; to the Jew first, and also to the Greek. For THEREIN [in this Gospel of Love] is the righteousness of God revealed from [an old] faith to [a new] faith...

Again, *from an old faith unto a new faith*; from an Old creature’s naturalistic worship unto a New creature’s spiritual worship – which is yet another topic (*on the worship habits of these two creatures*) that we’ll get into much deeper during chapter 3 here in Romans. But, too (and, I certainly have to point this out – because, I’ll be revisiting this thought even more in this present letter), that just because the “ways” of the Old Testament have *supposedly* disappeared (for, we are now in a New Testament World), much of mankind still embraces the old worship styles (*ritualistically, and naturalistically, that is*) in their modern worship routines – which, in turn, is very reminiscent to the ways of the Old Testament World, in worshipping God in *formality* and *lies* instead of in *Spirit* and *truth* . . . Again, I will get into much greater detail of what I’m meaning in our lesson for Romans chapter 3 . . . But, then, in the last part of verse 17’s message, Paul reveals to us that this is the *lifestyle* that we are to now live-in:

Romans 1:17b ...as it is written, The just shall live by faith.

And, though I may be giving a different slant onto this verse’s meaning (other than what one may have already heard), it really should come as no surprise that this is exactly what God wants for us to do – *to live a lifestyle as a new creation, allowing the ways of the old creation to pass*.

Ephesians 4:22-24 That ye put off concerning the former conversation the old man, which is corrupt according to the deceitful lusts; And be renewed in the spirit of your mind; And that ye put on the new man, which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness.

But, even so, what sort of “faith” is this, then? For, if I am correct in what I’m saying here, then, surely, we’ve gone way-beyond mere “belief” in God’s Word and Ways, right? Well, not really; for, if we “believe” in God, and that He is, then we’ll want to embrace His ways and His Word with all of our might. And, that word tells us to become a new creature in Christ Jesus. And, if we believe that, then we’ll do our part in trying to obtain this. That is, in drawing near to God (and, His ways), so that He, in turn, will draw near unto us (James 4:8); and, then, after that initial drawing, He will then help us with what we’re lacking to obtain all of this.

Matthew 6:33 But seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things [that is, *everything* that we actually need – both in our natural lives, and in our spiritual lives, too] shall be added unto you.

2 Corinthians 5:16-17 Wherefore henceforth know we no man after the flesh [i.e. the “ways” of the Old Man]: yea, though we have known Christ after the flesh [only naturalistically, though

not on deeper spiritual levels as we should have], yet now henceforth know we *him* no more [of He just being a natural man who visited earth (only in the “history”); but, to embrace Him, instead, spiritually (now knowing Him in the “mystery”!). Therefore [and, if we practice this correctly] if any man *be* in Christ, *he* [too] is a **new creature**: old things are passed away [including the Old Man’s ways]; behold, all things are become new.

END OF 1st CHAPTER’S SAMPLE...

Paul’s Letter to the Romans, Chapter 2

With my own thoughts [in brackets] inserted into original scriptures.

Romans 2:1 Therefore thou art inexcusable, O man, whosoever thou art that judgest: for wherein thou judgest another, thou condemnest thyself; for thou that judgest doest the same things.

Once more, and as I had already covered in chapter 1 of Romans, mankind has absolutely no excuse for the things that they carnally do – especially in trying to blame some supernatural, evil Being called the devil or satan! – but, should, instead, own-up to the evil things that they do themselves, and repent. And, not only, but not to do the “*blame-shift game*,” either – such as Adam and Eve had done to keep their crime from sticking to their own-selves.

Genesis 3:11b-13 ...Hast thou eaten of the tree, whereof I commanded thee that thou shouldest not eat? And the man said, The woman whom thou gavest *to be* with me, she gave me of the tree, and I did eat. And the LORD God said unto the woman, What *is* this *that* thou hast done? And the woman said, The serpent beguiled me, and I did eat.

Again, *the devil made me do it!* . . . Romans 2:1 even extends on-over to judging another person unrighteously, too.

John 7:24 Judge not according to the appearance, but judge righteous judgment.

For, when we try and consider what is even a righteous judgement, we shouldn’t try and figure it out with the carnal thinking of man – for, we will always be in the wrong if we do so:

Romans 8:6-7 For to be carnally minded *is* death; but to be spiritually minded *is* life and peace. Because the carnal mind *is* enmity [hostilely opposed] against God: for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be.

So, then, until we “know” that we are overcomers (away from unrighteous judgments against others), it’s really best not to judge others at all with our sharp tongues.

James 3:5-6 Even so the tongue is a little member, and boasteth great things. Behold, how great a matter a little fire kindleth! And the tongue *is* a fire, a world of iniquity: so is the tongue among our members, that it defileth the whole body, and setteth on fire the course of nature; and it is set on fire of hell.

Also see Romans 3:13; James 1:26; 3:8; 1st Peter 3:10; and, etc.

Matthew 7:1-5 Judge not, that ye be not judged. For with what judgment ye judge, ye shall be judged: and with what measure ye mete, it shall be measured to you again. And why beholdest thou the mote that is in thy brother’s eye, but considerest not the beam that is in thine own eye? Or how wilt thou say to thy brother, Let me pull out the mote out of thine eye; and, behold, a beam *is* in thine own eye? Thou hypocrite, first cast out the beam out of thine own eye; and then shalt thou see clearly to cast out the mote out of thy brother’s eye.

However, when it all boils down to the bottom of the kettle, the best judgment at the end of the day (of how to “properly” judge others) is to simply live the right lifestyles ourselves; and, by doing so (being a goodly example for others to follow), you’ll notice that you are judging others without even having to

open your mouth; for, in just one sense, folks can even feel convicted by you not participating in their ways . . . But, by accusingly pointing fingers at folks, of whom you feel are unjust or are in the wrong, it doesn't help an already bad situation. And, you better believe that God told you to judge another harshly before attempting to do so.

Titus 3:2-7 To speak evil of no man, to be no brawlers, *but* gentle, shewing all meekness unto all men. For we ourselves also were sometimes foolish, disobedient, deceived, serving divers lusts and pleasures, living in malice and envy, hateful, *and* hating one another. But after that the kindness and love of God our Saviour toward man appeared, Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to his mercy he saved us, by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost; Which he shed on us abundantly through Jesus Christ our Saviour; That being justified by his grace, we should be made heirs according to the hope of eternal life.

But, if one DOES feel that they were commissioned by the Lord to say such and such to another person, in correction and judgment, about what they may not be doing correctly (*and, I'm certainly not suggesting that that can't happen!*), then we must be prepared to do so with kindness as a loving parent:

Ephesians 4:31-32 Let all bitterness, and wrath, and anger, and clamour, and evil speaking, be put away from you, with all malice: And be ye kind one to another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, even as God for Christ's sake hath forgiven you.

Again, we must be sure that God had commissioned us to do so before we ever dare open our mouths.

Ecclesiastes 5:1-2 Keep thy foot when thou goest to the house of God [i.e. in His presence in general!], and be more ready to hear, than to give the sacrifice of fools [by speaking foolishly, without Godly commission]: for they consider not that they do evil. Be not rash with thy mouth, and let not thine heart be hasty to utter *any* thing before God: for God *is* in heaven, and thou upon earth: therefore let thy words be few.

Proverbs 14:12 [also, Proverbs 16:25] There is a way which seemeth right unto a man, but the end thereof *are* the ways of death.

Proverbs 21:2 Every way of a man *is* right in his own eyes: but the LORD pondereth [weighs in the balance] the hearts [of mankind].

Romans 2:2-4 But we are sure that the judgment of God is according to truth against them which commit such things. And thinkest thou this, O man, that judgest them which do such things, and doest the same, that thou shalt escape the judgment of God? Or despisest thou the riches of his goodness and forbearance and longsuffering; not knowing that the goodness of God leadeth thee to repentance?

As everyone should know, repenting doesn't simply mean saying that you are sorry for the bad that you've done; but means, actually, that you have really "changed" from your wicked or evil ways, and will not repeat the offense in the future.

Repentance/Metanoia (met-an'-oy-ah), G3341, from Strong's Greek Dictionary: From G3340; (subjectively) compunction [feeling "actual" guilt for wrong doings] (for guilt, including reformation [i.e. to make "actual" changes]); by implication reversal (of [another's] decision): - repentance.

Many folks do not understand this simple meaning; but, and like the folks of the Old Testament, are willing to substitute their crimes with a "scapegoat" (a *false* substitute) for their wrong-doings; which, in the Old Testament, was an animal sacrifice – of which did NOT bring repentance to the user:

Hebrews 9:8c-9 ...as the first [literal] tabernacle [Temple] was yet standing: Which *was* [only] a figure [a metaphoric, though literal representation] for the time then present, in which were offered both gifts and sacrifices [literally, and naturally], that COULD NOT make him that did the service perfect [nor an overcomer], as pertaining to the conscience.

Once the sacrifice and oblation had ceased (because the natural building [the Jerusalem Temple – and, as history attests to] which had housed such literal, naturalistic sacrifices was finally torn-down by Roman forces in AD 70), there therefore remained no more literal sacrifices for sins...

Hebrews 10:26b ...there remaineth no more sacrifice for sins.

The tearing down of that natural Temple, I say, was a bold declaration to the entire world that God not only stopped dwelling in Temples made by man's hands (Acts 7:48 and Acts 17:24 – *as I had already illustrated in the dialog on John's Gospel*), but, too, that there now remains no more sacrifices for our sins. Meaning, specifically, that if we now sin willfully, we shall be "*chastised*" by God for our wrong doings, instead of us bringing some "scapegoat" to appease God for our crimes.

Hebrews 10:26 For if we sin wilfully after that we have received the knowledge of the truth, there remaineth no more sacrifice for sins.

Again, the scapegoat in the Old Testament were literal animals being sacrificed, but today the scapegoat is usually, and simply, saying that we're sorry for what we've done (whether in "*some*" earnest, just half-heartedly, or in feeling nothing at all [1st Timothy 4:2b "...having their conscience seared with a hot iron"]) – and, with a complete misunderstanding of what *true* repentance is really about; for (*and, even though God DOES want us to be sorry for what we've done wrong; or, rather, haven't been doing right*), God is more interested in us completely changing from what we were, and in totally learning our lesson (again, *completely* changing), so that we don't repeat any such crimes ever again. For, by changing, we prove that we truly feel bad for the wrong doing.

Hebrews 12:5b-13 ...My son, despise not thou the chastening of the Lord, nor faint when thou art rebuked of him: For whom the Lord loveth he chasteneth, and scourgeth every son whom he receiveth. If ye endure chastening, God dealeth with you as with sons; for what son is he whom the father chasteneth not? But if ye be without chastisement, whereof all are partakers, then are ye bastards, and not sons. Furthermore we have had fathers of our flesh which corrected *us*, and we gave *them* reverence: shall we not much rather be in subjection unto the Father of spirits, and live? For they verily for a few days chastened *us* after their own pleasure; but he for *our* profit, that *we* might be partakers of his holiness. Now no chastening for the present seemeth to be joyous, but grievous: nevertheless afterward it yieldeth the peaceable fruit of righteousness unto them which are exercised thereby. Wherefore lift up the hands which hang down, and the feeble knees; And make straight paths for your feet, lest that which is lame be turned out of the way; but let it rather be healed.

Romans 2:5-6 But after thy hardness and impenitent heart treasurest up unto thyself wrath against **the day of wrath** and revelation of the righteous judgment of God; Who will render to every man according to his deeds.

Many may see this "day of wrath" (i.e. a *single* day of wrath) to be way-off into our future; but, that's not the only way one can look upon this statement by Paul. Actually, and in continuance of our current topic (of us, as Christians, either changing from our old ways, or in us NOT changing from our old carnal, evil ways) it may even make more sense to say that this "day of wrath" (or, rather, the "*days*," plural – as I'm fixing to show) could very well be for us "personally" the days in which God is actually correcting us (chastising us) for what we're not doing right; or, in not living the correct lifestyle that God wishes for all of His children to live; of when God's wrath is set-hard upon us in these corrections – which "*afflictions*" can range from either being light, or of being very heavy. Again, I say "*days*," instead of any single day, for even the original Greek meaning, for our word *day* in this verse, denotes that it can mean either a single day, or even multiple days – such as a *period of time*; or, years; even an entire *age* – depending, it continues, on the context of the verse or verses. Let's take a look:

*Day/Hēmera (hay-mer'-ah), G2250, from Strong's Greek Dictionary: ...day, that is, (literally) the time space between dawn and dark, or **the whole 24 hours** (but several days were usually reckoned by the Jews as inclusive of the parts of both extremes); figuratively a period (always defined more or less clearly by the context): - age, + alway, (mid-) day (by day, [-ly]), + for ever, **judgment**, (day) time, while, **years**.*

So, we can be just as justified in saying “days” of wrath as easily as one could say “day” of wrath. For, in just a moment, I will explain my take on such as to being God’s afflictions toward us, in our personal trials and tribulations, so that we can learn of His ways and commandments ‘presently’ – *certainly not He being mean to us!* – but, in corrections for our education and benefit (‘these’ days of His wrath, in His chastisements toward us). But, first of all, I wanted to further explain that just because someone believes in a future judgment day for Christians, we have to also consider that God is judging the righteous right here and now as well (see Psalms 7:11a); because, in order for us to receive any corrections *presently*, we first have to have been judged in the wrong before any corrections from God can come against us – *else, He’s just chastising us for nonsensical reasons.*

Hebrews 12:11 Now no chastening **FOR THE PRESENT** [right here and now] seemeth to be joyous, but grievous: nevertheless afterward it yieldeth the peaceable fruit of righteousness unto them which are exercised thereby.

But, as I’ve said (*and, as Paul confirms here in Hebrews 12:11*), such “afflictions” from God (in these trials and tribulations that we go through) is for our *current* education and growth.

Hebrews 12:6 For whom the Lord loveth he **chasteneth**, and **scourgeth** every son whom he receiveth.

