

Principles of

LIGHT

&

DARK

The Fruit of Two Trees

Shawn Aaron McCraney

Copyright © 2022 Samworks Published by Samworks

All rights reserved.

No part of this publication may be reproduced, stored in a retrieval system or transmitted, in any form, or by any means, electronic, mechanical, recorded, photocopied, or otherwise, without the prior written permission of both the copyright owner and the above publisher of this book, except by a reviewer who may quote brief passages in a review.

The scanning, uploading, and distribution of this book via the Internet or via any other means without the permission of the publisher is illegal and punishable by law. Please purchase only authorized electronic editions and do not participate in or encourage electronic piracy of copyrightable materials.

Your support of the author's rights is appreciated. Printed in the United States of America

Giving thanks unto the Father, which hath made us meet to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light: 13 Who hath delivered us from the **power** of **darkness**, and hath translated us into the kingdom of his dear Son. Colossians 1:12-13

To my grandchildren, great-grandchildren and all the rest that may follow in thereafter, consider the words of Jesus who wisely said - "*Be careful that the light that is in you is not **darkness.***" I think He knew what He was talking about.

Bjorn

TABLE of CONTENTIONS

Introduction

Informational Preamble

PART I

Chapter 1	Dark and Light
Chapter 2	Two Trees
Chapter 3	Overview of Fulfillment
Chapter 4	Hard to believe Insights I
Chapter 5	Hard to believe Insights II
Chapter 6	Relationships
Chapter 7	Fashioning the Flesh
Chapter 8	Feeding the Flesh
Chapter 9	Feeding the Carnal Mind
Chapter 10	Education and Employments
Chapter 11	Money and Materialism
Chapter 12	Politics/Theocracy

PART II

Chapter 13	Spirits in a Material World
Chapter 14	Self-will
Chapter 15	Prosperity Gospel
Chapter 16	The Law of Attraction
Chapter 17	Hermeticism
Chapter 18	Masonry
Chapter 19	Mormonism
Chapter 20	Eckhart Tolle
Chapter 21	Theosophy
Chapter 22	Eckankar
Chapter 23	Scientology
Chapter 24	Theistic Satanists
Chapter 25	Thelema
Chapter 26	Objectivism

Conclusion

Introduction

I am genetically and therefore naturally inclined toward the **Dark**. It is my human nature. I lean toward it and am drawn to it non-existence much more than to light and things of the light. It has been this way since I can remember as I've always related not only to literally and actually **dark** things - the **night** over the day, **dark** rooms over the well-lit, **dark** themes in art and music, and frankly no matter how hard I try I still, even today, find the **Dark** far more comfortable and fitting to my person than all the elements of light. This has caused me trouble over the years in terms of feeling accepted and able to engage with so-called normal people in the world surrounding me. I mention this because I want to emphasize the fact that almost every moment of every day of my life I have naturally wanted, as the Rolling Stones once sang, "*to paint it black.*"

I suppose there is not too much we can do about the genetic construction of our make-up. Believe me, I have tried. But because of this I have had to learn to adjust every minute of my life to making constant choices that embrace light and light ways over the will and ways of the **Dark**. Looking around, I could intellectually see that I was not like the men and women of the world who loved the light. These were people who never seemed to want to do anything "wrong," who were always organized and productive, who did their homework, cared about their car, listened to adult contemporary music while I was tuning into **death** metal, not caring about what I drove or how it looked and was walking **chaos** in everyday living. These were good people who rejoiced over owning a Thomas Kinkaid and who decorated their nice tract homes with bright floral wallpaper and wainscoting - while I was vibing on Jackson Pollack's posted in **empty** rooms of cold, hard cement. Sure, much of this can be assigned to having an artistic temperament, but even the artists I knew in my life had day to day tendencies that were considerably lighter, brighter and more reasonable than mine. I enjoyed pain. I loved revenge. And I was predatory in nature, like a creature of the **night**, seeing people as things and life as nothing more than ways to feel something, anything in the face of what I saw as a rather **empty** package of **meaninglessness**. Of course, the end result was inner alienation and living a life of solitude in spite of the paradoxical fact that I was socially charming and quite adept at pleasing people from all walks of life. Put it all together, I

was, and am by nature, a narcissistic sociopath and I believed I was destined to a life according to the rules of this make-up as I did not know of any other way to exist.

I mention all of this because I want you, the reader, to know that because of my nature I am somewhat of an expert in **Dark** forces, **Dark** things and **Dark** philosophies. I understand them, relate to them, and can spot them a mile away. I would like to suggest that as a Christian I have lost this affinity all-together but that would be a lie. What I have experienced however, as a Christian, is the absolute alternative to the **Dark**, which of course would be the Light or God. And in this I have personally discovered what this Light offers those wanting it, what power it can bring wayward and errant souls, and how His Light equates to real living verses the **death** that abides in the **Dark**, its forces and its forms.

Without going into a whole bunch of history (that is found in other places) understand that I have spent most of my adult life searching for something, anything that would liberate me from the chains of **Dark** that actually held and hold me bound. Yes, I said hold, present tense, because even as a sold-out believer in the Light that shined into this **Dark** world, I am still in a body of flesh, and as long as I remain in this natural body my flesh yearns for **Dark** things and **Dark** ways, including deep expressions of **selfishness** like being **rude, sarcastic, demeaning, a brute, a liar, a criminal, full of revenge, hatred, misogyny, sexual perversions, adultery, lust, pride, rage, murder** and **anarchy**. This is who I was before Christ; it is who I am without Him on the throne of my heart. And I want to make these things clear as we embark on the information contained in this book.

I cannot escape the fact that my tastes in things still orbit around **Dark** themes and that as a human being I find many aspects of this **Dark** forces attractive. But I have learned, frankly equipped myself to know and understand, from where they originate, what moves them and what they ultimately lead to - **death**. In fact, that is the call from the **Dark** - to cease to exist, **nothingness**, silence, being comfortably numb. And here's the really difficult news from one who has been there - the war on **Dark** forces is unfortunately constant and is won through characteristics found only in labor, effort, and selflessness.

These principles of labor and effort are not referencing sweat and duty but are reflected in diligent seeking for Truth, or humbling oneself before the world and its demands, and in making the relentless, constant choice to put God first in one's life, and

others second. This is the interesting thing about what the Dark fails to accomplish in its ways and the Light brings to pass - really freedom, liberty which comes by and through selflessness, sacrifice, and insufferable dedication to God and His will.

We will see this as a theme, especially in Part II, where we could probably separate true Light from the Absolute **Dark** based on doing the will of God verses doing the will of **self**. Both produce completely different outcomes. Having ardently pursued both approaches, I cannot more readily recommend His will over our own. Read on - maybe you will come to the same conclusion.

Informational Preamble

Admittedly, much of the information, especially in Part II, comes simply from Wikipedia. I admit it without shame as I am not a scholar nor an academic but someone looking to compile information that will support a view - in the case, Dark forces have always existed and are at war with the Light causing each person "to choose this day whom they will serve." I thank Wikipedia for its content and accept all errors herein as my own.

It has been said that in order to be able to detect **counterfeit** currency investigators study the real thing. This has been the case in my creating this book - I have honestly studied the "real thing" front to back, from original languages and in context for decades. Using the Word of God as my guide I am able to more readily detect the **counterfeits** to the real McCoy.

Having this world-view in place, the crux of this book is founded on the Genesis account of the Creation - which is where we will begin in Chapter one. I submit that the template for all of human existence, in principle, is described therein and what it all really boils down to is all human being have a choice in everything that we do - to eat from what is called, the Tree of Life verses choosing to eat of the fruit from the Tree of Knowledge of Good and Evil. Understand this concept as foundational to this book.

Also, because the scripture is clear that human beings cannot please God but by faith (Hebrews 6:9) then when we write of knowledge we speak of it in two distinct ways - heavenly knowledge, which is information that lends without defect leads to knowing God and His Son, and then **carnal knowledge**, which is everything

else and is antithetical to faith. For this reason there will be times when knowledge is depicted as good and of God and other times where (**carnal**) **knowledge** is emboldened.