Chasteneth/Paideuō (pahee-dyoo'-o), G3811, Strong’s Greek Dictionary: From G3816; to train up a child, that is, educate, or (by implication) discipline (by punishment): - chasten (-ise), instruct, learn, teach.

Scourgeth/Mastigoō (mas-tig-o'-o), G3146, Strong’s Greek Dictionary: From G3148; TO FLOG (literally or figuratively): - scourge.

Now, let’s watch this unfold in the Bible itself:

Psalms 119:71 *It is good for me that I have been afflicted; that I might learn thy statutes [commandments].*

Surely, it wasn’t good for David to have been afflicted by the *devil* in order to learn of the devil’s statutes. This had to have been God afflicting him. *But why?* Well, let’s continue:

Psalms 119:65-68 TETH. Thou hast dealt well with thy servant, O LORD [not satan!], according unto thy word. Teach me good judgment and knowledge: for I have believed thy commandments. **Before I was afflicted I went astray: but now have I kept thy word** [this, by the way, is why we are afflicted by the Lord (*i.e. corrected by chastisements*) – to stay on the right path]. Thou *art* good, and doest good; teach me thy statutes. [73] JOD. Thy hands have made me and fashioned me [through these afflictions upon the potter’s wheel – see Jeremiah 18:6]: give me understanding, that I may learn thy commandments. They that fear thee will be glad when they see me; because I have hoped in thy word. I know, O LORD, that thy judgments *are* right, **and that thou in faithfulness hast afflicted me.**

Again, these are the trials and tribulations that God Himself places onto us for our education and growth – *not for our misery*. We simply must do good and be good, and we shall overcome these judgmental afflictions. But, again, He’s correcting us for not being obedient children. For, even Jesus Himself had to learn obedience by the things that He had suffered at the hands of His father:

Hebrews 5:8 Though he [Jesus] were a Son [of the Father God], yet learned he obedience by the things which he suffered [again, from the hand of the Father].

Isaiah 53:4 Surely he [Jesus] hath borne our griefs, and carried our sorrows: yet we did esteem him stricken, smitten of God [smitten by His own Father], and **afflicted**.

And, if Jesus was afflicted and had suffered for corrections and obedience, *then how can we escape them?*

Romans 8:32a He [the Father] that spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all...

Delivered Him up, *how?* To suffer the passion on the cross. *How great of an affliction was that?* It's almost as if, in all our own afflictions, that we are truly partaking of the *fellowship of His sufferings*:

Philippians 3:10 That I may know him, and the power of his resurrection, and **the fellowship of his sufferings**, being made conformable unto his death.

But, can we truly justify our own afflictions (*which are extremely light, by the way, compared to the sufferings on the cross*) as to being the fellowship of *His* sufferings? Indeed, we can! If we consider ourselves servants of God, and if we consider ourselves followers of His Word, if we are at least trying, I say, to keep His statutes, then surely the things that come-up against us, which tests us (these things that have power over us – no matter if they are heavy or light), are things ordained by God Himself, who does these things to strengthen us, not to tear us apart . . . *Do all such things really have power over us which tests us?* Yes, for Paul is very direct, later-on here in Romans, in that the **ONLY** power-source in existence is God. *Not any other evil Beings; not the devil; not a serpent; not demons...*

Romans 13:1 Let every soul be subject unto the higher powers. For there is **NO** power but of God: the powers that be [any other power] are ordained of God.

Let verse 1 of Romans chapter 13 sink in a bit . . . *What exactly are the higher powers?* But, more importantly, we must digest the second and third parts of that passage: "there is **NO** power but of God: the powers that be are ordained of God." This, of course, will also depend on our interpretation of how much power God has over this universe, this planet, and over our very lives:

Psalms 46:7-10 The LORD of hosts is with us; the God of Jacob is our refuge. Selah. Come, behold the works of the LORD, what desolations he hath made in the earth. He maketh wars to cease unto the end of the earth; he breaketh the bow, and cutteth the spear in sunder; he burneth the chariot in the fire. Be still, and know that I *am* God: I will be exalted among the heathen, I will be exalted in the earth.

All of which would explain precisely of why satan, in the book of Job, had to get permission from God before he could even lay a finger on Job:

Job 1:12 And the LORD said unto Satan, Behold, all that he [Job] hath is in thy power; only upon himself put not forth thine hand [that is, don't kill him!]. So Satan went forth from the presence of the LORD [to do what God had allowed him to do unto Job].

Unless we should say, rather, that satan even has influence over God, and that he's so powerful that he can entice God to allow evil to prevail against His children . . . However, and in Job knowing the truth of the matter, he's precise in whom he placed responsibility on for his afflicting woes of corrections:

Job 2:10b ...shall we receive good at the hand of God, and shall we not receive evil?...

That is, if we can receive good from God's hands, can we not also receive evil from God's hands, too? And, all of this in corrections, and of learning obedience to Him and His ways . . . But, if Job really meant it that way (in the way that I just explained), then wouldn't a saying such as that upset God? That is, in "accusing" God of placing evil upon him, just as he says that God gives them goodness as well? *Nay*; for the narrative continues, thus:

Job 2:10c ...In all this did NOT Job sin with his lips.

And, then, later-on, Job even confessed that...

Job 13:15a Though he slay me, yet will I trust in him...

Who was slaying Him? Satan? So that he could trust in satan? . . . No, but God! . . . And, let's also consider these verses:

John 19:10-11a Then saith Pilate unto him [unto Jesus], Speakest thou not unto me? knowest thou not that I have **POWER** to crucify thee, and have **POWER** to release thee? Jesus answered,

Thou couldest have no power *at all* against me, except it were given thee from above [given to him by the Father God]...

All this should help to prove to us that there is no true power other than God; in that He's not only the ultimate power-source, but that anybody or anything who has any power to do as they are doing, that they had to have been ordained by God in the first place to have such power. *Hence, Paul's words in Hebrews:*

Romans 13:1 Let every soul be subject unto the higher powers. For there is **NO** power but of God: the powers that be [any other power] are ordained of God.

So, we are to be subject to evilness in general, then? No; but subject, rather, to God's corrections over our lives, in helping us to become better people for Him and for others around us . . . This vast subject (*of which I just got through opening a huge can of worms by simply mentioning*), I'm actually not done with in just this quick explanation. For, in Paul's writings, we'll continue to see examples of God's mysterious power; for by it, we discover that He can even be in control over evil spirits...

1 Kings 22:21-22 And there came forth a spirit, and stood before the LORD, and said, I will persuade him. And the LORD said unto him, Wherewith? And he said, I will go forth, and I will be a lying spirit in the mouth of all his prophets. And he [the Lord] said, Thou shalt persuade *him*, and prevail also: go forth, and do so.

But verse 23 is adamant in telling us of whom was responsible for this lying spirit to begin with:

1 Kings 22:23 Now therefore, behold, **THE LORD** HATH PUT A LYING SPIRIT IN THE MOUTH OF ALL THESE THY PROPHETS, and **THE LORD** hath spoken evil concerning thee.

And, too, God was responsible for other similar situations in the scriptures as well. For instance:

1 Samuel 16:14 But the Spirit of the LORD departed from Saul, **and an evil spirit FROM THE LORD troubled him.**

And, then:

Exodus 9:12a And **THE LORD** [Himself had] hardened the heart of Pharaoh...

That is, to not let the children of Israel flee Egypt, or to flee from their bondage.

Poor Man's Commentary by Robert Hawker ... Observe the change of expression. Upon several instances before, it is said that Pharaoh hardened his own heart: but here it is said, that the Lord hardened it.

Of which thought is also seen in Exodus 10:20; 10:27; 11:10; and 14:8 . . . But, let's continue:

Proverbs 21:1 The king's heart is in the hand of the LORD, as the rivers of water: he turneth it whithersoever he will.

Geneva Bible Translation Notes (published in 1599; public domain): Though kings seem to have all things at commandment, they are not able to bring their own purposes to pass unless God has appointed: much less are the inferiors able.

Psalms 115:3 But our God is in the heavens: he hath done whatsoever HE hath pleased.

However, I say not all these things to scare the reader, but to show how much control God has over this universe, over this planet, and over our entire lives. For, we being His children, we don't even have control over our own paths – *all of which are ordained by God Himself:*

1 Corinthians 6:19-20 What? know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost *which* is in you, which ye have of God, **AND YE ARE NOT YOUR OWN? FOR YE ARE**

BOUGHT WITH A PRICE: therefore glorify God in your body, and in your spirit, which are God's.

The People's New Testament (published 1889, public domain) ... The fact that we are his, purchased, parts of his spiritual temple, makes the obligation imperative to consecrate the body and spirit to his service.

John Wesley's Explanatory Notes ... And even your body is not, strictly speaking, your own, even this is the temple of the Holy Ghost - Dedicated to him, and inhabited by him.

Albert Barnes Notes on the Bible ... We are bound, therefore, to devote ourselves, body, soul, and spirit, as he directs, to the glory of his name, not to the gratification of the flesh.

The Biblical Illustrator, by Joseph S. Exell (published in 1900; public domain) ... To be "our own" is our very greatest ambition. To be our own masters, that is nature . . . God has been pleased so to order it, that no man can truly say, "I am my own"; "Know ye not that to whom ye yield yourselves servants to obey, his servants ye are," &c . . . Of all the happy conditions upon earth, the happiest is to give up the whole heart to an authority which the whole heart can quite love and respect . . . God's property in you: A father has a right to his child, but God has done more than made you His child, for He has given you the spirit of a child, to cry "Abba Father." . . . Christ has more than a right to His body, being the Head, and we all members in particular; so that each condition of life teaches us with one common voice, "Ye are not your own."

Let's also consider this verse:

Proverbs 20:24 Man's goings are of the LORD; how can a man then understand his own way?

Albert Barnes Notes on the Bible ... The order of a man's life is a mystery even to himself. He knows not where he is going, or for what God is educating him.

John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible ... The act of motion from place to place is not without the concurrence of his providence; as in him we live, and move, and have our being, so "in and by him we move"; he preserves our going out and coming in; and as the preservation, so the success and prosperity of journeying are owing to his providence, and the whole is under his care and direction.

To a dedicated Christian, *why should any of that bother us?* For, either God has control over everything, or He doesn't. He's either all powerful, or He's not . . . In fact, it would certainly be scarier to think that He's NOT in control of everything. And, yet (*and, as I well know*), such a thought causes many confusing questions of why God even allows bad things to happen. Well, from my own experience, I can tell you for certain that NOTHING is hopeless for us in this world; and that, despite there being evil (even when we can't understand it in all of its varied forms), that God will never allow His children to do without what they actually need . . . However, and despite all the things that I've said thus far, I don't want to be mistaken in folks thinking that I'm blaming all evil things on God – which I'm certainly not! For, my speech has been quite solid on God's trials and tribulations and afflictions that He sends us through for educational purposes. But, and as for the usage of evil in this world, that's an entirely different subject matter; which, I'll actually touch-on a little bit later-on during this very chapter (chapter 2) where I'll go-over this subject even more deeply than I'm doing now, and will explain that it's man himself who is the "inventor of evil things," as Paul had so amply stated it in Romans 1:30 – which is very important for us to understand – in that God is not the distributor of sin, even if He did create evil in the first place, as Isaiah had so boldly declared in verse 7 of chapter 45 of his book – as we'll also go-over in just a bit . . . But, and in consideration of even if we are broken-down in life, or even beaten, we should never believe that we are forsaken, nor left alone.

Romans 8:35-39 Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? *shall* tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword? As it is written, For thy sake we are killed all the day long; we are accounted as sheep for the slaughter. Nay, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him that loved us. For I am persuaded, that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to

come, Nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.

God will NEVER leave us nor forsake us; and, His Love is an undying and endless Love.

2 Corinthians 4:8-11 *We are* troubled on every side, yet not distressed; *we are* perplexed, but not in despair; Persecuted, but not forsaken; cast down, but not destroyed; Always bearing about in the body the dying of the Lord Jesus, that the life also of Jesus might be made manifest in our body. For we which live are always delivered unto death for Jesus' sake, that the life also of Jesus might be made manifest in our mortal flesh.

Our only concern is for us to do our expected duty:

Matthew 6:33 But seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things [what we actually need for our livelihood] shall be added unto you.

That is, by sacrificing our life to God. *Not literally!* But, in giving-up our past, carnal ways of this ungodly world, and to embrace God's Kingdom with all of our might instead:

Romans 12:1-2 I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, *which is* your reasonable service. And be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God.

Therefore, if all I've been saying about God taking us through these trials and tribulations is really true, then why would it be surprising for me to say that He will conduct our "corrections" (through any means of tribulations) in the way, or ways, that He sees fit?

Romans 9:20-21 Nay but, O man, who art thou that repliest against God? Shall the thing formed say to him that formed *it*, Why hast thou made me thus? Hath not the potter power over the clay, of the same lump to make one vessel unto honour, and another unto dishonour?

Now, having said all this, let's repeat verses 5-6, and see if what I've said fits in:

Romans 2:5-6 But after [or, because of] thy hardness and impenitent heart [you will then] treasurest up unto thyself wrath [severe dealings toward you from God] against the day of wrath [during which He will deliver corrections toward you that best fits your crimes] and [of which will be the] revelation [revealing from God toward us] of the righteous judgment of God [against our wrong doings]; Who will render to every man according to his deeds.

I will once again say that this "*day*" of wrath (as many see it to be in the distant or near future) to be just as easily seen to be here and now, in our own personal days of "corrections" from God's wrath against our wrong-doings, during our present trials and tribulations; for, and as I'm going to show (*again, during this chapter*), that there is a limitation of who is even going to participate in this/those day(s) of wrath, because I don't see any of the ungodly heathens even being in it! It being, instead, something that's reserved only for those who have come into God's Kingdom. And, though that saying may seem strange to some, this will be seen by the dissecting of scripture – not just speculation. *So, stay tuned!*

Romans 2:7-9 [But] To them who by patient continuance [having great patience] in well doing [doing good, and being good; they can actually] seek for glory and honour and immortality, eternal life: But unto them that are contentious, and do not obey the truth, but obey unrighteousness, indignation and wrath, [will instead suffer] Tribulation [and trials] and anguish, upon **every soul of man** that doeth evil, of the Jew first, and also of the Gentile.

In verse 9, I'm actually wanting (momentarily at least) to break-away from what we've already went-over (*when we spoke on God's judgements toward those in His Kingdom, and of our trials and tribulations when we aren't doing righteously therein*) to speak quickly on Paul's statement of "*every soul of man*," here from verse 9. For, I do not believe that this is speaking about every person upon the face of the earth – of both the Godly and of the ungodly – but, instead, I feel that he's speaking about

“every soul of man *within God’s Kingdom*,” as I had spoke-on during Romans chapter 1, concerning those terrible folks on which he had ended that chapter – namely those who held the truth in unrighteousness (*again, see Romans 1:18 on-down*), in that he was *not* speaking about every person on earth with his statements there, but rather toward those who “knew” God – as in a *personal* way – and, not just “knew *of*” God, as in an “impersonal” way. “Because [and, as Romans 1:19 continued to say] that which may be known of God is manifest in them; for God hath shewed *it* unto them.” And, so, I feel the same way about these folks here in Romans 2:9, too – *keeping the topic within context*. For, as one can plainly see, once Paul began his subject in chapter 1, then chapter 2 picks-up on that same theme and continues-on with it; for, and as everybody who reads their Bibles should know, chapter divisions were NOT in Paul’s original letters (nor in any other book of the Bible, for that matter), but were later added-in by the translators to try and give all of us some study helps. And, though it does help on many occasions, it can, too, hinder our researches if we rely upon them as a part of God-breathed scriptures, in thinking that when we see a chapter stop, that that automatically means that the subject had changed too. Which, it doesn’t always do so; though on occasion, it does . . . Now, I’m going to go ahead and throw a huge chunk of meat out onto the floor with my next statement, and see if I can but make any sense to the reader with it – for, and before I can really continue-on with our letter to the Romans, it’ll be very helpful to see where I’ll be heading with my understandings. Not only here in Romans, though, but, too, in Paul’s other letters . . . *Ready for this?* . . . I do NOT believe that the ungodly heathens will be in the ultimate, future judgment of God; or, and as the Bible actually states it – *as I’m fixing to show* – that they will not *stand* in the judgment of God . . . Now, let that statement sink in for just a moment . . . But, before getting upset with such a declaration, or to toss this book quickly upon the ground, please allow me to explain my position . . . Let’s first consider these two verses:

Psalms 1:5a Therefore the ungodly **shall not stand** in the judgment...

If that’s really true (*if I am even understanding those words correctly*), then who shall be judged?

Psalms 7:11a God judgeth the righteous...

Again, those who are actually within His Kingdom (the righteous – but, also [*and, perhaps more especially*] those who hold the truth in unrighteousness; again, see Romans 1:18), but not those who are on the “outside” of His Kingdom . . . But, perhaps instead, Psalms 1:5a merely meant *that they will be on their knees!* So, that’s why they won’t stand . . . Well, I’m not sure if strict literalism is really needed here. However, the Hebrew word for “stand” in this verse is actually too complicated of a word to really try and pinpoint a specific meaning with this single verse. *Observe:*

Stand/Qûm (koom), H6965, from Strong’s Hebrew Dictionary: A primitive root; to rise (in various applications, literally, figuratively, intensively and causatively): - abide, accomplish, X be clearer, confirm, continue, decree, X be dim, endure, X enemy, enjoin, get up, make good, help, hold, (help to) lift up (again), make, X but newly, ordain, perform, pitch, raise (up), rear (up), remain, (a-) rise (up) (again, against), rouse up, set (up), (e-) stablish, (make to) stand (up), stir up, strengthen, succeed, (as-, make) sure (-ly), (be) up (-hold, -rising).

With such a wide variety of meanings, it’s, again, hard to pinpoint specifics with this one verse. But, and even though one may think that I am over-simplifying this, perhaps, with a “modern” interpretation – *in that I’m saying that they won’t “participate” in the judgment* – I believe we’ll actually have to seek other verses in the Bible as a help to this situation. In fact, over at <https://biblehub.com/psalms/1-5.htm>, when comparing at least 27 Bible versions with each other, most of them actually repeat what the King James Bible had said: “The ungodly **shall not stand** in the judgment.” Though other, more modern versions, seem to “spiff” it up a bit more, by saying things like:

New Living Translation (AD 1996): “Sinners will have no place among the godly.”

Amplified Bible (AD 1965): “Therefore the wicked will not stand [unpunished] in the judgment.” [Actually adding-in the word “unpunished” into the biblical text – but, fortunately, within brackets to show that that word wasn’t in the original text.]

Holman Christian Standard Bible (AD 1999): “Therefore the wicked will not survive the judgment.”

Contemporary English Version (AD 2000): “Sinners won't have an excuse on the day of judgment.”

And, *etc* . . . But, are they really justified in updating the wording thus from the King James Version, who had translated our word as “*stand*” over 400 years ago? . . . Actually, in the verse just above this one, in verse 4, the message really seems to indicate that the ungodly will simply vanish-away like the wind:

Psalms 1:4b-5a The ungodly . . . *are* like the chaff which the wind driveth away. Therefore [and, because of this] the ungodly shall not stand in the judgment...

Reading these two verses together (and, in consideration of my own suggestion), it really seems more plausible to say that because they end-up vanishing like this wind, or being whisked-away like a puff of smoke, that they won't be around to be judged later-on by anybody. *But yet, otherwise, once they are driven away, like a mere puff of smoke, they'll suddenly reappear for a future judgment?* . . . Even though one would expect all commentaries to be contrary to my own thinking (for, it's very popular to believe that the ungodly heathens *will* be judged and punished one day, way-off into the future), I did surprisingly find amongst them this thought, concerning the verbiage: “the ungodly shall not stand in the judgment...”

Albert Barnes' Notes on the Bible: The idea seems to be derived from the act of standing up to be tried, or to receive a sentence.

That is, and as I've said myself, to not even be in the judgement to begin with. But, even if Albert Barnes may not have meant exactly what I am meaning with his words, there's still the possibility that he really did see it this way, in that the ungodly certainly won't escape death, but that they will escape some sort of a trial at the end of times . . . Such sayings as mine would perhaps make others scratch their heads in disbelief, if in consideration to this other scripture by Paul:

Hebrews 9:27 And as it is appointed unto men once to die, but after this the judgment.

Reading this, of course, in a strict, literal sense, in saying that once a person “physically” dies, then they'll be expected to attend some futuristic trial. However, that's not the only way that somebody could read this verse. In fact (and, again, in keeping all this within context), in the verse just above Hebrews 9:27, it speaks of a very specific event, which certainly had occurred – *not in the distant future* – but historically in the past:

Hebrews 9:26b ...but now once in the end of the world hath he appeared to put away sin by the sacrifice of himself.

Again, this is *not* way-off into the future, for Jesus will never suffer the passion of the cross again; but, Paul was speaking strictly of the past, of when Jesus did die on the cross, and of what that means, presently, for our own salvation. For, first of all, and as we should remember going over this verse during John's Gospel (when I was speaking about “biblical language” – in that such verses shouldn't be read so literally), we see that Paul called such a historical event (again, of Jesus dying on the cross) the “end of the world.” (Hebrews 9:26b) And, Paul no more meant that literally being the end of the planet earth than that he expected his reading audience to understand that the judgement commences directly after our literal, physical death; but actually commences, instead, after we “*die-out*” to this ungodly world, just before we enter-on into His present Kingdom (or, rather, into His “church-world”). That is, in a beginning of the “crucifying” of our old-selves upon our own “*metaphorical*” cross:

Romans 12:1 I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, **that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice** [again, “metaphorically,” but not “literally” – which is why he called it a “living” sacrifice], holy, acceptable unto God, *which* is your reasonable service.

Or, again, beginning our “dying-out” process away from this ungodly, heathenistic world . . . Then, as a follow-up thought (and, in explaining what he had actually meant “*allegorically*”), Paul finishes up with this:

Romans 12:2 And be not conformed to this world [of either this ‘ungodly-heathen’ world; or, even, of man’s ‘religious’ world]: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God.

Again, not a literal sacrifice of our literal bodies, but of a “spiritual” sacrifice upon our own metaphorical crosses; for, and as I am contending here (with our verses in Hebrews chapter 9 – and, as we can also see elsewhere, too), the scriptures are no stranger (*especially in Paul’s letters*) in speaking about several types of deaths. That is, not just “*physical*” deaths, but of “*spiritual*” deaths, too:

Colossians 3:3 For YE ARE DEAD [presently, while you yet physically live], and your life is hid with Christ in God.

1 Corinthians 15:31b ...I die daily.

Romans 6:2b ...How shall we, that are DEAD TO SIN, live any longer therein?

Romans 6:4a Therefore WE ARE BURIED with him by baptism INTO DEATH...

Romans 6:11a Likewise RECKON YE ALSO YOURSELVES TO BE DEAD indeed unto sin...

Romans 7:6a But now we are delivered from the law, that BEING DEAD wherein we were held...

Galatians 2:19 For I through the law AM DEAD to the law, that I might live unto God.

Etc., etc., etc. Again, “*biblical language*” being deciphered. For, in knowing how Paul phrases himself on many occasions, should we always take that same route in reading his words in every verse? *That is, in always reading him so literally?* In fact (and, in running back to our original topic), all this actually ties-in perfectly with what we’ve already discussed during chapter 1 and the beginning of chapter 2, here in Romans, and of our own personal judgement from God – who is “*presently*” judging us when He corrects and chastises us with His trials and tribulations toward us, and of us learning obedience with the things that we are presently suffering. Therefore, I say again, that I rather see Paul saying that once we are dead in Christ (having just come-out of the ungodly, heathen world), then our own personal judgments from God begin. The righteous being judged *presently*. Because, once we find ourselves within God’s Kingdom, He’s going to expect us (once we die-out to what we once were) to start behaving like decent children. But, if not (*of which our old, carnal natures certainly won’t allow*), then we’ll be judged unjust, and then be “*presently*” chastised for our crimes . . . And, I believe, even in the very next verse (*again being “metaphorically” understood*), that he actually continues the dialog in the very same manner:

Hebrews 9:28 So Christ was once offered to bear the sins of many; and unto them that look for him shall he appear the second time without sin unto salvation.

Here, we are seeing the crucifixion being spoken on – *but, both in the natural and in the spiritual sense*; that is, in a comparison of one crucifixion to another; for, and just as Jesus had literally died upon a literal cross (*historically*), then we (*in a spiritual mystery*) will also put our Old Man to death – but, not literally this time, but closer to being “*symbolically*” done. And, yet, not really in “*symbols*,” but actually in reality; for, our own “*crucifixion process*” begins with the birth of our Inward-Man (of which “*crucifixion process*,” surely, does NOT happen for us overnight – *because, we are in a constant war with that Old Man whilst still living here upon this earth*) . . . Again, Hebrews 9:28 is speaking of two different kinds of crucifixions – Jesus’ literal example; and, then, of our own crucifixion (*spiritually*), when we begin killing that old, evil man: our own carnal natures . . . *Let’s see that again:*

Hebrews 9:28 So [Jesus] Christ was once offered to bear the sins of many [literally upon the cross in approximately AD 30]; and unto them that look for him [coming into their hearts “*spiritually*,” via the Holy Ghost] shall he appear [in the form of the Inward-Man – God’s birthed-son inside of us] the second time [a second appearing of Jesus, but NOT the man Jesus

who was here 2,000 years ago; but, again, of the Inward-Man; who will be – “ourselves” will be...] without sin unto salvation.

This is speaking of what Paul had spoken-on beginning in verse 26b, in that Jesus had died on the cross to put away sin by the sacrifice of Himself. But, then, he also expressed what that *inwardly* means for us, and for our own personal walk with God . . . But, even though Jesus bore the sins of many upon that cross, we STILL aren't without our faults. But, since He took the place of the scapegoat (that is, in taking the place of all those animals being sacrificed for sins during the Old Testament – *which could not actually appease God for all the crimes committed, nor could actually take-aways sins*), Jesus placed a permanent stop to the necessity of animal sacrifices by dying as a sacrifice Himself (becoming the *ultimate* scapegoat). Then, once He did die, and once the sin offering of an animal was taken away from the people, there would be no more sacrifices for sins, and the guilty would have to (instead of bringing some animal to be sacrificed for their sin), they would have to “serve time” for what they are doing wrong by being judged by God as to having committed crimes, and the punishment for it would be *chastisements, corrections, trials, and tribulations*. For, again, once a person dies-out to what they once were in the ungodly world (for, one must die before life can even come unto them afterward – John 12:24), they will then enter into the judgements and corrections of God . . . So, with all that in mind, please allow me to repeat these verses, but with more of my own thoughts inserted into the text; and, let's do so by keeping all of this within the context of a single subject; and, also, by beginning a bit higher in the verses:

Hebrews 9:24-28 For [Jesus] Christ is not entered into the holy places made with hands [not into natural buildings, but into our hearts instead], *which* [natural buildings, such as the Temple in Jerusalem] *are* [only] the FIGURES of the true [That is, natural buildings are not the true buildings of God, such as we now become personally ourselves]; but [Jesus went] into heaven itself, now to appear in the presence of God [the Father] for us [in speaking on our behalf for our sins]: Nor yet that he should offer himself often [because once was enough upon that cross!], as the high priest [during the Old Testament had] entereth into the holy place every year with [natural animal] blood of others; For then must he [Jesus] often have suffered since the foundation of the world: but now once in the end of the world [at the end of the Old Testament age] hath he appeared [in flesh] to put away sin by the sacrifice of himself [by dying upon the cross – which is really our current topic: “dying on a cross for sins”]. And [now, and in comparison to that literal, historical event] as it is appointed unto men once to die [mimicking the death of Jesus on the cross, but in a metaphorical execution of the Old Man (Romans 12:1-2 and 1st Peter 2:5) – for, when we die to what we once were in the ungodly world, we now come into His Kingdom and judgments], but after this [spiritual death occurs] the judgment [which immediately commences for us, on our personal journey, in corrections from God so that we can now grow; and, in also reducing that Old Man's power and influence over us]: So [and, in summing up] Christ was once offered to bear the sins of many; and [now, in a spiritual continuation] unto them that look for him [within the confines of this New Kingdom] shall he appear the second time [but this time in the form of the New Man; who will be] without sin unto salvation.