The **EMBOLDING** of certain words

Because I do things according to how I am inclined which is always in an effort to teach, I will appeal to unorthodox approaches at times to make my point. In this book I have chosen to embolden certain words in the text. The words emboldened are all related and hopefully create what we might see as **Dark Threads** which I submit are found, even interwoven through every expression of the **Dark**, from the most benign to the most egregious. These threads or **Dark Continuities** are revealed in some of the following terms:

Egypt, Egyptian	Krishna	Second sight
Dark, Darkness	Ernest Holmes	Kabbal, Kabbalist
Night	Babu Nanuk	Seers, palm readers
Chaos, chaotic	Hakunin Ekaku	Astrology, astronomy
Void	Emmanuel Swedenborg	Fortune telling
Without form	Mary Baker Eddie	Near Death Experiences
Dried	Charles Taze Russell	NDE's
Corrupt	Rilke	Gold
Blind, blinded	Kahlil Gibran	Eckankar
Satan, Satanism, Satanists	Dali Lama	Theosophy
Lifted, lifted up, raised	Tony Robbins	Mormonism
Hollow, hollowed out	Deepak Chopra	Mason, Masonry, Free
Empty	Initiate	The Law of Attraction
Hallucinogens	Pagan	Queen of Heaven
Ego, egoist, egoism	Knowledge, know, knowing	Persephone
Black hole	Alexandria, Alexandrian	Equinox
Power, powerful	Manifestation	Wicca, Wiccan
Twisted	Muscular Christianity	Magic, magick, magician
Nothing	Sealed	Thelema
Meaninglessness	The Restored Gospel	Objectivism
Opposing, opposite	Carnal	Zoroaster, Zoroastrian
Wise, wisdom	Vibe	Prosperity Gospel
Any other source	Aura	Name it and Claim it
Pride	Seduced, seductive	Helena Blavatsky
Proud	Allure, alluring	Eckhart Tolle
Absence of	New Thought	Works in the world

Non-God, non-Light, non-Living	Priests, priesthood	Meditation
Mystic, mysticism	Miracle, miracles	Thetan
Devil, devils	Outside	Engrams
Lust, lusts	Feelings, emotion	Clear
Variableness	Navel gazing	Audits
Purposelessness	Hu, light/sound of God	Bondage, captivity
Chaldean	Gnostic, Gnosticism	Death, dead, die
Orphic	Neoplatonism	Oprah Winfrey
Porphyry	Sex, sexuality, sex-magick	Illumination (false)
Spiritual wickedness	Principalities	High places
Self, selfish, selfishly, self-centered, self-reliant, self-driven	Money, love of, Materialism, wealth, riches, seed money, tithes	The Book of Mormon, the Quran, The Book of the Law, other books
World, the spirit of this, spirits of, all that is in, god of this, spirit, otherworldly, underworld	Temple, Restored, Rites, rituals, anointing, endowments, passwords, signs, grips, handshakes	The Tree of Knowledge of Good and Evil; the Tree of Life; Fruit
Faithlessness	Theurgy	States of bliss
Higher Life	Sage	Depravations
Energy	Rebirth (not from God)	Masters/Meisters
Affirmation	Golden Dawn	Contemplatio
Hermes Trismegistus	Rosicrucianism	Theoria
Aiwass	Pre-Mortal Life	Encountering God
Welt/Zeit/World Geist	Transmigration of soul	Third eye
Tertullian	Becoming Gods	Namaste
Hidden	Repeated words	OM
Divine love	Manicheanism	Taosim
Astral projection	Black Magick/Magic	Horus
Karma, karmic	The Left-Hand Path	Jainism
Reincarnation	Occult	Dianetics
Extra-terrestrials	Diabolists	Urantia
Mythological framework	Reverse Christians	Religion

Interestingly, the connections between all of these words listed above between the various expressions we will examine are there if you are willing to look. I am not going to spend much time connecting the dots because suffice it to say, all of them originate from the same big black dot called the fruit of **Knowledge** of good and evil. But try and see how all of the expressions we will address thrive in secrecy, in the gaining of secret knowledge (Gnosticism), in recovering lost or stolen information, of raising

human beings up (elevating man) to his or her rightful place in the universe, of providing initiations along with promises to elevate or raise people higher, of esoteric masters, meisters and queens or mothers in heaven, and most of them somehow tap into feelings, appeal to emotions and emotionalism and promise something newer, better or more elevated than a relationship with God as described in the Bible.

I've written this book for people wanting to understand the differences between the fruit from the Tree of Life and the Fruit from the Tree of Knowledge of Good and Evil. If this is you, thanks for the consideration.

PART I

Chapter 1

Dark and Light

The contents of this book in some ways can be considered very speculative. I can only speak to what I see and tend to believe and cannot prove nor can I say that God in any way endorses or approves of my final specific assessments. Take the information and let the Spirit of God guide. And while I think my use of some biblical passages are pretty sound the whole of the content leads me to believe and see things that cannot be proven. So, again, the information is speculative in nature.

I want to begin referencing two passages of scripture, which I will use as my guide in all information presented, hopefully by the Spirit. The first passage I want to recite is found in Exodus where Moses is speaking to the Nation of Israel after they escaped Egypt and after three days they lacked drinking water. After making the waters sweet for their benefit, Moses says to them:

Exodus 15:26 *"If thou wilt diligently hearken to the voice of the LORD thy God, and wilt do that which is right in his sight, and wilt give ear to his commandments, and keep all his statutes, I will put none of these diseases upon thee, which I have brought upon the Egyptians: for I am the LORD that healeth thee."*

Several things to notice about this passage:

- They had just left "**Egyptian** captivity."
- That God blesses them with provisions of fresh water from the bitter water.
- And then after doing this, God tells them (through Moses) that they if they were to -
 - "Diligently hearken to His voice"
 - "Do what is right in His sight"
 - "Give ear to His commands"
 - and "keep His statutes"

He would put none of the diseases that He put on the **Egyptians** for He *is the Lord that heals them.*

From this single verse and all of the historical backstory that comes with it, we have **Egypt** - and all that it represents (which we will ultimately go back and revisit) and we have the Nation of Israel (and all that it represents) coming out from her.

Remember this. **Egypt** and all that it represented - **bondage, captivity, sin, death, even spiritual darkness** contrasted to God's elect people, after being captive to it, coming out from all of it. Then Moses tells them how to avoid having all the plagues that fell on **Egypt** fall on them because, he says, *He is the Lord who heals them.*

Before we go to the second passage for your consideration, I want you to recognize that **Egypt** offered all sorts of "other" ways to deal with life other than through the living God. These things will become the fodder for this book later but for now, let's just rest on **Egypt** representing non-God and Israel representing God's elect coming out of her.

The second passage I want to read to you comes from the Apostolic Record (what people wrongly call, the New Testament). It's in Hebrews 11:6 and in the scope of all that God has done it is utterly profound. It says

Hebrew 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.

A couple of things about this passage. We note that without faith it is impossible to please the living God, Creator of heaven and earth. Reread this. We can dance on our head, have all **knowledge**. Do wonders. Heal the sick. Read the stars. Give all we have to feed the poor . . . but without faith, it is impossible to please Him. Please who? The true and living God. And how do we please Him? Only by faith.

When the Nation of Israel was delivered from the hands and ways of **Egypt**, God's command upon them was to *diligently* pursue Him and His ways - which ostensibly was a way to say to them, "and leave behind the ways of the **Egyptians**."

We also note from this passage in Hebrews the word, *diligently* (as in *diligently seek Him*). Let's re-read the passage:

Hebrew 11:6 But without faith it is impossible to please him: for he that cometh to God . . .

In other words, those who come to, discover, see, understand, follow the true and living God, among all other gods and ways and pursuits . . . "those who come to God . . ."

"*must believe that He is (the one true and living God - that He exists, is who He claims to be, and He is what He promises to be in the face of all other **counterfeits**).*

So, again, "*those who come to God must believe that He is . . . and*" (also believe) *that He IS a rewarded of them*" that what? Again, "that (diligently) seek Him."

Not *diligently* seek-after alternatives to Him. Not those who *diligently* seek after the ways of this **world**, not those who *diligently* seek **wisdom** and **knowledge** out of **Egypt** or those who appeal to Dark forces nor those who appeal to things that may even function and bless people here and now, but again, "*He is a rewarder of them who diligently seek Him.*"

This may be the thesis statement of this book - to encourage all people within the sound of my voice to diligently seek Him alone. In all things.

So, go with me now to the creation account in Genesis as we will further speculate on a few matters that are in conjunction with biblical Truth. By turning to the first chapter we read the following two verses which are significant. Ready? Verse 2-5

Genesis 1:2 *And the earth was **without form**, and **void**; and **darkness** was upon the face of the deep. And the Spirit of God moved upon the face of the waters. And God said, Let there be light: and there was light. And God saw the light, that it was good: and God divided the light from the **darkness**. And God called the light Day, and the **darkness** he called **Night**. And the evening and the morning were the first day.*

So let's take a minute and examine these passages a little more closely because in them we discover some radical stuff. Verse 1 says

"*In the beginning God created heaven and earth.*" (and then verse 2)

"*And the earth was **without form**, and **void**; and **darkness** was upon the face of the deep. And the Spirit of God moved upon the face of the waters.*"

It does not tell us what waters these were nor when they were created. Maybe God just created these waters or perhaps they were there from another dispensation of creation. Can't say. But the Spirit of God moved upon the face of these waters. I submit that

God is the Creator of all things, speaking and breathing all things into existence - all things - including these "waters." But that said, this does not preclude some things from existing before the account of this creation takes place as it seems pretty apparent that what we are talking about here was either just made by Him or already existed when He embarked to create the Heavens and the Earth. Relative to the earth, however, is God taking matter (that is there) and actually reforming it or reusing it? It seems to me that what God moved over was already there as Moses says that the earth was "**dead matter, without life, and in chaos.**"

The Words "earth was **without form and void**" best mean the earth was in "*confusion and emptiness,*" as the words are rendered in Isaiah 34:11 tend to echo the account and this meaning.

I am personally convinced that our globe, at some undescribed former period, erupted and was broken up, and was a **dark** and watery waste for ages; that perhaps it remained in this **Dark chaotic** state until this time of which Moses speaks, when God began to weave this **dark** and **chaotic** mess into the planet upon which we now stand.