This very last verse (9:28) cannot be taken out of context with our current subject of Jesus dying upon the cross, and of us accepting Him now into our hearts; and, of us trying to become Christ-like, too. Else, we'd have to say that right in the middle of Paul's thoughts, that he suddenly began talking about the literal second coming of Jesus way-off into the future – which, actually, would be oddly placed, since he wasn't even speaking of that to begin with . . . Now, this is NOT me trying to tear-down the teaching of Jesus' second, literal coming with my words; but, this is me saying that I don't see this particular verse (Hebrews 9:28) speaking on such; but (and, as I've said already), I see this as He coming *inside of us* (“spiritually,” with His Holy Spirit [and, with the birthing of the New Man], as opposed to He coming naturally, as He did 2,000 years ago, appearing in His own flesh). But this time (and, as to how Hebrews 9:28 tells us), we'll see ourselves attain to a place of being without sin unto salvation. Meaning particularly, that when He comes into our flesh (again, spiritually – *yet still literally!*), it's really what God plants inside of us that cannot actually sin; for, as opposed to what we've received from our natural parents (and, indeed, from our very first parents, Adam and Eve), what we now receive from God (*of which cannot sin*) is a New Man; a New Adam – which is now created after God's likeness and image. But, the Old Man is what we are now trying to crucify with this second, spiritual coming of Jesus into our fleshly houses, by the birth of the Inward-Man:

Romans 6:6 Knowing this, that our old man is crucified with *him* [spiritually done, though, as compared to Jesus' literal action], that the body of sin might [eventually] be destroyed, that henceforth we should not serve sin [by embracing God's ways now instead of man's ways; but only because of God's corrections toward us].

For, it's this Inward-Man's birth that I'm seeing as to being how Jesus comes a second time (*at least in this verse – and, of other verses which speak similarly*). Whose name, also, by the way (that is, this New, Inward-Man), is Jesus, too – **Ephesians 3:14-15**. However, and just because the New Man inside of us is without sin, that certainly doesn't mean that our old, carnal man (who is *also* inside of us) isn't still there taunting us – who, again, is not crucified "*immediately*;" but is eventually, in time, taken out of the way.

Galatians 5:17 For the flesh [the old man] lusteth against the Spirit [the new spirit man], and the Spirit against the flesh: and these are contrary the one to the other: so that ye cannot do the things that ye would.

Ephesians 4:22-24 That ye put off concerning the former conversation the old man, which is corrupt according to the deceitful lusts; And be renewed in the spirit of your mind; And that ye put on the new man, which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness.

But, with the New Man's arrival (that is, in he being born inside of us), we have hope. Hope, that is, for eternal life.

Colossians 1:27c ...Christ in you, the hope of glory.

"Christ in you" is this New Inner-Man; for, "Christ" does not always denote the Man Jesus who was here on this earth 2,000 years ago; but, indeed, can also denote the anointing of God's Holy Spirit – of which this New Man is anointed thereby . . . But, and in going back to my former subject of the ungodly not standing in the judgment, and as I'll continue to paint a picture of, in order for one to be judged guilty by a law (which calls the breaker of it a sinner), the participant has to first be under that law to begin with. And, if I can prove that the ungodly heathens weren't even under the Law of Moses at all, then I'll have to ask how they could even be judged as sinners by that law? And, if not found to be sinners by that law, then how can they be punished or corrected by that same law? . . . However, one can argue that *everyone* on earth is under the Mosaic Law; and, being found guilty sinners if they do not follow-along with it, they then will be convicted by God to some sort of eternal punishment. But, I personally do not believe that all the occupants of the entire world were under the Old Mosaic Law during the Old Testament, but was only given unto the Israelites – as I'm fixing to actually give proofs of in just a few moments. But, first, and before continuing with that topic, I have to first point-out that God is not angry with the ungodly – *despite how many may read this verse, here*:

Psalms 7:11b ...God is angry *with the wicked* every day.

As I've pointed out before, just because somebody's an ungodly heathen, that it doesn't automatically make them wicked or evil. They are just simply without God in their lives . . . You know, *ungodly!* . . . Webster's Dictionary actually gives us several meanings to our word:

Ungodly: 1) Wicked; impious; neglecting the fear and worship of God, or violating his commands. 2) Sinful; contrary to the divine commands; as ungodly deeds.

For, though having ONLY the wicked Mind of Man to contend with, many are ungodly (as Webster also says) because they neglect the fear and worship of God – hence, my quick explanation that not all of them are absolutely, and terribly wicked; but, are without God in their lives; for, a terrible, wicked person can, in reality, be either ungodly, or even Godly to begin with . . . But, going back to our thoughts on Romans chapter 1, beginning in verse 18, we see Godly folks turning ungodly, and becoming wicked. This is how I'm reading Psalms 7:11b, also. *Why?* Because, part A of that verse tells us that those who were being judged were those who were considered, at least at one time in their lives, to be the righteous...

Psalms 7:11a God judgeth the righteous...

...that is, the *Godly* . . . So, let's see this entire thought from Psalms:

Psalms 7:11 God judgeth the righteous, and God is angry *with the wicked* every day.

Showing us that this verse only concerns those who had come-up under God's Laws to begin with (again, just as is the case for those folks in Romans chapter 1), and who were judged by the Law as guilty breakers of it. *Else, how could they be judged "wicked" without the Mosaic Law being enforced? Or, even, the Law of Christ being enforced?* And, if this is all correct, then we see why the ungodly (as Psalms 1:5a actually says) shall not "stand" in the judgment . . . But, even so, *why isn't God angry with the ungodly heathens, as I am contending?* Simple enough, it's because they're only acting like what God had "preprogrammed" them to be at the beginning of time; for, and just like the workings of the *rivers, the air, and for nature in general*, God had programmed everything to go upon their own circuits after the initial creation:

Ecclesiastes 1:5-8 The sun also ariseth, and the sun goeth down, and hasteth to his place where he arose. The wind goeth toward the south, and turneth about unto the north; it whirleth about continually, and the wind returneth again according to his circuits. All the rivers run into the sea; yet the sea is not full; unto the place from whence the rivers come, thither they return again. All things *are* full of labour; man cannot utter *it*: the eye is not satisfied with seeing, nor the ear filled with hearing.

Similarly, God had simply designed mankind's "natures" at the beginning of time, too...

Ephesians 2:3b-c ...we all had our conversation in times past in the lusts of our flesh, fulfilling the desires of the flesh and of the [fleshly] mind; and were **BY NATURE** [of how we were naturally born] the children of wrath [that is, the children of first man, fleshly Adam]...

...God had allowed for mankind to be born randomly – as we actually see the beginning of all this in the book of Genesis, when, after redescribing the creation of Adam and Eve – *the initial creation of man* – it shows that mankind (beginning with Adam himself) started to reproduce after his own kind, just as the animals (*and, nature in general*), did in Genesis chapter one (see Genesis 1:11-12; 1:21; and 1:24-25). Let's watch this happen:

Genesis 5:1-3 This is the book of the generations of Adam. In the day that God CREATED man [i.e. Adam – as we see in Genesis 1:27], **in the likeness of God** made he him; Male and female [Adam and Eve] CREATED he them; and blessed them, and called their name Adam [mankind], in the day when they were CREATED. [But, then:] And Adam [the man whom God had created] lived an hundred and thirty years, and BEGAT [birthed, not created] **a son in his [Adam's] own likeness, after his [Adam's] image**; and called his name Seth.

Therefore (and, once again), mankind began to reproduce after their own kind, just as nature in general does; and, so man had therefore become inventors (themselves) of either good or evil things (Romans 1:30 – *i.e. trees of the knowledge of good and evil*). God initially created mankind to be, not only inventive, but to be "learners" too; that is, we are impressionable, and can learn about things along the way in our personal journey, growing smarter by each passing year, forming our personalities as we age, etc. . . . However, there's actually a few scriptures that allude to God specifically "forming" some folks in their mother's womb, and outside the randomness of nature:

Jeremiah 1:5 Before I formed thee in the belly I knew thee; and before thou camest forth out of the womb I sanctified thee, *and* I ordained thee a prophet unto the nations.

Also see Isaiah 49:1;5 and Psalms 71:5-6, *etc.* Which is only specified for "Godly" folks, for their Work within God's Kingdom; that is, and in my own opinion, *all* the elect will be especially formed by God, along with that person's parents' DNA included, and their family traits, too . . . An exception to that rule, however, is that some other folks (i.e. some ungodly people, *but not the elect in this instance*) can also be designed by God for very important and specific purposes that effect God's Kingdom *negatively*:

Romans 9:17 For the scripture saith unto Pharaoh [of the Exodus], **Even for this same purpose have I raised thee up**, that I might shew my power in thee, and that my name might be declared throughout all the earth.

John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible: That he made him to exist in time, or brought him into being; that he raised him to the throne, promoted him to that high honour and dignity; that he preserved him, and did not cut him off as yet; that he strengthened and hardened his heart, irritated, provoked, and stirred him up against his people Israel; and suffered him to go all the lengths he did, in his obstinacy and rebellion: all which was done; that I might shew my power in thee: his superior power to him, his almighty power in destroying him and his host in the Red sea, when the Israelites were saved...

Romans 9:21 Hath not the potter power over the clay, of the same lump to make one vessel unto honour, and another unto dishonour?

However, and despite these direct and purposeful instances, I'm actually trying to specify in *generic terms*, and not with some exceptions to the general rule . . . Therefore, when mankind acts like animals (or, worse – *who have beastly natures about them*), it does not surprise God when they do evil – since He made them (or, rather, had *designed* them) to be like this without His Spirit working within them (as a guide unto goodness). And, if what I am saying here be really true, then how can God get angry with them when they do wrong or bad things? That is, when they act according to how they were designed to act? Unless we want to say, as many religious today do, that “evil” is a separate power unto itself, outside of God’s creativity; and, that it just, somehow, popped-up unexpectedly someday, somewhere, without any warning at all – *and, there it was!* Which is a thought, actually, that I will deal with in a few moments. However, and as to God’s anger, it’s not the same thing as man’s anger. *God’s anger can be a study all unto itself!* Naturally, when we first read about God’s anger in scripture, we imagine it to be the same as when we, who are of carnal flesh, get angry, and that He would have the same exact feelings that we would have in any given situation; but, as to that, I would have to disagree . . . Such thoughts could lead-off into many different directions, but I want to guide this ship back to a single point, and that’s back to God having the most supreme power in the universe, and power to do with His creation as He sees fit. So, let’s reread this very important verse:

Romans 13:1 Let every soul be subject unto the higher powers. For there is no power but of God: the powers that be are ordained of God.

We’ve also already visited a certain thought from the book of Job – in that even satan is subject to God’s will – making satan *NOT* a power source unto his own whims. And, we also saw how that some angels (who are lying spirits) were at God’s will to enter into the mouths of ungodly men. And, not only, but Isaiah is quick to tell us that it was God Himself who had created evil to begin with:

Isaiah 45:7 I form the light, and create darkness: I make peace, and **create evil** [H7451]: I the LORD do all these *things*.

The thought that it would have been God to create evil is so loathing to many folks, that a lot of them have made it their business to smooth this over by saying that what God had actually made was nothing more than *calamity* – such as natural disasters, and *etc.* But, let’s take special notice to the Hebrew meaning for our word evil in Isaiah 45:7...

*Evil, Ra – or, râ’âh (rah; raw-aw’), H7451, from Strong's Hebrew Dictionary: From H7489; bad or (as noun) evil (naturally or **morally**). This includes the second (feminine) form; as adjective or noun: - **adversity, affliction, bad, CALAMITY**, + displeasure (-ure), **distress**, evil ([f-favouredness], man, thing), + exceedingly, X great, **grief** (-vous), **harm**, heavy, **hurt** (-ful), **ill** (favoured), + mark, **mischievous**, (-vous), **misery**, naught (-ty), noisome, + not please, sad (-ly), **sore, sorrow, trouble, vex, wicked** (-ly, -ness, one), **worse** (-st) **wretchedness, wrong**. [Including feminine raah; as adjective or noun.]*

Did God really create all that?

The Biblical Illustrator, by Joseph S. Exell: Soften it down as we will, it is a tremendous claim [of God creating evil], a claim which plunges our thoughts into impenetrable mysteries, and

suggests problems we cannot solve ... And how can our hearts be at rest until we know and are sure that God rules over the kingdom of darkness as well as in the kingdom of light; that the evils which befall us are under His control no less than the blessings which enrich and gladden us; that wherever we wander, and through whatever sorrowful changes we pass, we are never for a single moment out of His hand?

Even though the word *calamity* did make its way into Strong's Dictionary meaning for evil, the extended definition far exceeded just that! Showing us that, perhaps, the English word '*evil*' just may be the best English word for our biblical translation here. But, honestly, and if so, *can that really make any sense?* According to Biblehub.com, when it lists parallel verses for Isaiah 45:7 from other translations, of the 22 different Bible versions compared, only 10 of them use the English word *evil* for the Hebrew word *Ra*; insinuating (that is, those who chose *other* English words for their translation) that what God had created, as opposed to *wicked* evil, was (as some suggested) *disaster* or *calamity* only. This is completely understandable, since we all know of the goodness of God, and that it is impossible for Him to bask in anything bad; or, for Him to even look upon sin. Therefore, these other versions, which say *disaster* or *calamity*, are, instead, suggesting some *other* types of bad things (again, such as *natural disasters*, etc.), rather than, of course, actual *wicked* evil. But, are they really justified in using a word other than *evil* in their translation? As we've already seen, the official definition for *Ra* went a bit further than just some random *calamities*, especially when the entry included things like: *natural or moral evil*; *wicked*; and *wretchedness*. But, *calamity*, however, was mentioned only *once* during the course . . . AMG's Annotated Strong's Dictionaries, from 2009 (which tool I highly recommend for my readers; and, which takes word study to a whole new level), adds-in that *Ra* displays ten or more various shades of the meaning of evil according to its contextual usage; adding, also, that it is bad, in a moral and ethical sense, and ultimately describes, along with good, the entire spectrum of both good and evil. Taking on, as well, the aspect of something disagreeable, unwholesome, or harmful; or, even people of wickedness. But, if this really is the case (i.e., that Isaiah's actual, original meaning was for us to understand that he meant the *entire* spectrum of this Hebrew word *Ra*), then could this cause a problem for Christians? *Absolutely not!* Do we not know that there isn't anything made that wasn't made by the hand of God?

Colossians 1:16-17 For by him were **ALL** things created, that are in heaven, and that are in earth, visible and invisible, whether *they be* thrones, or dominions, or principalities, or powers: all things were created by him, and for him: And he is before all things, and by him all things consist.

This passage declared boldly that our Lord had created *everything*, and that He had set all things into motion. But, even if it can be proved that He created evil in the first place (that is, in *all* of its varied forms), it certainly does not mean that He is evil Himself, or that He takes pleasure in it – as I'll also continue to explain. But, even so, just exactly *why* would God create evil in such varied forms to begin with? Especially when it is so far from his personality and nature? Actually, to be quite fair (*and I will be amongst them who claim this*), that it's really man himself who had become the *inventors of evil things*...

Romans 1:30b ...inventors of evil things...

Yet, and even then, we must still ask where did that evil come from to begin with? We make a full circle with this type of reasoning (that is, that men are inventors of evil things) in that we must still wonder how this type of inventing even got into the Mind of Man to start with? *Did the devil just place it within the Mind of Man, or what?* . . . Not only does Isaiah 45:7 speak about God creating evil, but so does this scripture in Proverbs:

Proverbs 16:4 The LORD hath **made** all *things* for himself: yea, even the **wicked** for the day of **evil** [Ra].

Or, how about:

Genesis 3:1 Now the serpent [i.e. the devil!] was more subtil than any beast of the field **WHICH THE LORD GOD HAD MADE**.

But, surely, we must know that God *can* be the creator of evil *without* being affected by it. Such a powerful God can certainly be too strong to give-in to such a mess – proving to us, once again, that He can create it without giving-in to it . . . But, even so, are we really supposed to believe that God created evil with *ALL* of its aspects? That is, not only *calamity*, but also *wickedness* and *sin*, too? And (I'll ask once more), by doing so, is God's own goodness being questioned? Or, can we simply say that God has the extended knowledge to create evil, and He has the ability to *start the process, set it into motion* (an *initial* creation – like winding-up a toy, and then letting it go on its own steam from there-on), and then to work with it in all of its varied forms afterward? Cannot God have the power and ability to create wickedness without being wicked Himself? Or, without it affecting Him at all? Is that not a possibility? . . . But, that kind of thinking actually raises many more questions, such as: *Why would God even want to do that?* . . . Now, please, do not get me wrong, I am NOT leaning toward the thought that God has evil within Him. However, I will say that I do believe that God did, in fact, create evil in *ALL* of its varied forms as a part of His ultimate plan of salvation; and, I will presently point out *how* and *why*. But, if we can see that God Himself really did create evil (again, in *ALL* of its varied forms – that is, in more than just calamity, but of wickedness, too), and not only so, but uses evil for His salvation plan for us (again, in all those trials and tribulations that we've already discussed), then we will begin to view the devil's role a bit differently, as well . . . Now, before we go any further with these thoughts, I truly need to get one thing established on evil (Ra); that, even though I believe God created evil initially – to be able to branch out in men's minds toward its goals in all of its terrible aspects (*for things just don't create themselves – else, there would be creative forces outside the power of God – and, in turn, making Romans 13:1 a total lie when it said that there is no power but of God!*) – that just because He created it, it doesn't mean that He's the distributor of it. As I have already pointed out, in a few instances, God can set things into motion at the beginning, and then allow it to run upon its own steam thereafter. Thus, was nature wound-up and set loose to its own circuits at the beginning of time, as we've already witnessed in Ecclesiastes 1:5-8. So, in consideration that evil was created at the very beginning of God's Work (*for, when else could it have been created?*), I'd like to point out this verse:

Genesis 1:31 And God saw **every thing** that he had made, and, behold, *it was very good*. And the evening and the morning were the sixth day.

This verse, explaining the end of the initial creation, declares that everything that God created was *very good*. When did, therefore, evil come to be? Did it come *after* the creation of all things? For, suddenly, the serpent (*the devil!*), in chapter 3, pops-up out of nowhere! Though, and as verse 3 continued to say (as we've already seen), that it was God Himself who had "*made*" the serpent – just as surely as He had "*made*" the heavens and earth, and the trees, and the animals (see Genesis 1:7; 1:16; 1:25; and Genesis 1:31 for the usage of the word "*made*," and of its comparison to "*creating*") . . . Now, one can argue that there was a second creation in chapter 2, with such verses as these:

Genesis 2:9a And out of the ground made the LORD God to grow every tree that is pleasant to the sight, and good for food... [19a] And out of the ground the LORD God formed every beast of the field, and every fowl of the air...

We might even go as far as to say that there were two creations of man between chapters 1 and 2:

Genesis 1:27-28a So God created man in his *own* image, in the image of God created he him; male and female created he them. And God blessed them, and God said unto them, Be fruitful, and multiply...

Compared with:

Genesis 2:7 And the LORD God formed man *of* the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living soul.

However, at the *beginning* of chapter 2, it says that God had ended the creation. And, this was *before* this supposed "second" creation of man:

Genesis 2:2 And on the seventh day God **ended his work** which he had made; and he rested on the seventh day from all his work which he had made.

So, did He end the Work or not? For, it seems that just after He rested, He got up immediately and began creating again! . . . Over the years I have seen much confusion over the book of Genesis – that is, over, at least, the first four chapters. What we are actually seeing, though, isn't two separate "natural" creations in these two chapters of Genesis, but of a "natural" creation in chapter one, and then of a "spiritual" creation in chapter two. That is, a "spiritual" Garden experience for both Adam and Eve – *God's Kingdom; God's Paradise* – to work with mankind in; having nothing to do with any of the "initial" creation of all things physical and natural – of which initial creation included all of its Beings, both in the natural world, and in God's invisible world, too: *people; angels;* and, so forth. So, what He rested from, at the beginning of chapter two, was the *natural* creation that we saw in chapter one; and, also, of God's actual, invisible abode, along with all of its creatures, were already established as well. Therefore, if the devil were a Being to be reckoned with (that is, an actual Being that's as real as God is Himself), then it would make more sense to say that his creation would have been in chapter one when God was creating all things "physical," during the time when He was creating the heavens (the cosmos), and the earth – including its occupants of humans and animals . . . But, even if one wants to argue that Genesis chapter one ONLY describes the "natural" creation of things (of the skies and the universe [you know, the "natural" heavens – for, the Hebrew word for heaven actually denotes both the natural and the invisible heavens], and of the natural earth), but to say that it had nothing to do with the creation of God's actual Abode (also called heaven, too – and, in turn, showing us that the devil and his cronies were NOT a part of the "very good" creation of Genesis chapter 1), then we should at least take note that there's one scripture that's hard to get around; and, it's both a scripture that I just got through quoting, and of which, also, is the very first mention of what's considered to be the devil. And, in it, it actually says that the devil (or, rather, *the serpent*) was MADE by God:

Genesis 3:1 Now the serpent [i.e. the devil!] was more subtil than any beast of the field WHICH THE LORD GOD HAD MADE.

"Made," as in "creating." Again, see the verses of Genesis chapter one for a comparison of God both "creating" and "making" things; which, I'm equating to meaning the same . . . Genesis 3:1 actually gives us the impression that this was a part of the initial creation of Genesis chapter one. *And, so it was!* For, and as to how I am seeing it, this serpent was not the devil of church tradition, but was, rather, the evil mind (or, thoughts) of Eve herself! . . . *Let that one sink in for a moment, too . . .* But, let's watch Paul explain this for us:

2 Corinthians 11:3 But I fear, lest by any means, [just] as the serpent [had] beguiled Eve through his subtilty, **SO YOUR MINDS** [i.e. the serpent] should [also] be corrupted [as well] from the simplicity that is in Christ.

If we can but see it in the light that the serpent *is* the corrupted Mind of Man, then we would have absolutely no problem in discovering whom the *serpent*, or the *devil*, really were the whole time. That is, being nothing more than **fleshy** knowledge, wisdom, and understanding – which is the exact opposite of **Godly** knowledge, wisdom, and understanding (see Proverbs 2:6 and Proverbs 9:10) . . . On the opposite side of that sphere, we could say that other Beings can certainly influence us by their deceitful words which can be heard outwardly by our ears; which, if we listen to and consider, could cause us to take the wrong advice; and, in turn, could possibly cause us to do things that are wrong. However, I'd like to point out that what is being proposed, in that scenario, is different than what I had already talked about (when I discussed Mark 7:18-23 and Jeremiah 17:9, in that it's actually *within* the heart of mankind where evil thoughts actually originate), for, we aren't discussing other Beings speaking things out-loud that we can hear and consider, we are speaking of another Being (that is, the devil!) *having the power to actually place the bad thoughts inside of our minds, as in a telepathic manner*. And, that's a different case-in-point altogether. This is where I am making the separation; and, I'm not saying that other folks can't influence us to make bad decisions; but, I am saying (and what I am disagreeing with) is that another Being has the power to place a bad thought into our minds, telepathically, to begin with. *How so?* Well, if we really believe what Romans says... (*and, forgive me for quoting this again, but it's very important to understand*):

Romans 13:1 Let every soul be subject unto the higher powers. **For there is no power but of God: the powers that be are ordained of God.**

Again, this speaks volumes to us in that if something or somebody has a power over us, then it was God Himself that had ordained that power in the first place ("...the powers that be [all of them – no

limitation!] **are ordained of God**") – and, when it comes to something having the power to place thoughts into our heads, *telepathically*, then we have to either assume (based on Romans 13:1) that God had ordained for it to happen, or that God did it Himself. And, in us knowing the true nature of God (which is the nature of Christ), in that He would NEVER place evil thoughts into our minds (see and meditate on James 1:13: "Let no man say when he is tempted, I am tempted of God: for God cannot be tempted with evil, **neither tempteth he any man**"), then we are forced to conclude that the serpent which beguiled Eve was nothing more than her own wicked thoughts (*the inventor of evil things* – Romans 1:30). Not only so, but in consideration that God had created evil to begin with, then we must see (and, in consideration, too, of the serpent being the wicked Mind of Man) that God not only set it into motion to begin with (much like a wind-up toy – *wound-up, and then seeing where the toy walks to on its own circuits*), but that God knows exactly how the Mind of Man works. Therefore, He gave us, not only the Mind of Man to deal with (along with all of its *ordained*, inventive power), but He also gave us an escape route for when we're tired of contending with this evilness – *the Spirit of Truth, the Comforter*, John 14:26). Yes, the elect does have that choice. Even though God set it into motion (a thing that is capable of inventing evil things on its own accord – which was initially ordained by God to do), we must never conclude that God had sat there, at the beginning of time, and thought of every little evil thing that would come thereafter because of it. I don't think that anybody, who really knows God, could ever think of Him inventing all the horrible, evil thoughts that had been dreamt of and then executed upon this earth by mankind. *God forbid!* However, that's not a foregone conclusion that God didn't initially create an evil machine that was capable of inventing or thinking of evil things that it could do . . . Further, and on the note that we can see how bad things happen to folks, that there is no scripture anywhere in the Bible that suggests that the devil, the serpent, or any other application of a suggested evil Being, has ever placed a bad thought into the Mind of Mankind (that is, without God's ordination and purpose – which is a case in point for 1st Kings 22:21-23, which we've also already covered, concerning a lying spirit). But, when bad things occur to people (which can include bodily illnesses, depression, or agony), it's always up to the individual to decide how they will react to the situation. That is, will they trust and rely upon the Lord to help them? Or, will they allow their mind to give-in to the evil that has befallen them, and allow themselves to act upon such occurrences in a bad way? . . . If we can but see that people are capable of making their own decisions, making themselves responsible for their own actions without consideration of any other influence from any other supernatural, evil source, then we will have to, once again, reconsider the role of the devil, and of whom he or it really is, and of his/its purpose and true function . . . So, if this is really the case (that is, that the devil was created at the beginning of God's Work during chapter one of Genesis), then this devil/serpent would have been put into the category of "very good" things that were created, as says verse 31; though, that wouldn't make much sense when traditional doctrine about the devil is being considered . . . But, the actual reason that it was "very good" (that evil was a part of the initial creation in the first part of Genesis), was because without evil being present in this world, we would have nothing to overcome; and, if not overcomers, then how can we ever hope to taste of life eternal? Hence, God's reasons for creating evil to begin with; and, of why it's a part of His salvation plan.

Romans 12:21 Be not overcome of evil, but overcome evil with good.

1 John 2:13 ...I write unto you, young men, because ye have overcome the wicked one... [2:14b]
I have written unto you, young men, because ye are strong, and the word of God abideth in you, and ye have overcome the wicked one.