This view does not defy the doctrine of "creation ex nihilo" but it does offer some insight into a number of things about our world - like why radiometric dating methods, which calculate the rate of decay in carbon and potassium, rate some matter as being millions and millions of years old when many Christians think the earth is only thousands.

It may - may - also give us insight into the presence of ancient fossils like dinosaurs, which could have roamed an earth (that was destroyed), decayed into fossil fuels, and were put back together in the recreation of the world on which we now live.

I'm anything but a scientist and this Bible is not a science book, but we have to consider, as believers, that what the narrative says holds water (whether we understand it or not). Taking what verse 2 says, I am able to see this creation period as possible and answerable to legitimate scientific theory - and to go from there. Now, Moses describes the earth like this:

*"And the earth was **without form, and void; and darkness** was upon the face of the deep."*

To me, that is a description of matter without God's presence. That to me, this suggests something that could actually describe the former earth as a **hollowed** out cavernous demon-filled pit or

perhaps even a place where demons or **Dark** forces thrived. It was dead. There was no light. No life. In **chaos**.

Where it says that "the Spirit of God moved" literally, this means that the Spirit of God, the very breath of God, His pneuma (from the Septuagint), brooded over it - as a hen does over her eggs to bring them to life. And in this very early picture we have the power of God's breath giving life and reinvigorating dead things to animation. While the active account of the Spirit begins at the end of this second verse, it appears that the power continues to work on all the various ways we will read about in the subsequent verses.

Before continuing, I want to pull from other parts of scripture that help illustrate what I've said thus far. First, listen closely to what the Psalmist, speaking of the creatures of the sea, says in the first line of Psalm 104:30

"Thou sendest forth thy spirit, they are created."

From this we see that by His Word and Breath, God (note His three working expressions here - Him, His Words and His Breath) created all the living creatures in the sea. Then listen to the second line from this passage in Psalms which says:

"and thou renewest the face of the earth."

The Hebrew word for "renewest" used here is "khaw-dash," which means to renew or rebuild. Either Psalm 104:30 is wrong, or the scripture is right and we know that what God did in the re-creation of this earth was He renewed matter that had existed before but was at that point, dead.

Again, I think He is the one who originally created all matter so this is no slight on Him. But it does show how God loves to restore, re-use and bring dead things to new life.

I personally see wisdom in this, as the aged elements from whatever the former earth was would come to serve us today in innumerable ways - coal, oil, diamonds, minerals and who knows what else. There is obviously some conjecture on my part here but what is not conjecture is:

- a) he did renew or rebuild this earth upon which we live, and
- b) this trait of His, renewing, restoring, reusing, and saving things is part of His make-up and is evidenced though out scripture in a number of beautiful ways. How?

First, in the second verse of the Tanakh, we have God recycling and restoring material elements back to life. And He does this by and through His Spirit brooding over the **chaotic, dark** and ruined elements of decay and giving them or bringing them to life. Isn't this what rebirth is all about? Of our being born spiritually dead (or at least diseased) and having the Spirit regenerate or renew us to new life? Is this not God taking our hard hearts, our depraved minds, our **dark** and **chaotic** lives, and giving us new life - again, by and through His Spirit brooding over those who are seeking and willing?

In a classic picture and type of this event, we read a story in Ezekiel chapter 37 where he writes at verse 9

*"Then said he (GOD) unto me, Prophecy unto the wind (ruwach - breath) prophecy, son of man, and say to the wind, Thus saith the Lord GOD; Come from the four winds, O breath, and breathe upon these slain, that they may live. So, I prophesied as he commanded me, and the breath came into them, and they lived, and stood up upon their feet, an exceeding great army. Then he said unto me, Son of man, these bones are the whole house of Israel: behold, they say, Our bones are **dried**, and our hope is lost: we are cut off for our parts. Therefore prophecy and say unto them, Thus saith the Lord GOD; Behold, O my people, I will open your graves, and cause you to come up out of your graves, and bring you into the land of Israel. And ye shall know that I am the LORD, when I have opened your graves, O my people, and brought you up out of your graves, And shall put my spirit in you, and ye shall live, and I shall place you in your own land: then shall ye know that I the LORD have spoken it, and performed it, saith the LORD.*

This is obviously a picture of God's capacity to bring broken, **dead, corrupt** things back to life - by His Spirit or breath and words. We also recall the story of Elijah and the woman's son whose breath left him. And we read in 1st Kings 17:17

And it came to pass after these things, that the son of the woman, the mistress of the house, fell sick; and his sickness was so sore, that there was no breath left in him. And she said unto Elijah, What have I to do with thee, O thou man of God? art thou come unto me to call my sin to remembrance, and to slay my son? And he said unto her, Give me thy son. And he took him out of her bosom, and carried him up into a loft, where he abode, and laid him upon his own bed. And he cried unto the LORD, and said, O LORD my God, hast thou also brought evil upon the widow with whom I sojourn, by slaying her son? And he stretched himself upon the child three

times, and cried unto the LORD, and said, O LORD my God, I pray thee, let this child's soul come into him again. And the LORD heard the voice of Elijah; and the soul of the child came into him again, and he revived. And Elijah took the child, and brought him down out of the chamber into the house, and delivered him unto his mother: and Elijah said, See, thy son liveth. And the woman said to Elijah, Now by this I know that thou art a man of God, and that the word of the LORD in thy mouth is truth.

Then in 2nd Kings 4:18 we read about Elisha and another revival - this one is even more on point to this creation being discussed. In the story Elisha the prophet is staying with what was called a Shunamite family (but was not there at the time) and we read beginning at verse 18 where it says:

*And when the child (of the Shunamite woman) was grown, it fell on a day, that he went out to his father to the reapers. And he said unto his father, My head, my head. And he said to a lad, Carry him to his mother. And when he had taken him, and brought him to his mother, he sat on her knees till noon, and then **died**. And she went up, and laid him on the bed of the man of God, and shut the door upon him, and went out.*

So, the woman goes out to get Elisha. Elisha sends a servant with a staff to touch the child, but it doesn't work. So, he goes himself with the woman (verse 32)

And when Elisha was come into the house, behold, the child was dead, and laid upon his bed. He went in therefore, and shut the door upon them twain, and prayed unto the LORD. And he went up, and lay upon the child, and put his mouth upon his mouth, and his eyes upon his eyes, and his hands upon his hands: and he stretched himself upon the child; and the flesh of the child waxed warm. Then he returned, and walked in the house to and fro; and went up, and stretched himself upon him: and the child sneezed seven times, and the child opened his eyes. And he sent word to the mother who fell at his feet in gratitude.

Moving out to the Apostolic record we remember when Jesus is with his disciples after his resurrection in John 20:19. There, it says,

Then the same day at evening, being the first day of the week, when the doors were shut where the disciples were assembled for fear of the Jews, came Jesus and stood in the midst, and saith unto them, Peace be unto you. And when he had so said, he shewed unto them his hands and his side. Then were the disciples glad,

when they saw the Lord. Then said Jesus to them again, Peace be unto you: as my Father hath sent me, even so send I you. And when he had said this, he breathed on them, and saith unto them, Receive ye the Holy Spirit: Whose soever sins ye remit, they are remitted unto them; and whose soever sins ye retain, they are retained.

All of these stories evidence the Spirit bringing dead things life, of revival, and regeneration. And so, in the very act of creating our world God's spirit brooded like a hen over her eggs and then restored, reframed, or brought the **chaotic** and **hollow** elements together. Again, and for emphasis, we can see that the living God is a God who loves fixing things, broken things, damaged things. He loves taking the broken and **hollow** and binding and filling them up. Restoring, reusing, and bringing lost and dead things back to life.

I would suggest that this same God hates waste amidst His creations and seeks to restore, repurpose, recycle everything - but especially those things made in His image - who are human beings.

Of all people groups today, many Christians, because of errant eschatology, see this world as their own ash tray. This observation is not a political statement - I care nothing about politics - though the subject of ecology has been so politicized that it actually causes many in the faith to assume attitudes (relative to conservation) which are contrary to the attitude of God Himself. I mean look at the laws of the harvest God imposes on the Children of Israel and how they went to great lengths to save every piece of fruit from a tree - even the pieces that fell to the ground and grew soft and virtually unusable! And we would be remiss if we didn't point out (again) that after Jesus multiplied bread and fish in John 6:12 He says:

"When they were filled, he said unto his disciples, Gather up the fragments that remain, that nothing be lost."

If Jesus was concerned with gathering up fragments of fish and bread (that He miraculously created) so that nothing is lost, and God restores the elements of the earth and uses them again, perhaps we as believers today ought to be the world leaders in recycling and caring for this world rather than indifferent to our environment! But even more to the point is the need to see the value of every living soul made in His image and realize that the worth of one of His human creations is beyond our comprehension and God is not flippant about their present state nor their eternal destinations.

Like the flippant attitude many Christians have toward the world and its condition and resources, it stuns me that this very same attitude is passed along by some believers toward other people or people groups when they readily assign them to hell. Some go so far as to look at the world with glee thinking that God can't wait to banish them to a burning eternity. This attitude is not consistent with the Creation account nor with the manner in which God speaks to the world and its inhabitants through scripture. Yes, God is just. So just that He sent His Son to save us all "while we were yet sinners" and by Him experiencing **death** for all, all have had the price of sin paid. In full.