An all-knowing God will already know who will do evil things and who won't; and, like Judas, are still allowed within His Kingdom anyway, for He had already ordained for satan to always be in the midst of His children – as we see from the book of Job (Job 1:6 and Job 2:1) . . . Now, let's consider these passages from Romans:

Romans 9:20-23 Nay but, O man, who art thou that repliest against God? Shall the thing formed say to him that formed *it*, Why hast thou made me thus? Hath not the potter power over the clay, of the same lump to make one vessel unto honour, and another unto dishonour? [But, watch this:] *What* if God, willing to shew *his* wrath, and to make his power known, endured with much longsuffering [tolerance for] the vessels of wrath [of dishonor, who are only] fitted to destruction [fit only to die. Showing us God's endurance of evil men! (both in and out of His Kingdom) And, also, using them for specific purposes *in* His Kingdom, whilst we are all still upon this earth]: And that he might make known the riches of his glory on the vessels of mercy, which he had afore prepared unto glory [afore prepared = predestinated].

But, on the other side of this large coin, we also have folks who just randomly involve themselves into Godly affairs (who were never meant to be in His Kingdom) by coming into contact with God's Children on occasion. And, as to how to interact with them, several different scenarios will occur; either they will try and hurt the child of God, mentally or physically (and, unless the ungodly heathens, in such cases, are being used by God for trials and tribulation purposes – Romans 9:20-23 – God will simply intervene and put a stop to their evil ways); or else, *nothing* will happen – since, on such occasions, no harm or violence is intended from the ungodly toward the Godly. That is, assuming that the ungodly person in question was never meant to make it into God's final Abode – even if they are nice people in general. However, I am fully aware that the next step as to where I am going gets heavily involved in the *Predestination vs Free-Will* issue; and, neither am I wanting to get into that large topic just yet – for, I'll actually be covering that exclusively in chapter 9 herein. But, I do at least want to say that I truly believe that there are those who **WILL** make it to be with God, and that there are those who **WON'T** make it. It *cannot* be proved in scripture that every living person who ever walked this earth will make it to be with God into His eternal Heaven/Abode; but, the Bible actually says contrary to that. This is where some folks who hate the doctrine of Predestination have a problem; for, sometimes, they will tell their opponent, in their discussion or debate, that they cannot say who will make it and who will not make it to be with God; and, as to that conclusion, I whole-heartedly agree. *But, how can any person say that God does not know?* If we come to that conclusion, we would also have to come to the conclusion that God is *not* all-knowing; and, that there are limitations to His power and understandings. As I myself have come to know concerning the Predestination issue, man cannot tell the future (unless, of course, God specifically reveals things to them – *a true prophet!*), but God Himself has to know one way or the other concerning those who will live for eternity and of those who will die, not having eternal life. With such a thought, I always like to use a certain scenario, that we should envision God in His eternal, invisible Abode, sitting there one day, and in pops 'ol Jim Bob. And, God, looking at him, in amazement, says: *"I had no idea that he would have made it!"* Therefore, Predestination is the predetermining of *God* and not man. And, besides that, we even have scripture which uses the actual word "predestination;" so, there has to be *something* to it:

Romans 8:29 For whom he [God] did **foreknow** [knew before], he also did **predestinate** to be conformed to the image of his Son, that he might be the firstborn among many brethren [and, the thought continues in verse **30**; and, is also seen in **Ephesians 1:5** and **1:11**].

Now, getting back to whom God's anger is kindled against (in continuing our topic from Romans 2:9), I say again that it's not against the ungodly heathen (for, they do not know God if God has not revealed Himself to them); but (and, again, as Romans chapter 1 had boldly declared), God's anger is kindled against those of whom He *has* revealed Himself to, and after they willingly turn their backs to His truths. But, not only turn their backs to His truths, but, afterwards, who conduct themselves in the vilest of ways:

Romans 1:18-21 For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who hold the truth in unrighteousness; **BECAUSE THAT WHICH MAY BE KNOWN OF GOD IS MANIFEST IN THEM; FOR GOD HATH SHEWED IT UNTO THEM.** For the invisible things of him from the creation of the world are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, *even* his eternal power and Godhead; **SO THAT THEY ARE WITHOUT EXCUSE:** Because that, **WHEN THEY KNEW GOD,** they glorified *him* not as god, neither were thankful; but became vain in their imaginations, and their foolish heart was darkened.

But, if (as I say) the regular ungodly folks (the heathens of this world) are not going to stand in the judgment (that is, they of whom never came under God's Laws to begin with), *then just what will happen to them?* . . . Let's consider the following:

Ecclesiastes 3:18-20 I said in mine heart concerning the estate of the sons of men [i.e. the heathen], that God might manifest them [to show them for themselves], and that they might see that **they themselves are beasts.** For [get this:] that which befalleth the sons of men befalleth beasts; even one thing befalleth them: **as the one dieth, so dieth the other;** yea, they have all one breath; so that a man hath no preeminence above a beast: for all is vanity. **All go unto one place [what? To hell? No! But...]; all are of the dust, and all turn to dust again.**

If, in reality, the “sinning” ungodly man goes to hell, *then so does an actual animal when it dies*; for, as it just said: “All go unto one place; all are of the dust, and all turn to dust again;” and, also: “As the one dieth, so dieth the other.” These scriptures in Ecclesiastes are insinuating that the destination of a beast (*a natural animal – just as Strong’s Hebrew Dictionary so explains this word for us in this instance*), is the same as a “beastly natured” man. Therefore, the ungodly man and the beast who die will only be “grave occupants” for eternity. We can also see here that man himself is considered a “beast” – a name that’s usually applied to the devil in many religions. And, all this is despite what the rest of this thought from this Old Testament book says:

Ecclesiastes 3:21 Who knoweth the spirit of man that goeth upward, and the spirit of the beast that goeth downward to the earth?

Do we have to imagine this to be a reference to Heaven and hell for the sinner and the saint? Again, in verse 20, we’re reminded that a “beastly natured man” has the same fate as an actual animal:

Ecclesiastes 3:20 All go unto **one place** [i.e. both the ungodly man and animals]; [which is:] all are of the dust, and all turn to dust again.

That one place not being hell, but the grave; and, neither do these verses insinuate any type of trial for such ungodly folks to participate in; for, not only is their predestined fate (or, final place) the same as a natural animal, but, as it further explains its meaning in verse 20: “*all are of the dust, and all turn to dust again.*” Of which instance is their actual fate . . . Again, that’s the grave – a predetermined destination – which does not need an end-time trial to repeat. That is, to first place them in the grave, to just have them come back up for a trial which will simply place them back in the grave once again . . . But, once more, that one place cannot be hell; nor, either, of some futuristic courtroom trial. However, when the writer of Ecclesiastes gets to verse 21, he finally shows us a distinction between a Godly man versus an ungodly man, in the fact that, as we’ve already seen, an ungodly man will share the same fate as an animal: they return to the earth from which they came (“...the spirit of the beast that goeth downward to the earth...”). So, either way you want to slice it or dice it, the spirit of man (that is, a *Godly* man in this instance – Ecclesiastes 3:21), will eventually “rise” unto God, unto the Eternal Abode. But, the beast (or, that is, *a beastly-natured man*) simply turns again unto dust from whence he came. Or, that is, and as our scriptures in Psalms had told us, *they are like the chaff which the wind will eventually blow away*. And, that’s why, as Psalms continues to point out, they will not stand in the judgment.

Psalms 1:4b-5a The ungodly . . . *are* like the chaff which the wind driveth away. Therefore [and, because of this] the ungodly shall not stand in the judgment...

I say this again, in repeat, that if their fate is simply to go six-feet underground [i.e. the grave], then why is there even a need to judge them to that same fate once more in some futuristic trial? Why bring them up from dust, to convict them to dust again? . . . But, without the want of too much repetition, I have to repeat, once more, this again: Ecclesiastes had already told us that their eternal fate is the eternal graveyard – the same fate as a natural animal; they all have a single breath, so that man nor beast are above another in status . . . But, in deeper consideration as to why the ungodly heathen won’t have a part in the final judgment, we must ask again if such folks actually sin? To such a question, I have to also ask, *how can a dead man sin?*

Romans 6:7 For he that is dead is freed from sin.

This verse can be looked upon in two different ways. Firstly, he that’s dead *to God* – while he yet lives (*temporarily, that is*) – is free from sin in accordance to God’s Law; for (and, as I’m going to continue to show), they are not under a law that calls them a sinner if they break it. Even though being *FAR* from innocent in their actions, they are just simply not under God’s Law that calls them sinners if they break it; they’re simply DEAD while they yet live . . . And, for a second definition (but, concerning Christians this time), being dead “in Christ” (while, yet still living upon this earth), we are delivered from the Law of sin and death (Colossians 3:3 “For ye are DEAD, and your life is hid with Christ in God.”) – delivered from an Old Law that declares us sinners if we live therein and break it . . . But, with all of my dialog concerning God’s Law, please take note that I am particularly speaking of the Mosaic Law. Because sin, according to the Apostle John, is defined as transgression of the Law of Moses.

1 John 3:4 Whosoever committeth sin transgresseth also the law: for sin is the transgression of the law.

And, also:

1 Corinthians 15:56b ...the strength of sin is the law.

We'll continue to see why I am saying that this particular law is that which was presented to the children of Israel by Moses; but, in the meantime, and in going back to our first definition (*being dead to God and His ways*), let's consider the following:

Luke 9:60 Jesus said unto him, **Let the dead bury their dead**: but go thou and preach the kingdom of God.

Do dead people come up out of their graves to bury other dead people? Of course not; but, these people are dead to God, and to His Ways. They're "*metaphorically*" dead . . . Let's see what Paul says about this:

Ephesians 2:1 And you *hath he quickened*, who were **DEAD in trespasses and sins**.

Ephesians 2:5a Even when we were **dead in sins**...

Ephesians 5:14 Wherefore he saith, Awake thou that sleepest [in darkness to the truth], and arise from the dead [away from being dead to God], and Christ shall give thee light [enlightenment].

Etc. . . . And, though one could argue that if these folks were really "dead to God" while they yet lived upon this earth, then how could they be dead in trespasses and sins, since they were not under the Law of Moses to begin with? Well, the thought actually gets even deeper than what I've already proposed. But, I will try and narrow this down as quickly and easily as possible. First of all, even the ungodly (who are not under the Law of Moses) are automatically placed (once they are born) under a "universal law" of mankind (*which I'll actually explain what that is in just a few moments*), and are therefore counted as "sinners" under this universal law; a law, that is, which was given to earth's very first parents. But, and as far as the Law of Moses is concerned, we'll also see in a moment (as promised), that only the Israelites were given that Law – as it was, understandably, given to them by God through Moses, and many years after the creation of the earth; many years after, I should rather say, the initial creation of man . . . And, even though all of this could easily and quickly get very confusing, I will narrow all this down by declaring that there are only **THREE LAWS** that we should even be concerned about in biblical studies. And, once we learn of the differences between all three, then this should get easier for us to understand . . . *Let's count them*:

- 1) *The Universal Law of Adam*
- 2) *The Law of Moses, given exclusively to the children of Israel*
- 3) *The Law of Christ; also called the Law after the Inward Man; given to all born-again saints*

Again, there are no other laws in existence that we should be concerned about in biblical studies. Of course, and according to what I've just said, this "Universal Law of Adam" concerns all the ungodly heathens on the earth who had never come into God's Kingdom and graces. Then, there was the Law of Moses that was given exclusively to the children of Israel (the Hebrews / the Jews), which Paul did NOT try and slap onto the Gentiles – though the Jewish Christians, themselves, were certainly trying to do so to the Gentiles – for, *that's all they knew!* For, they certainly did not want anybody, who called themselves Christians, to live merely under the Universal Law of Adam – not yet understanding that there was such a thing as the Law of Christ; for, in scripture, we see that Paul himself was the first to ever even mention such a law – being one of the things, in this author's opinion, that Paul exclusively got from the risen Christ when he was caught up unto the third heaven to receive all such divine revelations.

2 Corinthians 12:1-4 It is not expedient for me doubtless to glory. **I will come to visions and revelations of the Lord.** I knew a man in Christ above fourteen years ago, (whether in the body, I cannot tell; or whether out of the body, I cannot tell: God knoweth;) **such an one**

caught up to the third heaven. And I knew such a man, (whether in the body, or out of the body, I cannot tell: God knoweth;) How that he was caught up into paradise, and heard unspeakable words, **which it is not lawful for a man to utter.**

Unlawful, that is, which went-against the ways of the Old Mosaic Law – since, these new things, which Paul was now receiving, were teachings concerning the New Law of ultimate life . . . Therefore, when I say things like: “*how can a dead man sin?*,” I am meaning specifically sinning according to either the law of Moses or of Christ; for, the ungodly heathen, again, are simply dead while they yet live. And, unfortunately, all who are under the universal Law of Adam will just simply die anyway; ceasing to be; driven away like the chaff in a gust of wind:

1 Corinthians 15:22a For as in Adam all die...

However, all those who were under the law of Moses had died, too; but, at least (and, *ONLY* during the 1st century AD – *as I will certainly explain why later-on during this study*), these were all given a chance to arise from their graves at the “end of times” in a literal resurrection. That is (and, as we had also covered in John’s Gospel), the end of the Old Testament world (*for, once again, we should consider the wording of Hebrews 9:26b, when it said: “...in the **end of the world** hath he appeared to put away sin **by the sacrifice of himself** [on the cross];” i.e., the end of the Old Testament age*). All those Old Testament worthies *did* have a natural grave-opening as a reward; as we see here:

Matthew 27:52-53 And the graves were opened; and many bodies of the saints [of the Old Testament] which slept arose, And came out of the graves after his [Jesus’] resurrection [and, on the third day, too], and went into the holy city, and appeared unto many.

So, and in going back to our three scriptures in Ephesians, we could actually apply those in one of several ways – depending on whom we are speaking. So, let’s quickly narrow these down by, firstly, repeating the verses:

Ephesians 2:1 And you *hath he quickened*, who were **DEAD in trespasses and sins**.

Ephesians 2:5a Even when we were **dead in sins**...

Ephesians 5:14 Wherefore he saith, Awake thou that sleepest [in darkness to the truth], and arise from the dead [away from being dead to God], and Christ shall give thee light [enlightenment].