This view is significant and ought to be taken into account when we observe the world around us and its inhabitants. There appears to be an immediate need among believers to approach all people with more longsuffering, with more mercy, more patience, and more "hope in all things," and "believing all things." Perhaps there is a tacit call on the Children of God to partnership with Him, by and through His Spirit, with an aim to help restore all people abiding in the **chaos** and **dark** of this **world** with the hope of bringing them to new life whenever possible.

If there is, we might ask ourselves, "How?" And my reply would be, "the same way God Himself took the **void, dark** earth and gave it new life - through His words and His spirit!"

Then we come to verse three which appears to give us some of the specific measures God did to create the world. And Moses, with very succinct words, says, describing the first day in verses 3

"And God said, Let there be light: and there was light."

This decree is one central to His personal character and make-up - He speaks Words, and they create or bring light, illumination and therefore an ability to see, perceive, understand, comprehend.

God said, *"Let there be LIGHT and there WAS light!"*

These things - "words" and "light" - are mentioned in other places in scripture. Consider

Proverb 1:23 "Turn you at my reproof: behold, I will pour out my spirit unto you, I will make known my words unto you."

Isaiah 59:21 says "As for me, this is my covenant with them, saith the LORD; My spirit that is upon thee, and my words which I have put in thy mouth, shall not depart out of thy mouth, nor out of

the mouth of thy seed, nor out of the mouth of thy seed's seed, saith the LORD, from henceforth and for ever."

Remember Jesus said, in John 6:63

"It is the spirit that gives life; the flesh profits nothing: the words that I speak unto you, they are spirit, and they are life."

Paul even said in 1st Corinthians 2:4

*"And my speech and my preaching was not with enticing words of man's **wisdom**, but in demonstration of the Spirit and of power."*

All of this is present in the Creation account and first three verses of it! **Darkness**, God speaks, and BOOM! Light!

Now let's go to verse 4 of Genesis 1 where we read,

*"And God saw the light, that it was good: and God divided the light from the **darkness**."*

Go back to how Moses describes the **chaotic void** which the Spirit of God brooded over. This, I again suggest, is the direct result of there being a complete "**absence of God**" which results in **chaos, emptiness, purposelessness** and frankly **chaotic** waste. It is the absence of Light, the **absence of** warmth, the **absence of** order and meaning and in these absence there is *the presence of **chaos and death***. **Darkness** is merely the **absence of** Light just as cold is merely the **absence of heat**. We don't measure cold, we measure the lack of heat. We don't measure **dark**, we measure the **absence of** Light.

Light is real.

Heat is real.

Dark and cold are not (not in any measurable sense).

In order to drive **darkness** out of a room we bring light in. We cannot remove the **dark** from a room in any other way. We can't shovel it up and bring it out in wheelbarrows. In order to liberate the hearts and minds of souls we seek to illuminate them with the Light of Truth, the presence of God, by and through the words we speak which are spirit and truth! The words of truth that we speak by the Spirit illuminate the ignorant **darkness** of their Godless minds and serve to bring people to life! To know the truth, Jesus said, is to be set free. And truth is discovered by, through and in Light when God gives it. In the **Dark** we are **blind**, cannot see, trip, fall and languish in **death**. And so, God said, with His Words

in the creation of our world, "Let there be Light." And in the very first day of His creative act God "divided the light from **darkness.**"

Ezekiel valley's of bones, Old Testament sons lying dead, people living in ignorance, an earth **without form** and sitting in a **dark chaotic** mass - all **hollowed** out and dead but all experience the Spirit of Truth, the Spirit of God which illuminates as it enters into each situation, giving real life to the people and objects involved. Because this is "all the same God doing the same things," Paul wrote in 2nd Corinthians 4:6

*For God, who commanded the light to shine out of **darkness**, hath shined in our hearts, to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ.*

And so, as illuminated children, restored children, we bear within us what Paul described as, "the light of the knowledge of the Glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ." Possessing this incomprehensible gift, we seek, strive and desire all people to choose to become children of Light which will enable them to let the **dark** within and around them fade from existence.

To me, God's Light is synonymous with authenticity, genuineness, and resist acts, words, and lives of deception or phoniness. It is not easy abiding in the light and sometimes it is neither rewarding or accepted but authenticity is central to right relationship with the living God and authentic living. I am not talking about appearing translucent or transparent. I am talking about the hard cold reality of actually being transparent because when we are, we are . . . truly free. Any substitute, any **counterfeit** is merely an act of deception which incorporate **shadow** into our lives, hearts and minds and hinder our truly having a genuine relationship with our Maker and operating at our full capacity as creations made in His image.

Think about his in our own lives. In order to genuinely be in a relationship with another person there has to be transparency, honesty and the presence of facts. If a husband never lets his wife know "the real him," the wife can never truly love the man that he is - she can only love what he pretends to be. Therefore, in the **absence of** true knowledge, true love cannot exist!

As a result, believers have to be very wary of embracing **counterfeits** in authentic living before God - **counterfeit** spouses, **counterfeit** actions, **counterfeit** gods or any other thing that is not His Light, His Spirit, His Word and His Truth. These things

cannot and will not lend to authentic living or lasting love. Light is the first of four principal "L" Words by which Christians enter into a relationship with God. Jesus was teaching among the Jews and while He was rejected by most present at that time, we do read in John 8:30 that as He spoke,

"many believed on Him."

These were able to "see" and being illuminated by His word, were able and even willing to then believe. When people abide in the **dark** they cannot see, and therefore they cannot perceive, and therefore they cannot believe. For this reason, we read in John 12:37-40

*But though he had done so many miracles before them, yet they believed not on him: That the saying of Esaias the prophet might be fulfilled, which he spake, Lord, who hath believed our report? and to whom hath the arm of the Lord been revealed? Therefore, they could not believe, because that Esaias said again, He (meaning the **God of the world** at that time, **Satan**) hath **blinded** their eyes, and hardened their heart; that they should not see with their eyes, nor understand with their heart, and be converted, and I should heal them.*

Interestingly, and as a comment on the sinister nature of Reformed Theology, we can't help but notice what Jesus said to those who believed on Him -

"If you continue in my word you are my disciples indeed and you will know the truth and the truth will set you free."

But I digress. So, let's go back to the Creation account in Genesis. Most commentators, even most Christians today, believe that what we are reading here in these first five verses is God creating our earthly time structure of twenty-four hour days and nights which, of course, are established by the earth orbiting around a fixed sun. This thinking is reinforced by the next verse which describes the first day of the creation where Moses writes:

*"And God called the light Day, and the **darkness** he called **Night**. And the evening and the morning were the first day."*

Because of verse 5, some commentators (and most Christians) reading the Bible on their own believe that these passages are describing our days and nights - meaning the first twenty-four hour period. I don't agree. At all. Relative to day and night, and the seasons, the Psalmist wrote Psalm 74:16-17:

"The day is thine, the night also is thine: thou hast prepared the light and the sun. Thou hast set all the borders of the earth: thou hast made summer and winter."

There is a bit of a glitch in the chronology of events however, because while the passage certainly says that God "called the light Day and the **Darkness Night**" and added that "the evening and the morning were the first day," we don't have a sun, moon or stars yet created! And that doesn't happen until the fourth day of the narrative! So, we have a decision to make - is what Moses says here speaking to our days and nights, our evenings and mornings in some "non-literal sunlight" manner, OR when God said, "let there be light" is the net result God dividing the light from the **darkness** in some *other* manner?

In my estimation, these verses are describing God dividing the **Godless, dead, chaotic Dark** by inserting Himself, meaning Light - which drove the **Darkness** away.

If this is so, which it seems to be for me, why then does Moses write, *"and God called the light Day and the **darkness Night**?"*

Simply put, God identified the light that shined into the **dark** here with the title, "Day," and He identified the **dark** (present here) by the title, "**Night.**"

Let's look at verse 5 more closely by consulting the Hebrew:

Genesis 1:5 And God <'elohiyim> called <qara'> the light <'owr> Day, <yowm> and the **darkness** <choshek> he called <qara'> **Night**. <layil> And the evening <'ereb> and the morning <boqer> were the first <'echad> day. <yowm>

"light" is "owr" (which means illumination)
but "day" is "yowm" (which can mean a warm age or space)

But **darkness** is *choshek* (which best means, misery, destruction, **death**, ignorance, sorrow, wickedness and obscurity) and **Night** is *layil* (which means "to twist away, and/or adversity").

Light = *owr* = illumination
Day = *yowm* = warm space or age

AND

Darkness = *chosek* = misery, **death**, ignorance
Night = *layil* = to twist away/adversity

Appealing to all of this, we can say that God called Day "the illumination a warm age or space," and that He called the **Night** "**miserable twisted away adversity.**" And in all of this we might see this first day representing not our twenty-four hour days and nights but God separating the "cold miserable obscurity of adversity" by and through "His warm illumination."