And, secondly, we have to establish of whom Paul was even speaking to. If to Gentile converts, who had NEVER lived under the Law of Moses, we could say that all of his Gentile audience were merely under that *Universal Law of Adam* when he had first found them – living in the filthy “sins” of heathen man; being sinners, that is, of that broader law of Adam. Or, if also speaking to Jews, who were adamant to stay under the Law of Moses, Paul would tell all of them (*and, he did tell them!*) that the Old Law could not bring them ultimate salvation (as he often does tell them in his letters – *and, especially after Jesus had already died and had arisen again; but, more specifically, after the Day of Pentecost when the Holy Ghost had fully come to the occupants of the earth*); for, that Old Law had only kept them hanging-on until a better day would come – and that day, being, again, the *Day of Pentecost*, had ALREADY come within Paul’s own dispensation of time; and, God was now ready to ditch that Old Law in favor of the New (or, rather, to “*update*” it unto a Law of Love; a Law of Christ).

Hebrews 8:13 In that he saith, A **new covenant**, he hath made the first old. Now that which decayeth and waxeth old is ready to vanish away [during the 1st century AD].

Therefore, the “trespasses and sins” that they were under was because nobody could actually keep the Old Law in perfection. That is, only Jesus Himself could; but, He was an exception to the general rule; for, besides him, EVERYBODY had fallen short of God’s Glory:

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

Therefore, in a New Testament setting, whether Jew or Gentile (whether under the Law of Moses or of Adam), everybody was “spiritually” dead anyway, and stuck in trespasses and sins (*as we’ll continue*

to learn about here in Romans); and, only by the New Law of Christ could anybody actually be delivered from sins.

Romans 6:14 For sin shall not have dominion over you: for ye are not under the [Mosaic, or even Adam's] law, but under grace [and the New Law].

1 John 3:9 Whosoever is born of God [being born-again by the Holy Ghost, and entering under the Law of Christ] doth not commit sin; for his [God's] **seed remaineth in him**: and he cannot sin, because he is born of God.

The seed of God (as opposed to the days of the Old Testament) can now REMAIN in us? Yes; for, but consider:

Romans 8:11 But if the Spirit of him that raised up Jesus from the dead DWELL IN YOU [i.e. stay forever without ever departing! Then...], he that raised up Christ from the dead shall also quicken your mortal bodies by his Spirit that dwelleth in you.

For, even though folks still made mistakes being under this New Law (as we today continue to also do), the fiery trials and tribulations (of which we've already spoken-on earlier in this current chapter of Romans) would finally teach the student how to be delivered from sins – *by learning obedience from the things that we suffer at the hands of God*. For, under the Law of Moses, folks simply brought animal sacrifices for their crimes. But, now, we find that this new method (again, of our chastisements, corrections, and fiery trials and tribulations – *the fellowship of Jesus' sufferings [Philippians 3:10]*) is the *only* true method of learning of God's ways, and of being delivered from sins. *Which, certainly, is not an overnight procedure!*

1 Peter 4:1 Forasmuch then as Christ hath suffered for us in the flesh, arm yourselves likewise with the same mind: **for he that hath suffered in the flesh hath ceased from sin**.

Psalms 119:67 Before I was afflicted I went astray: but now [that I have been afflicted by God] have I kept thy word. [71] *It is good for me that I have been afflicted; that I might learn thy statutes.*

The Law of Christ may not bring “*perfection*” to the saint (that is, perfection as the world understands perfection) – but, it certainly can now bring folks into the “*maturity*” of Christ that was not available during the days of the Old Testament.

1 Corinthians 2:6 Howbeit we speak wisdom AMONG THEM THAT ARE PERFECT [G5046]: yet not the wisdom of this world, nor of the princes of this world, that come to nought [to nothing].

Ephesians 4:13 Till we all come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a PERFECT [G5046] man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ.

Perfect/Mature, Teleios (tel'-i-os), G5046, Strong's Greek Dictionary: From G5056; complete (in various applications of labor, growth, mental and moral character, etc.); neuter (as noun, with G3588) completeness: - of full age, man, perfect.

Basically, when we *grow-up* from a child to an adult in Christ, we become “biblically” perfect:

1 Corinthians 13:10-11 But when that WHICH IS PERFECT is come [that is, when we become mature in Christ], then that which is in part shall be done away [“in part,” such as in being “immature”]. When I was a child, I spake as a child, I understood as a child, I thought as a child: but when I became a man [an adult], I put away childish things.

The Old Mosaic Law could at least bring a person into God's Kingdom, and unto a promised, futuristic grave-opening (a “literal” resurrection); for, and even though “technically” the Law of Adam was still a Law presented by God, it was not the very “heart” of God, of which He had wanted His “called” children to live under for a chance at eternal life. For, those “sinners” under the Law of Adam had NO chance at eternal life whatsoever!

Romans 5:14a ...death reigned from Adam to Moses...

But, even so (that is, that death had reigned from Adam to Moses – and, this is concerning all those who had lived under the Law of Adam prior to when Moses had presented God's Law to the children of Israel in the wilderness), there were still a few folks who had escaped such a death, and who had become eligible to resurrect with Jesus anyways – *such as Enoch!* For, and as we'll learn in a few moments, when it came to the Law of Adam, there was actually a way to escape total death between the time of Adam and Moses. But, first, and speaking of Enoch, and despite many folks who feel that Enoch had just simply jumped on-up to Heaven, at the time of his "translation," such a theory, actually, would be in complete contradiction to what Jesus himself had told Nicodemus:

John 3:13a And **NO MAN** hath ascended up to heaven, but he [Himself, that is] that came down from heaven...

Despite any elaborate way we may want to decipher Enoch's "translation" (see Genesis 5:24 and Hebrews 11:5), Paul says that he *didn't* go to Heaven:

Hebrews 11:13 **These ALL died in faith** [which list included not only Noah and Abraham, but even Enoch. Start reading from verse one to see], not having received the promises [nor having gone to Heaven], but having seen them afar off [futuristically – having to physically die first, then go into a coma-state of sleeping, and then to resurrect on the same day that Jesus did], and were persuaded of *them*, and embraced *them*, and confessed that they were strangers and pilgrims on the earth.

So, neither Enoch, *nor even Elijah* (as we'll also see in just a moment), nor of any other Old Testament worthy, got to go to Heaven before the promised grave-opening (*which I'll continue to explain why*) – which indeed occurred on the very same day that Jesus had arisen from the tomb . . . *Let's see that again:*

Matthew 27:52-53 And the graves were opened; and many bodies of the saints which slept arose, And came out of the graves after his [after Jesus'] resurrection [on the third day], and went into the holy city, and appeared unto many.

If anybody could get into Heaven *prior* to this, then what good was a natural grave-opening anyway? Such an event would have been totally useless by that time if folks could get to Heaven prior. So, we cannot prove by scripture that anybody ever got into Heaven before this New Testament, natural grave opening event – which, again, had occurred on the very same day that Jesus arose from the tomb . . . And, though, many others will ask, "*But, didn't Moses and Elijah appear to Jesus during His ministry?*" That is, on the "Mount of Transfiguration" before Jesus even died on the cross?" "And, doesn't that prove that they were in Heaven already?" Well, despite me thinking that they hadn't actually gone to Heaven, and that I could say that those were *mere illusions to the Law and Prophets* – a visual demonstration for the apostles' sake – that certainly wouldn't satisfy everybody! So, however one may want to slice it or dice it, the considerations of anybody ever arriving to Heaven before the New Testament period will always continue. But, despite this *seemingly* weak idea of mine (that is, that Moses and Elijah were mere "illusions" of the Law and Prophets of the Old Testament, for the disciples' sake [see Matthew 17:4a "Then answered Peter, and said unto Jesus, Lord, it is good for us to be here..."]), there could be yet another possibility of their appearance on the Mount of Transfiguration from Matthew chapter 17; for, surely, we can at least agree that Moses did die and got buried during the Old Testament days:

Deuteronomy 34:5-7 So Moses the servant of the LORD died there in the land of Moab, according to the word of the LORD. And he buried him in a valley in the land of Moab, over against Bethpeor: but no man knoweth of his sepulchre unto this day. And Moses *was* an hundred and twenty years old when he died: his eye was not dim, nor his natural force abated.

But, even so, let's speak of Elijah possibly going to Heaven on a flaming chariot before doing so:

2 Kings 2:11 And it came to pass, as they still went on, and talked, that, behold, *there appeared* a chariot of fire, and horses of fire, and parted them both asunder [that is, Elijah and Elisha]; **and Elijah went up by a whirlwind into heaven.**

Albert Barnes' Notes on the Bible: No honest exegesis can explain this passage in any other sense than as teaching the translation of Elijah, who was taken from the earth, like Enoch (Genesis 5:24), without dying.

That is, according to Mr. Barnes, that Elijah, like Enoch, went to Heaven . . . Well, it's not hard to guess that Albert Barnes was traditional when it came to what and where Heaven is. And, this is despite the fact that we CANNOT be satisfied with simply saying that when we, ourselves, die, that we'll go to "Heaven" . . . *And, pray tell, why not?* . . . It's because the scriptures plainly illustrate that there are *three* heavens in existence, and not just one:

Revelation 21:1a And I saw a new heaven [a 2nd Heaven] and a new earth: for the FIRST heaven and the first earth were passed away...

And...

2 Corinthians 12:2c ...such an one caught up to the THIRD heaven.

However, Paul then further illustrates for us that Jesus, at His ascension, had actually ascended far above ALL THREE HEAVENS to get to the actual realm of the Father:

Ephesians 4:10 He that descended [to earth from the Father's Abode, for an earthen ministry] is the same also that ascended [as we saw in Acts chapter 1, at His ascension] **UP FAR ABOVE ALL HEAVENS** [all three, that is!], that he might fill all things.

If that's really so, and God's final Abode isn't actually "*called*" Heaven, as church tradition demands, *then just where did Elijah go?* . . . Now, this is *not* me saying that there isn't a "Heaven" for us to go to after physical death (that is, that there's not an actual, physical, "heavenly" place for us to live-in throughout eternity with God); but, this is me saying that God's actual Abode is not "*called*" Heaven; nor, that we're going to see some sign-post out front, upon entrance, that reads: "*Welcome to Heaven!*" So, the place itself is real, alright...

Romans 6:8 Now if we be dead with Christ, we believe that **we shall also live with him.**

2 Timothy 2:11 *It is* a faithful saying: For if we be dead with *him*, **we shall also live with him.**

...but, the "*name*" of God's Abode is questionable, as one can certainly see from a deeper study of scripture – such as, again, that we read of in Ephesians 4:10 "...[He] ascended up FAR ABOVE ALL HEAVENS...."

Psalms 8:1 To the chief Musician upon Gittith, A Psalm of David. O LORD our Lord, how excellent is thy name in all the earth! **who hast set thy glory** [His actual Abode] **ABOVE THE HEAVENS.**

Psalms 113:4 The LORD is high above all nations, **and his glory above the heavens.**

Therefore, and with such a thought as this (and, a bit more cautious in his approach to the subject), Robert Hawker, in his "Poor Man's Commentary," had this to say:

"Instead of unprofitable and improper enquiries concerning this event [i.e. of what had really happened to Elijah], I would rather refer the Reader to the consideration, how lively a type the prophet was, in this instance, of his divine master."

That's playing it safe! And, instead of just regurgitating standardized, modern doctrine, he's a bit wiser in his approach – though not really giving any answer to the mystery. For, and as we have already learned of, in John's Gospel commentary, we cannot simply breeze-over such passages and say that it

means “literally” just what it says. *And, I’m certainly not calling any words in the Bible a lie;* but, some of its text (well, really, a lot of its text!) can’t be taken so literally. For instance, I’m quite sure that Jesus did not mean for certain people to actually cut off their literal hands and feet with these words:

Matthew 18:8 Wherefore if thy hand or thy foot offend thee, cut them off, and cast *them* from thee: it is better for thee to enter into life halt or maimed, rather than having two hands or two feet to be cast into everlasting fire.

Idioms, people! Idioms! For, when we learn about, *metaphorically*, what hands and feet can represent in scripture (in Biblical Language, that is), then we’ll see that Jesus would rather us cut-off our relations with man’s carnal religion instead of our own natural limbs; for, just as feet can represent a good foundation in Christ, hands, too, can do works within such foundations, in either a good or a bad fashion:

Romans 10:15 And how shall they preach, except they be sent? as it is written, HOW BEAUTIFUL ARE THE FEET of them that preach the gospel of peace, and bring glad tidings of good things!

You want to literalize that passage, too? If so, then if I have ugly toenails, I can’t be a preacher for God! ... *Idioms, people; idioms!* For, on the opposite sphere of this thought, the FEET of them who preach lies should be offensive, and should be cut off . . . The same with hands:

Acts 20:34 Yea, ye yourselves know, that THESE HANDS have ministered unto my necessities, and to them that were with me.

And, etc., etc., etc. For, there’s even more scriptures to consider for metaphorically understanding hands and feet; but, and though we really aren’t talking about hands and feet here, but of passages regarding “Heaven,” we should really know that we can’t just blindly accept an old-fashioned doctrinal understanding of an idea that can certainly be contested by other scriptures. Again, that there’s really *three* Heavens mentioned in the Bible and not just one; and, that (once more), Jesus had ascended above *all of them* to reach God’s actual Abode. So, then, if Elijah really didn’t go to “Heaven” (of church traditional understanding, that is), then just where did he actually go? Well, if we are to balance this with the other verses in the Bible, which actually contradict old doctrinal ideas, then we should realize that his fate was the same as Enoch’s, and that Paul didn’t make such a horrid mistake in saying that Enoch actually died instead of going anywhere:

Hebrews 11:4-13 [a summary] By faith Abel offered unto God a more excellent sacrifice than Cain ... **By faith Enoch was translated that he should not see death;** and was not found, because God had translated him: for before his translation he had this testimony, that he pleased God. [11:7] By faith Noah... [11:8] By faith Abraham... [11:11] Through faith also Sara herself received strength to conceive seed... [11:13] **THESE ALL DIED IN FAITH** [including Enoch], not having received the promises, but having seen them afar off, and were persuaded of *them*, and embraced *them*, and confessed that they were strangers and pilgrims on the earth.