In doing this God might have made a way for the creative process that would follow to be void of all defects and ultimately allow God to look upon it all when He is done and call it "good." Before we move on, notice something interesting about the terms Night and Day in scripture. Not always, but often **Night**, is depicted as a place of evil or evil deeds in scripture. Such deeds would indeed occur by a twisting away from all that is God. Job speaks of **Night** frequently and says things like:

*"Desire not the **night**, when people are cut off in their place."
Job 36:20*

We recall that Paul wrote in Romans 13:12

*"The night is far spent, the day is at hand: let us therefore cast off the works of **darkness**, and let us put on the armor of light."*

And then he added in 1st Thessalonians 5:5

*"Ye are all the children of light, and the children of the day: we are not of the **night**, nor of **darkness.**"*

It's really interesting that Paul uses all four of the same words we find in verse 5 of Genesis - light, day, **darkness** and **night** in that passage. What is also intriguing is the New Jerusalem (which is above) is described by John this way in Revelation 22:5

*"And there shall be no **night** there; and they need no candle, neither light of the sun; for the Lord God giveth them light: and they shall reign for ever and ever."*

In my estimation, **Night** in Genesis (and other places) is emblematic of either the **Darkness** or **Satan** when he reigned and **blinded**, ruined, and kept **the world** in **death**. This is why Paul wrote in 2nd Corinthians 4:4, speaking of **Satan** (in that day)

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

This brings us to the Day (with a capital D in the KJV) where God called the **Dark** Night and He called the light Day (with a capital D). I further suggest that this "Day" speaks of what would be born, Jesus of Nazareth, God's very Word made flesh, and whom John also describes as the Light that came into **the world**. In Numbers 24:17 we read the following prophetic words:

"I shall see him, but not now: I shall behold him, but not nigh: there shall come a Star out of Jacob, and a Sceptre shall rise out of Israel, and shall smite the corners of Moab, and destroy all the children of Sheth."

Moving out to the Apostolic Record, the Apostle Peter says something intriguing in his second epistle chapter 1:19 where we read:

*"We have also a more sure word of prophecy; whereunto ye do well that ye take heed, as unto a light that shineth in a **dark** place, until the day dawn, and the Daystar arise in your hearts."*

That term, Daystar, also called, the "morning star," because it is the first star in the sky to illuminate the **dark night** and introduce morning (or day) is a name given to Jesus of Nazareth, as Revelation 2:28 says,

"And I will give him the morning star."

Then in the last chapter of the Revelation (22) Jesus himself says in verse 16

"I am the root and the offspring of David, and the bright and morning star."

Taking this all in, my point is to say that in the beginning, at the creation of heaven and earth, God said, (with WORDS) "let there be light" (which speaks to what would become Jesus of Nazareth) and (then) he called the **dark Night** (emblematic of evil, **Satan, dark dead chaos**). And (then) He called the light, Day, (which was emblematic of His Son, the Day Star) and these two expressions are what all of human existence diligently pursues with the life and time that they have been given on earth - Light or **Dark**.

These things set the stage for how we will proceed from here.

Chapter 2

Two Trees

We left off talking about the Creation period and God calling the light Day with a capital D and the **dark** Night with a capital N. At this point we start to get a little deeper into the realms of conjecture - take it for what it's worth and test all things - (especially me) but hold fast to what is good.

So now let's talk about **Satan** and Eve.

For starters, and from all I have been taught and understand, **Satan** was a created angel that was once good. We read about him in Job and his interacting with God in the trial and temptation of the man and there are other references to him, of course in the Tanakh and in the Apostolic Record. We can't truly support **Satan** as a created angel from scripture because the prooftext that teaches this is contextually talking about the King of Tyre. Most Christian scholars assume that description has a double application with the being described also, being **Satan**. The passages I am referencing are found in Ezekiel 28 beginning at verse 12 where we read:

*Ezekiel 28:12 Son of man, take up a lamentation upon the king of Tyrus, and say unto him, Thus saith the Lord GOD; Thou sealest up the sum, full of wisdom, and perfect in beauty. Thou hast been in Eden the garden of God; every precious stone was thy covering, the sardius, topaz, and the diamond, the beryl, the onyx, and the jasper, the sapphire, the emerald, and the carbuncle, and gold: the workmanship of thy tabrets and of thy pipes was prepared in thee in the day that thou wast created. Thou art the anointed cherub that covereth; and I have set thee so: thou wast upon the holy mountain of God; thou hast walked up and down in the midst of the stones of fire. Thou wast perfect in thy ways from the day that thou wast created, till iniquity was found in thee. By the multitude of thy merchandise they have filled the midst of thee with violence, and thou hast sinned: therefore I will cast thee as profane out of the mountain of God: and I will destroy thee, O covering cherub, from the midst of the stones of fire. Thine heart was **lifted up** because of thy beauty, thou hast corrupted thy wisdom by reason of thy brightness: I will cast thee to the ground, I will lay thee before kings, that they may behold thee. Thou hast defiled thy sanctuaries by the multitude of thine iniquities, by the iniquity of thy traffick; therefore will I bring forth a fire from the midst of thee, it shall devour thee, and I will bring thee to ashes upon the earth in the sight of all them that behold thee. All they that know thee among the people shall be astonished at thee: thou shalt be a terror, and never shalt thou be any more.*

The passage that is of interest here is the one that reads:

"Thou was perfect in thy ways from the day that thou wast created, until iniquity was found in thee."

What caused this "perfectly created cherub" to turn from God? And where did the iniquity come from that was found in the being created perfectly? I suggest that the cherub (called **Satan**) was drawn away from the presence of God by what we might refer to as "the **Dark**" with a capital D.

The effects, outcome and even the very existence of this **Dark** was represented in the "**chaotic void**" that God's spirit hovered over in the creation. Perhaps this **power**, this force, this **absence of God** somehow drew or **seduced Satan** to pursue it and its ways of Godlessness and in this perfect cherubs case, caused him to try and be or replace God himself. Since God is the Light, then the source of **non-God** could be called the **Dark**, and as we learned in the first chapter, this **Dark** and can be defined as

"miserable twisted-away adversity."

Isn't his description synonymous with the **absence of God** who is light, life, love and liberty? In other words, since **Satan** had to be drawn away from the presence of God by something, perhaps it was that he was **seduced**, or **twisted away** by something supremely **empty, hollow, dark** and **self-centered** - like a giant **black hole** from which nothing can escape? Perhaps this something was actually the immense **power** of a huge **Nothing** that sucked **Satan** in with its principles and philosophies of **self**? The **absence of God**, then, might be defined as the presence of **self-will** stepping in and assuming control - which, apparently, when ultimately expressed, actually seeks to replace the will, ways and person of God with the "will and ways" of something "other?"

I'm not so sure how to describe this **Darkness**, this **Night**, this **absence of God**. I do not think we can personify it, or see it as a person or entity, so to speak, but It does seem to be an extremely **powerful** force or influence that exists **opposite God** - so **powerful** that it had the capacity to cause a perfectly created cherub to abandon a direct relationship with the living God by all that it seemed to offer him. The reason I am pursuing this is multi-fold but the first thing I want to point out is that **Satan** was not the author or creator of the **Dark**, but instead fell into Its clutches.

Of course, we can't really say because we don't really know.

The second thing relative to the Garden scene is to point out that "Eve fell *BEFORE* she fell." Have you ever thought of this? Re-read this line before continuing on. It's important. Eve, perhaps like **Satan**, was drawn away from God in and through her own personal traits because she chose to eat the forbidden fruit before she ate the forbidden fruit! Yes, the serpent (**Satan**) **seduced** her, but he had zero **power** over her at that point because she hadn't yet disobeyed God! In the end, she was the only one who could make the choice to eat the forbidden fruit and she made that choice before she ate of it and fell into sin! What does this tell us? It tells us that human beings were created with the capacity to choose evil, and even do evil, and that while she and Adam were created good, Eve, before her teeth sank into that forbidden fruit, chose to defy God and His command to refuse the fruit all together.

The point in all of this is to suggest, looking first at the Creation, then to **Satan** and then to Eve, that there has always existed the pull and **power** of **Darkness** in creation and the created, that it calls to all creatures to embrace it's will and ways, and that its ways can be defined as ways are not the ways of God. They are **opposite of Him** and His light, truth, life, love and actually work to replace Him, **oppose** Him and/or offer alternatives to His will. And in the end It's ways are always **self-directed**, **self-appointed**, **opposite** of God and therefore absent of Him all together.

If we really think about it, this **power** always offers itself up as an alternative, even as a **counterfeit**, to Him who is the real McCoy. For the earth it was an existence that roiled in the **Dark** cold emptiness of space, for **Satan** it was the promise to make Him equal to God, for Eve it was the **counterfeit** fruit to the fruit from the Tree of Life. These **counterfeits** are the focus of this book. To try and expose them and what they offer. So, there is God - who is light, truth, love, compassion, justice, mercy, patience, kindness, goodness, holiness and all the rest and then there is what exists in opposition to all things that He truly is - a **dark powerful, seducing** realm of things "**twisted away**" from Him and leading to a **dark chaotic void** called **death**.

Yet for some reason (that probably cannot be adequately described here) the creations of God - from the cherub named **Satan** once perfect, to Eve and then Adam whom God said were very Good, on out to every single human being made in His Image, all of us, individually and collectively and in most cases with all of our might, choose to embrace some form or another of It; some form of **self-will**, of other truths, of the **absence of God**, and therefore,

some form of sin, which is the twisting away from the presence of Him who lives. These choices end in **Death** which, again, is the **absence of God** Himself! I think that we must admit that there is certainly **power** in the **Dark; powers** that thrive in the **absence of God** and perhaps grow stronger the further they get from His presence and will. This **seductive self-centered dark power** is summarized in scripture as "**lust and pride**" or what John describes as "*all that is in **the world.***"

When the fallen but **powerful** cherub **seduced** Eve with the forbidden fruit, we read what it was about that fruit that enticed her in the first place, and Genesis 3:6 says

*"And when the woman saw that the tree was good for food, and that it was pleasant to the eyes, and a tree to be desired to make one **wise**, she took of the fruit thereof, and did eat, and gave also unto her husband with her; and he did eat."*

Interestingly, we read that two of the things that drew her toward **dark, self-willed** action, was *that the*

"tree was good for food, and that it was pleasant to the eyes,"

but these are also enticements God himself gave in the other trees of the Garden that He encouraged them to eat. In fact, in Genesis 2:9 we read

"And out of the ground made the LORD God to grow every tree that is pleasant to the sight, and good for food,"

From this we know that in this life it is acceptable to God for His creations to be enticed and toward thriving because it was these very features God gave all the fruit that caused them to eat. And these things are what causes humans to consume and desire things - they either "*look appealing*" or they are "*good for food,*" meaning they sustain us. But the difference between all the other trees in the Garden that God made and the forbidden tree of **knowledge** of Good and Evil is that Eve saw that that fruit would also "*make her wise.*" She could have gotten wisdom from God directly as she had direct access to Him, but she desired to embrace what would **make her wise**, which we might see as a short cut to wisdom, so to speak, or something that would allow her to act and live by and through her own **wisdom** and ways instead of looking to God and living by His.

This notion is also what this book is all about - choosing to obtain knowledge, wisdom and insights from God Himself or choosing

to obtain it from another source. Getting wisdom from God results in reliance upon Him and faith in Him and learning to trust in Him. Getting **wisdom** from "any other source," which wind up being **counterfeits** of Him, leads to **self-will**, and **pride**, and sometimes to the belief that a person doesn't even need God and maybe even that they can someday become God themselves. The bottom-line principle and **allure** of the godless **Dark**?

Self.

Pride.

Eve took of the forbidden fruit because of three factors but one of those factors was founded on an absolutely non-Godly principle. On **self; self-reliance. Self-will**. Even perhaps in replacing Him. And in **pride**. Because she saw that the fruit would **make her wise**. Same with **Satan**. Re-read what Ezekiel wrote about him.

*"Thine heart was **lifted up** because of thy beauty, thou hast corrupted thy **wisdom** by reason of thy brightness" (And so God says) "I will cast thee to the ground, I will lay thee before kings, that they may behold thee."*

And so, we have from the very beginning of creation of heaven and earth, a **Dark void**, and of God saying, "Let there be light, and then dividing the light and the **dark**, and calling the light Day (with a capital D) and the **Dark NIGHT** (with a capital N). And from all of this I maintain a principle about all of existence for you to consider here and now -

There is an eternal duality that has always existed and always will exist. The first side of this duality is God, who has forever existed, is uncreated, and is Light, Love and Good and the second side, also uncreated and forever existing, is the **absence of God**, which we can call, "**Night**" or **Dark**" or "the twisting away." If we were to diagram these dualistic components we would see on the One end perfect Light, Perfect Love, Perfect Glory, even a consuming fire that gives life (God) and on the **opposite** end we would see absolute black, the **absence of all light**, the **absence of all Love**, and the presence of complete evil - which is utterly and completely lifeless.

If we could draw it, it might look like this:



I suggest that there is an ongoing battle between God and His existence (Light, Love, Light, Liberty) and everything else that

exists **outside** of Him (which is **shadow, shade, dark and death**). I honestly believe that this is the basis of the proving ground in which we all live, and every human being is choosing what to embrace and how to live. Scripture makes it clear that no human being who has ever live on earth has ever truly lived according to God and His will *excepting* His only Human Son, Jesus of Nazareth, the very Light that came into the **world**, the Very Word of God made flesh, the Very son of His Spirit which overshadowed Mary when she conceived. I maintain that "God so loved the **world** that He Gave His only begotten Son to save us from the wages of our sin (which can be summarized as our turning to the **power** of the **Dark** and earning **Death**) and in so doing He had - again "had" - the ultimate victory over **Satan**, that tool of the **Dark**, who **seduced** Eve into joining him in his grasp at **pride** and **self-will**.

I submit that where we read in Revelation 20:10

*"And the **devil** that deceived them was cast into the lake of fire and brimstone, where the beast and the false prophet are, and shall be tormented day and night for ever and ever."*

and in Revelation 20:14, which says,

*"And **death** and hell were cast into the lake of fire. This is the second **death**."*

that due to proper eschatology these passages have been fulfilled, and that even though **Satan** the tempter and accuser of the brethren (according to the Law) has been cast into the Lake of Fire, the **Dark void** of Godlessness forever remains operational and has used - and uses - innumerable ploys that play specifically to the **pride** and **self-will** in all of us, twisting us from Him as effectively and often as possible.

Now, here is something key to understanding the choice to appeal to the **Dark void** of Godlessness instead of to Him - every time we eat of the forbidden fruit from the Tree of **Knowledge** of Good and **Evil** the results can be deemed, in this **world**, as either being Good or **Evil**. Isn't that amazing. That we can actually dine on forbidden fruit that gives us insights on both Good and Evil - but the eating always leads to **death**! Let me repeat this.

In the choice of appealing to the **Dark void** of **Godlessness** that always has existed - the acts and results of these choices can be categorized as either Good or Evil, but they are activities that will always lead to **death**. Why? (Listen carefully - it is a principle upon which this book is based!) It's because anything

that is not of or from God is not eternal in nature. Why? Because they are created, done and achieved from a place of the **self-will** and from **pride** which fruits cannot abide in His presence. Therefore, because they are ways, and philosophies and processes that are not ordered from Him, and because they do not originate from Him, they will not, cannot thrive in the presence of Him and therefore lead to **death** even if they can be deemed "good" here.

Perhaps the words from James will help round out what I mean as he says in verse 13 of chapter 1 of his epistle,

*"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: but every man is tempted, when he is drawn away of his own **lust**, and enticed."*

Notice here that James says nothing of **Satan**, but plainly says that

"every one is tempted, when they are drawn away of their own lust, and enticed"

This speaks to what we were saying about both **Satan**, who was made perfect and then also to Eve, who was also made perfect and without sin - they were "drawn away of their own **lust**" even though they were perfectly created beings. Then James continues and says

*"Then when **lust** hath conceived, it bringeth forth sin: and sin, when it is finished, bringeth forth **death**. Do not err, my beloved brethren. Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, and cometh down from the Father of lights, with whom is no **variableness**, neither **shadow** of turning."*

*"Every good gift (meaning it is good because it is from God and of His will and ways and not good in a moral or earthly sense) "is bestowed upon us by the Father of Lights, in whom there is no **variableness** nor **shadow of turning**."*

To me, this suggests that whatever is not from God, but is the result of our **own will**, ways, **lust** or **pride** is ultimately from another source (which I will generally call, the Fruit from the Tree of **Knowledge** of Good and **Evil**), which will not only fade and be lost, but it will all lead to the "**death**," of whatever it afforded the eater. It is by this principle that Jesus plainly said in Matthew 7:22-23

*"Many will say to me in that day, Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in thy name? and in thy name have cast out **devils**? and in thy name*

done many wonderful works? And then will I profess unto them, I never knew you: depart from me, ye that work iniquity."

Isn't that fascinating? That Jesus will say that many will say to Him, "Lord, Lord" in "that day" and these were they who

1. Prophesied in His name
2. Cast out **devils** in His name
3. And did many wonderful works

but that His response to them would be, "*Depart from me you who work iniquity - I never knew you.*" The implications are profound and direct. Let's approach it another way.

If we ask most people today the question, "*Does God approve of our doing wonderful works?*" Most would say, "*Oh, yes. God is good and doing Good is of God so if we do wonderful works God will approve and receive both the works and those who do them.*" According to the words of Jesus, this view is inaccurate! And this is my point - only those things which are from His will and ways, from the Light, and the Love, and from His Goodness, by His Spirit can be considered lasting, "life-giving" and therefore "truly good," and everything else (LISTEN) . . .

No matter how good it looks!

No matter how effective it is!

No matter how much value it appears to have in **this world!**

. . . if it is of **this world**, and from the **will and ways of Man**, especially if it is done from **pride** or **lust** it therefore end and have zero value in the heavenly economy. This is why John the Beloved wrote in his 1st epistle chapter 2 verse 16

*"For all that is in **the world**, the **lust** of the flesh, and the **lust** of the eyes, and the **pride** of life, is not of the Father, but is of **the world.**"*

Of **the world** means, it pertains to **this world**. It's value and benefits are applicable to the here and now. So again, if the acts we do are the product of "**lust of the flesh, lust of the eyes and/or the pride of Life**" they are fruit not from the Tree of Life but from the tree of **knowledge** of GOOD and EVIL! And the end-results of eating from that tree are what? **Death**. Which is why God said to Adam:

"If you eat of the fruit of that tree you will surely die."