Again, this is even despite how it’s worded: “Enoch was translated **that he should not see death.**” We shouldn’t see this saying that he went straight to Heaven, though, but that God probably spared him from further exposure on earth to any bad elements, and that he simply buried him to await his promised resurrection on the very day that Jesus had arisen, too (which sleeping, perhaps, seemed to last hardly no time at all!) – showing us, in turn, how that he didn’t see “ultimate,” or “eternal” death. If not, then Paul was terribly wrong in assessing that he was in the number of all those who had *died* in faith. But, no, I’m not seeing this as a mistake on Paul’s part, but that he understood what this actually meant, in that he died in faith, for he was certainly going to arise with life eternal, just as all the other Old Testament worthies did, who had arisen with Jesus. For, the promise to the old saints was never an admittance unto Heaven for when they had physically died, but that they were going to resurrect at the end times (*but, then, yes, they would go to God’s Abode after that*); but, too, I’m also not seeing Elijah’s “journey to Heaven” as a mistake, either. That is, when it actually said the words that he went to Heaven:

2 Kings 2:11c ...and Elijah went up by a whirlwind into heaven.

I've no doubt that this was illustratively, and literally done in the sight of Elisha for a witness that God had taken him from the realm of the "naturally" living.

2 Kings 2:12 And Elisha saw *it*, and he cried, My father, my father, the chariot of Israel, and the horsemen thereof. And he saw him no more: and he took hold of his own clothes, and rent them in two pieces.

But, and just like Moses, God had buried him in an unknown spot; for, Moses was alone when he had died, and so it had to be God who had buried him and no man (again, see Deuteronomy 34:5-6) . . . And, as to why Moses, or any other great man for that matter, was attended to privately by God can be up for debate and speculation; but, I am rather inclined to agree with this commentary quote:

Adam Clarke's Commentary on the Bible: It is probable that the reason why Moses was buried thus privately was, lest the Israelites, prone to idolatry, should pay him Divine honors; and God would not have the body of his faithful servant abused in this way. Almost all the gods of antiquity were deified men, great lawgivers, eminent statesmen, or victorious generals.

As I've also have already pointed out, here in our lessons on Romans earlier, "Heaven" itself can be either defined as *celestial* or *terrestrial*. That is, it can either denote something heavenly or of our current fleshly realm, too. *And, so it does:*

*Heaven/Shâmayim (shaw-mah'-yim) H8064, Strong's Hebrew Dictionary [as is used in 2 Kings 2:11] To be lofty; **the sky** (as aloft; the dual perhaps alluding to the visible arch in which the clouds move, as well as to the higher ether where the **celestial** bodies revolve): - air, X astrologer, heaven (-s).*

So, 2nd Kings could have meant, just as easily as saying that Elijah went to God's actual Abode, that Elisha saw Elijah climb up into the natural "sky" in that chariot. And, though, a great phenomenon that's not seen everyday by man, it does not prove, beyond a shadow of a doubt, that Elijah went to God's actual Abode . . . And, as far as Enoch "not seeing death," is concerned (from our verses in Hebrews just above), I see this, actually, in relation to a scripture that was already quoted, just earlier:

Romans 5:14a ...death reigned from Adam to Moses...

How is that connected? It's connected in the fact that despite death ruling over the earth until the Mosaic Law came – *giving hope to folks of having a literal resurrection, as seen here:*

Job 19:25-26 For I know *that* my redeemer liveth [Jesus!], and *that* he shall stand at the latter *day* upon the earth [that is, at the end of the Old Testament world, coming in His earthen ministry]: And *though* after my skin *worms* destroy this *body*, yet in my flesh shall I see God [Job would be a part of the literal resurrection, which we see coming to pass in Matthew 27:52-53].

...that, despite death reigning over the earth, there was still a way to escape death. *And, how was that?* Well, there was a "loophole" in the Law of Adam. A loophole where one could escape "*ultimate*" death; and could (just as those under the Law of Moses could) die in the hope of resurrecting unto life eternal – as we're fixing to see . . . *But, just what was this Law of Adam anyway?*

Genesis 2:17 But of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, thou shalt not eat of it: for in the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die.

This was the law given to earth's first parents, the very first of mankind:

Genesis 5:2 Male and female created he them; and blessed them, AND CALLED THEIR NAME ADAM [mankind], in the day when they were created.

And, just how could one overshoot this law of total death? By eating, instead, from the Tree of Life. A tree, that is, which had the power to grant eternal life to those who would eat therefrom:

Genesis 3:22 And the LORD God said, Behold, the man is become as one of us, to know good and evil: and now, lest he put forth his hand, and take also of the tree of life, and eat, and live for ever.

So, in order to stop Adam from partaking of that eternal life-giving tree, He drove him out of Paradise:

Genesis 3:23 Therefore the LORD God sent him forth from the garden of Eden, to till the ground from whence he was taken.

And, this is because, the Tree of Life is **ONLY** reserved for God's chosen children to eat from. That is, those whom He chooses to have eternal life; to those who seek to overcome this horrid, carnal world of mankind:

Revelation 2:7 He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches; **To him that overcometh will I give to eat of the tree of life**, which is [STILL – during the early church period, when this was written – as well as still being available for us today, too!] in the midst of the paradise of God.

But, just because Adam was refused the Tree of Life, it certainly didn't mean that others were denied to eat thereof; and, so, I believe Enoch was allowed to eat from it. And, as a result, was granted a chance to not see "ultimate" death. That is, he would have a chance to rise again at the end times with his Lord Jesus – just as Paul illustrates for us in Hebrews when he confirmed that Enoch was a part of those who had "died" in faith – just as Job, also, had that same hope (Job 19:25-26) . . . But, before somebody can come back on me with the thought that nobody could access that Tree of Life anymore until the New Testament times, then I'll say that that Tree of Life was always available, during the Old Testament, for His children to eat from if they could. The only way of doing it, though, was to find a way to get past the swords that were held by the Cherubims.

Genesis 3:24 So he [God] drove out the man [Adam, from the Garden]; and he placed at the east of the garden of Eden Cherubims, and a flaming sword which turned every way, to keep the way of the tree of life.

But, even so, the folks of the Old Testament really *did* know how to find that Tree of Life – *that sword being God's own Word that they needed to go through in order to eat therefrom*. And, here are confirmations from the Old Testament itself:

Proverbs 3:13 Happy is the man *that* findeth wisdom, and the man *that* getteth understanding. [Why? Because...] [18] She [this Godly wisdom and understanding – being taught by God's Word] is a **tree of life** to them that lay hold upon her: and happy is *every one* that retaineth her.

Proverbs 15:4 A wholesome tongue is a **tree of life**: but perverseness therein is a breach in the spirit.

And, just exactly what is this Tree of Life? *It is that which holds the fruits of the Spirit:*

Proverbs 11:30a The fruit of the righteous [fruits of the Spirit – as is seen in Galatians 5:22-23] is a **tree of life**...

Those Old Testament scriptures are no mistake! And, they prove that the Tree of Life was available during the Old Testament for those who had the right hearts . . . But, anyways, and as I've said, there just may be another way of seeing Moses and Elijah being at that Mount of Transfiguration, rather than they were simply visiting Jesus from Heaven, and that would be in the same capacity that Samuel visited Saul, who was awakened from his comatose-sleep by that witch of Endor, from 1st Samuel chapter 28. But, **NO!**, I'm not saying that Jesus had conjured them up with witchcraft, but I am saying that they may have visited Him from their rest. And, even though that's just an "*idea*," it's not one

which I myself believe. Again, I rather see this as a “vision” for the sakes of the future apostles; for, and even as Jesus Himself attested to (once this event had ended), that it was nothing more than a vision:

Matthew 17:9 And as they came down from the mountain, Jesus charged them, saying, Tell the **VISION** to no man, until the Son of man be risen again from the dead.

And, even though Strong’s Greek Dictionary doesn’t especially help us here, with our word “vision” in this instance (indicating that it’s merely a supernatural spectacle to be gazed at), the word itself, according to Webster’s Dictionary, could include things like *allusions* to reality . . . But, nevertheless, this was, again, a *vision* for the sakes of the future apostles, who were to take the Gospel-baton from the Law and the Prophets (the foundation on which they were going to continue to build upon – for, Moses, surely, represented the Law, and Elijah represented the Prophets; and, the Apostles would be the final foundation on which to build the church of Jesus Christ). Then, they would take God’s ministry on into a whole New era, the New Testament era; of which, again, the true foundation of God is built upon...

Romans 3:21 But now the righteousness of God without the [Mosaic] law is manifested, being witnessed **by the law and the prophets**.

Ephesians 2:19-20 Now therefore ye are no more strangers and foreigners, but fellowcitizens with the saints, and of the household of God; **And are built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets** [with the Old Law being behind their belts], Jesus Christ himself being the chief corner *stone*.

But, be that as it may, I’m not really sure that I can “prove” my point with direct scripture, but has to be arrived at *circumstantially*, and in a *round-about-way*, by comparing all relevant scriptures. But, and even though perhaps unprovable (that is, that Moses and Elijah were mere “visions”), I do know that it CAN’T be proved that Moses and Elijah were simply visiting Jesus from Heaven . . . But, and getting back to the Law of Moses, I must say that at least it had brought hope to the people. Again, that is, of having a future grave-opening unto eternal life. However, it was only a pale replacement for the wonderful Law of Christ that was to follow, beginning on the *Day of Pentecost*. (It began on the *Day of Pentecost* for God’s people, as opposed to it starting with the beginning of Jesus’ ministry, because of what Paul says, here: “For where a testament is, there must also of necessity be the death of the testator. For a testament is of force after men are dead: otherwise it is of no strength at all while the testator liveth.” – Hebrews 9:16-17) Because, the dedicated Christians, to be delivered from the Law of Moses, and to be delivered unto the Law of Christ (within a New Testament setting), means life eternal **HERE AND NOW** – *no need to wait for any further grave-opening anymore*; for (and, as I had explained in my dialog on the Gospel of John – and, indeed, as I’ll continue to explain in the upcoming chapters here in Romans), we can actually have life eternal *THIS* side of the grave. However, to not be under ANY “preferred” Law of God (whether Mosaic, or of Christ – but under, rather, the Law of Adam instead – as are all those who never come into God’s Kingdom, at all) simply means total death – *dead to God while yet naturally living*; and, then, such folks will die naturally, and be grave occupants for eternity – which is actually the same fate for both the heathen and the Christian who end-up dying in their sins and/or turning their backs on God and His ways . . . However, and as far as the Law of Moses is concerned, the chance at eternal life for its users had totally ceased by AD 70; for, though even the apostles in Jerusalem had still embraced the Old Law and its ways, the time of God winking on that Old Law had come to a complete and utter end with the falling of the Jerusalem Temple – the day in which animal sacrifices had totally ceased as well. Because, simply, the building being destroyed made them cease! For, and though the Jerusalem apostles were NOT wrong in still doing things according to the Old Law during their own time, it was only for *their* day and time, and for their dispensation – having nothing to do with us today. They were to sit upon twelve thrones and to judge the twelve tribes of Israel, and to bring that Old Testament era to an absolute close (Matthew 19:28 and Luke 22:30). *And, so they did!* Therefore, the hey-day of the Old Law of Moses had stopped with them, too. Not destroying the Law, but bringing it (*as Christ had begun the closing process Himself*), to a complete close by finally fulfilling it:

Matthew 5:17 Think not that I am come to destroy the law, or the prophets: I am not come to destroy, but to fulfil.

And, so, it was fulfilled – in the continued work of the Jerusalem apostles; and then, it *totally* ceased, and fell with the walls of the Temple in AD 70 . . . But, and getting back to the definition of “sin,” and even though I had said earlier (and, according to 1st John 3:4) that it’s just transgression against the Old Law of Moses, we should also realize that it’s also, too, *in a broader sense*, transgression against common decency and just plain common sense:

James 4:17 Therefore to him that knoweth to do good, and doeth *it* not, to him it is sin.

This last verse shows us the broader term of sin – for not just those under the Law of Moses, but under the Law of Adam, as well . . . In the Garden/Paradise of God (during the first part of Genesis) we see that there were two “main” trees. For, and though Adam and Eve, at first, were allowed to eat from ANY tree of the field, except for the Tree of Knowledge of Good and Evil...

Genesis 2:9 And out of the ground made the LORD God to grow every tree that is pleasant to the sight, and good for food; **the tree of life also in the midst of the garden, and the tree of knowledge of good and evil.** [16-17] And the LORD God commanded the man, saying, **Of every tree of the garden THOU MAYEST FREELY EAT: But of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, thou shalt not eat of it:** for in the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die.

...they actually chose to totally ignore the Tree of Life; and ingest, instead, the wrong tree – resulting, as we saw, in God not allowing them access, or as to having any other chance of touching the Tree of Life ever again.

Genesis 3:11b [God speaking to Adam] ...Hast thou eaten of the tree, whereof I commanded thee that thou shouldest not eat?

Blocking it only, though, for Adam and Eve, and all their children who follow in their footsteps of carnality. But, basically, what all this means for us now is if we (as a human race) do not eat from the *Tree of Life*, which bare the *Fruits of the Spirit* (again in Galatians 5:22-23; such as “love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith...” etc.), and eat instead from the *Tree of knowledge of Good and Evil* (as seen in Galatians 5:19-21; such as: “Adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lasciviousness, idolatry, witchcraft, hatred, variance, emulations, wrath, strife, seditions, heresies...” etc.), then we shall die. *Not go to hell; not stand in a trial; but, again, thou shalt surely die . . .* However, if God doesn’t draw us (John 6:44a), and reveal this to us, then we are bound for a determined destination anyway. And, that determined destination, as I’ve been contending, is six-feet underground – the grave. But, it’s nothing more . . . Because of all these things, those who are the ungodly heathens will never stand in the judgment of God at the end of this earth’s age. They will, however (at their personal ending on this earth), simply die the death of a natural animal, and return to the dust from which they came.