In other words, eating the fruit from the Tree of **knowledge** of (both) good and **evil** results in **death** of the individual because that **knowledge**, that **carnal wisdom** is driven by **lust** and **pride** and cannot lend to genuine Life and Living. Only to **death**. Look at it this way -

The **dark void**, created by the **absence of God** and in which there is no life (because God was not there nor in it) has "a tree," if you will. It is a single tree and when anyone chooses to eat of the fruit of that tree the end result is **death**. That fruit may even do wonders in this life. It might bring **fame, power, wealth** or even longevity. But in the end, and relative to Him and His Kingdom, those who eat of it "have their reward" (in the here and now) because it is only in the here and now where such exist.

Notice that the tree offers **knowledge** of Good and evil that leads to **death**. But this is not "spiritual knowledge" that comes from the Tree of Life, but **carnal knowledge** (even **knowledge of the Dark**) and it is this **knowledge** by which this present **world** operates and thrives.

What motivates, leads and drives people to eat from that tree are the very same motives that caused **Satan** to turn and Eve to rebel. **Self** over God, **pride** over contrition, **this world** over the promises of the world to come. Upon these principles everyone is **seduced** and draw away of their own **lusts**.

In the Garden of Eden, the first couple had the choice - live, act and operate by the will of God (which leads to life) and to freely eat from the Tree of Life or to live, act and operate by their own will (which again, leads to **death**) which was emblematic or captured in the eating from the Tree of **knowledge** of Good and **Evil**. The end result, like that of the earth that God brooded over, was **death, darkness** and **the absence of Him**.

Interestingly, this **knowledge** provided by the forbidden fruit can do and can actually look good (like the religious works done by people) or it can do and look evil (like the results from criminals), but it is all from the same forbidden tree!

Obviously, the **counterfeits** are **alluring, seductive**, and they often reward partakers in the here and now. But in the end, all of it, no matter what it produces here, will ultimately end at the grave leaving only the results from people eating from the Tree of Life. So . . .

The good that Apple and Microsoft do in this **world**? **Death**.

The good of religion empires governed by Man? **Death.**

The good alternative medicines and drug use bring? **Death.**

The viability and rewards from The Law of Attraction? **Death.**

The beauty of **carnal** music and the arts? **Death.**

If they are not the product of the Tree of Life, even if they work and benefit us in this, in the here and now, accomplishing what appears to be Good, they are all effectively saying,

My will.

My ways.

My desires.

and may even cause some to say to God,

"Lord, Lord have we not done many wonderful works" and He will apparently deny knowing them!

Before we wrap this chapter up, remember my postulation that **Dark** has always existed and that we should defined It as **the absence of God**? We might see the forbidden fruit as composed of the fruit of **knowledge** of Good and **Evil** as a fruit of **Dark wisdom** or **Dark knowledge** (because it lacks originating from the Living God) and ultimately draws people from His will and ways. A **self-willed**, Godless person may desire "from within themselves" to perform Good works (like feeding or clothing the poor) or they may desire to do evil (like mocking or ignoring the poor) but all the fruit from the Tree of **Knowledge** of Good and **Evil** leads to . . . **death** (or life **outside** the Kingdom of God above) where entrance is only possible by those who "diligently sought" Him and to do His will and ways and not their own.

If you are driven by a **godless self-will** to heal the sick, or to feed the poor, or to do many wonderful works, they might mean something here but will amount to **nothing** in the heavenly economy if God was not behind them. Let Him be the judge.

Such acts, ideas, talents, inventions, insights, philosophies, **fame, wealth** will all **die** - therefore they only appear to be Good and they only appear to be of God in the here and now. At the same time, **godless self-willed** souls may choose to do evil deeds instead of Good and instead of creating corporations and great inspiring literature or entertainment, medicines or philosophies for living,

these seek to cause harm and depravity as they prey on others and **selfishly** take what is not theirs to take.

These too obviously face the same end - banishment from God for He does not know them. But it seems that because they are based on choosing evil instead of good as a result of eating from the forbidden tree, the **dark** in them is greater and the results seem to contribute to afterlife existences that are destined to places of greater **darkness** thriving just **outside** His Kingdom of Light.

In the face of scripture there appears to be those who choose to truly seek Him and to allow Him and His will in their lives, but there are also those who are not so inclined but still seek to live good productive lives. And then we have those who are neither - they have no interest in God nor are they interested in doing works that benefit the **world** and choose, instead, to cause pain. According to the biblical text, the first will live in the light of God and His Kingdom, the second will live in some sort of greyish realm **outside** of that Kingdom and the third type will exist in the black environs far removed from Him all together. Not due to punishment, but as their reward as scripture makes it plain that we will all "reap what we sow!" (Galatians 6:7) Herein is the long explanation for people who say things like,

"I don't believe in God, but I do Good. I live a Good Life. I give to the poor. I obey the Laws of the Land - if that's not good enough for God, then whatever."

What they are really saying between the lines is no different from what both **Satan**, Eve and Adam said when they acted indifferently to the will of God - "It's **my will**. **I will do** what I want with my existence, and I really have no interest in pursuing the will of God in the least."

In and through these attitudes what they are really saying is, "I do not care about God. I do not love Him, nor seek Him, nor will I diligently seek Him. Instead, I will seek anything and everything but Him." Such seek high and low and try any and every **counterfeit** - including their own good works, but in the face of this attitude they prove they do not want to be in relationship with Him. And their lives - whether lived by **counterfeits** that produced Good or Evil - will end in **death** and they will exist **outside** of the presence of God, who is true life and light and love.

Get it?

For this reason, Jesus, the last or second Adam, when He came to earth, also faced the three same temptations from the hand of **Satan** in the wilderness that Eve faced. We can summarize these temptations as

"Feed **yourself**."

"Prove **yourself**,"and

"Gain something for **yourself**."

Self. Self. Self.

But to each temptation Jesus resorted to the will and ways of the Living God and NOT what would work for Him or bless His existence. I would be willing to bet Jesus would automatically reject all appeals to **the Prosperity Gospel, the Law of Attraction, Positive Mental Attitude** and the religious appeals in this day. For Him, it was only the will of the Father. Same for all who are His yesterday, today and forever. Each and every one of us, in this life, are constantly choosing. Before we move on to the specifics in the next chapters (including why I am so personally interested in all of this) we are going to do a quick simplified overview of what the Bible says exists in our day and age relative to the afterlife.

Chapter 3 Overview of Fulfillment

If you have been with us for any length of time you will know that I believe that most of the biblical narrative has been fulfilled. What this means is I see all of the passages speaking to events that are over and done with the exception of the few that speak to an eternally increasing Kingdom, (Isaiah 9:6) how God would relate to human beings today, (Jeremiah 31:31-34) and the way John describes the Heavenly realm once the former age of religion was over. (Revelation 20-22:5)

This is not to say the Bible should be discarded - not in the least as we read it, study it, and search it for countless principles of the faith that remain vital to our understanding God and His Son, and therefore what it looks like to be a Christian today in spirit and truth. So, the principles remain and should be aggressively pursued by diligent seekers, but all the material application that were pertinent to that age are over. This means Jesus has victoriously overcome all the deleterious effects of the Fall once and for all, including

Sin

God's wrath and alienation

Satan

Hell

his **power** of death and the grave,
and material religion and its demands.

The human race has ostensibly returned, spiritually, to the Garden of Eden state pre-fall, where all of us are innocent of sin (Jesus paid for it all) and are now in a place of choosing how we will live - by the will of God or by our own. This suggests then, that all people at their physical **death** will be **lifted up** to the heavenly realm, go through whatever that looks like (in its early phases) will ultimately be assessed, then given a resurrected body by God, and all will then enter the realm according to their choices.

The heavenly realm is described by John in Revelation chapters 20-22 and there we read a few significant passages, including a detailed description of the New Jerusalem where God and Christ dwell. From what he writes, God and Christ furnish the light in the New Jerusalem and while it is surrounded by a wall on every side there are twelve gates that are always open because there is no **night** therein.

After describing this heavenly kingdom John ends chapter 21 with,

And there shall in no wise enter into it any thing that defileth, neither whatsoever worketh abomination, or maketh a lie: but they which are written in the Lamb's book of life.

Chapter 22, before wrapping the Revelation up, has John add,

Revelation 22:14 *Blessed are they that do his commandments, that they may have right to the tree of life, and may enter in through the gates into the city.*

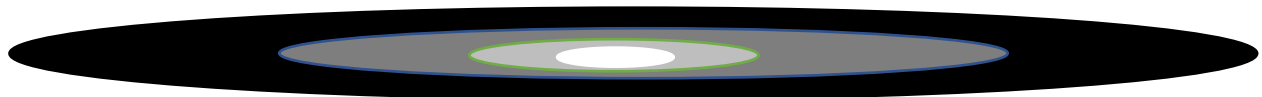
Got that? Then in the next verse John adds,

Revelation 22:15 ***Outside** are the dogs and sorcerers and fornicators and murderers and **idolaters**, and every one who loves and practices falsehood.*

So, in the age of fulfillment, with Christ having had the victory over all things, and having reconciled the **world** to the Father, all human being of faith experiences an afterlife in the Kingdom

called the New Jerusalem and are apparently rewarded by God according to agape love they gave. **Outside** that kingdom, whatever that looks like, the rest of the **world's** inhabitants reside. But remember, they are not **outside** the Kingdom because they are being punished - Christ paid the price for sin of the **world** once and for all - but these are there having received their reward for the life they chose to live absent of faith.

Perhaps most people will exist in that **outside** realm by choice. Can't really say. Perhaps some will exist there by appointment, and maybe some will be gravely disappointed by this appointment. Again, we can't really say. But I do suggest - and here comes some more conjecture, folks - but I do suggest that if we take a more literal approach to understanding these descriptions, and visualize a heavenly realm where all souls go and then are equipped by God with the resurrected body that they have merited or earned, the afterlife might be seen in the following way



Remember, God is merciful, forgiving, longsuffering and so we read that the gates to the Kingdom never close! I see this as God always and forever extending a merciful invitation to all who abide **outside** the Kingdom and back this up with passages like,

Psalm 57:10 *For thy mercy is great unto the heavens, and thy truth unto the clouds.*

and,

Psalm 86:15 *But thou, O Lord, art a God full of compassion, and gracious, longsuffering, and plenteous in mercy and truth.*

Or how about,

Psalm 100:5 *For the LORD is good; his mercy is everlasting; and his truth endures to all generations.*

This said, we have no comprehension of the price or cost to those **outside** the Kingdom for entrance. Perhaps it's just a matter of humbling oneself, or repenting, or maybe there is some extreme discomfort of soul in such a process? Who knows?

But the point is, in the face of all that we have discussed, there is a heavenly destination of Light, which is in the New Jerusalem above receiving all who lived by faith, and there is a Heavenly destination of **shadow** or **non-light** for those who didn't.

In terms of some total conjecture, which has absolutely no basis in scripture and cannot be proven correct, true or even possible, it seems to me, from everything I have read, seen and experienced, that these heavenly economies thrive, somehow, and in some degree or another, in realms of light and realms of **Dark** that are at constant war with each other, again, in some degree or another.

So, there is Light, in the Kingdom where there is no **shadow** or **Night** and there is **Dark**, which abides **outside** of the Kingdom where God is not and it there appears to have or possess a strength or **power** or pull and it seems to have always existed. Perhaps those who dwell close to the outer walls of the Kingdom have less to overcome if they choose to enter. Perhaps those who inhabit places further from the Kingdom of Light have more. And perhaps - just perhaps - there are those who dwell in the **darkest** recesses who become the actual demons of **our world**, and have the **power** given them to enter into our realm to **tempt** and **draw** us to their side?

I say this for a number of very personal reasons which we will address in the next two chapters. But biblically speaking, since **Satan** and His angels have been cast into the Lake of Fire which was prepared for them (and not for human beings) maybe there is a constant recruitment by the **Dark power** from deceased souls and those who choose to fully embrace this **power** after life actually become it. We might wonder if such that have zero interest in the things of Light or of God or of His Kingdom will somehow fight it and all who embrace Him forevermore?

With all of this in hand, lets now go to our next chapter where I will attempt to explain some of my own personal insights and experiences with the **Dark**. Again, these are not provable, nor do I expect them to be true for anyone but me, but I present them as anecdotal stories for you to consider as we explore these heavier concepts of Light and **Dark**.

Chapter 4 **Hard to believe Insights - I**

I enter into this chapter with some admitted trepidation for the simple reason I understand that anecdotal experiences are just

that - not provable stories and insights which could be seen as products of the imagination, mental defect, wishes, hallucinations, medical or mental imbalances and a whole host of other factors. I get it.

I also get that, or must admit that I am a super inclined toward something that has been labeled, *apophenia*, which is defined as "the tendency to perceive meaningful connections between unrelated things." The term was only recently coined (1958) by a psychiatrist named Klaus Conrad in a paper he wrote on the beginning stages of schizophrenia. Conrad defined apophenia as "unmotivated seeing of connections [accompanied by] a **specific feeling** of abnormal meaningfulness" and described the early stages of delusional thought as "**self**-referential over-interpretations of actual sensory perceptions," which are different than hallucinations.

Apophenia has also come to describe a human propensity to "unreasonably seek patterns in random information," such as can occur while gambling or what was represented in the Ron Howard film, "A Beautiful Mind." Some might see apophenia as **second sight**, others as the Spirit of God and/or the Spirit of Prophecy. Because I am so extremely inclined in this way (I hear patterns in traffic, machinery, music, speaking and I see patterns in print and writing, detect symbolism in film and lyrics that may or may not be there, and find connections in scripture most people never encounter) I have pursued information to help bring this tendency into check and have read a number of books that speak to the condition in some way or another (like Thomas Gilovich's, *How We Know What Isn't So*, - which is a really insightful read) and have used the information gathered to directly confront, and even call out this tendency whenever it manifests itself (which was constantly as a kid and has diminished greatly with time).

That said, I have learned to take every apparent "connection or insight" and to test the living hell out of them before I will assume they have any basis in reality (physical or spiritual) and whether I will share them or not. I am also an extremely passionate man and was once governed by my **Dark** and light **emotions** and **feelings** about things. More than most. Along with calling my tendencies toward apophenia in check I have also had to seriously counter my natural tendencies to let my **emotions** and **feeling** decide what is true and what is not. This has taken years. Interestingly, I have paradoxically become someone quite cynical in life when others present anecdotal insights, speak of connections and meaning in unrelated things, and dismiss (until proven true)

everything out the gate that is **emotionally** presented or derived. This includes but is not limited to

Ghost stories

NDES

Conspiracy theories

Visions and visitations

and anything and all religious appeals to God through **emotionalism**.

I have learned to use the Word of God as my guide and litmus test for all information, hopefully reading it contextually and by the Spirit, and then use my own reasonable mind to determine the truth. However, even though I have purposely chosen to directly confront my tendency toward apophenia, I have paradoxically still embraced what some may see as an extremely **mystical world** view and do accept things like Jungian archetypes, **other-world** beings, aliens and demons of the **Dark** as possible and not **outside** the realm of what Carl Sagan called, "the **demon-haunted world**."

I am really not sure what to say about it all except I may be wrong about some, most, or all of what I am about to share with you, in terms of its actual validity in the time/space continuum, but I stand by them and what they presently mean to me in the face of having experienced them firsthand.

In the end, I cannot explain why I am this way, nor can I tell you if anything I say (that cannot be supported by a contextual understanding of scripture) can ever be considered true or real. So, take it all with a grain of salt and if inclined, test it all by the Word, by reason, by the Spirit of Truth, and hold fast to what is good while discarding what is not.

There is perhaps no more **gnostic, esoterically** driven faith that claims Jesus on the face of the earth than Mormonism. (I exclude Jewish **kabbalism** because it rejects Jesus from this claim). Prior to my birth my parents, both natives of Los Angeles, converted to the LDS Church and were **sealed** for time and all eternity in the Los Angeles **temple**. Like the founder of Mormonism, Joseph Smith, Jun., I too was born with a caul on my head. According to folklore, a child born with a caul on their head is destined to have "**second sight**" and good luck. Throughout my life, my Dad would call me the lucky one. It didn't always seem that way.

When I was about four years old, I woke up in my bedroom and noticing that it was a particularly bright morning. I distinctly remember the sun shining through the yellow drapes hanging over the windows and filling the room with vivid yellow beams. I

remember watching it sort of bound around and **feeling** sort of filled with warmth.

Suddenly, but without any sort of terror, a woman, hanging a little bit in the air and above the floor, leaned out from the bathroom that was located just outside my room to the left. From my bed I had a clear shot into the hall and watched as she sort of blithely hung there in the air about the floor. The woman's face, **illuminated** by the light, was abnormally large and flat and bore deep pock marks that were smoothed over by what appeared to me to be something like baby oil. Her hair was blondish-red and curled and like my older sister's hair would look when she first removed her giant-sized rollers but before brushing it out. She wore a nightgown-looking frock of sorts that had small fabric ruffles at the arms and neck. Her limbs were long and lean. As she hung there staring at me, I felt neither fright nor joy - it just was, in my mind, but I had no idea what it was or what it might possibly mean.

As gently and quickly as she leaned out of the bathroom, she proceeded to lean back in and I immediately watched as my oldest sister Kathy came out of her room and walk into the bathroom after her. I didn't hear a scream or any other sort of reaction happening and so I got up and went on with my morning, assuming that she didn't see her. I never shared this vivid experience with anyone as my nature then, and even today, lends to keeping things close to the chest.

Years later, when I was a married adult with a young child my wife we were over my parent's house and along with other siblings we were sitting around telling spooky stories. For some reason I decided to tell this one. As the tale came forth as I described it, I watched the color drain from my mom's face. I said, "What?" And she informed me that the house we were living in was purchased from an estate sale. Apparently, the former owner, a sheriff, came home from work one day, viciously beat his wife, ripped the curlers out of her hair before dragging her to the bathroom, throwing her in the tub and shooting her in the face. My dad added, "I had to wash the blood off the walls before we moved in."

This was my introduction to the unseen **world**. I've never seen another figure from the dead (that I know of), but I've had other experiences that helped me understand more about the **realms** beyond.

So, in addition to our both having a caul on our heads at birth, Joseph Smith Jun., also claimed to have had **otherworldly** visitors appear to him in his room and like me, he was a middle son, was

described in his teens as a large strong broad-shouldered person (as was I). Joseph Smith Juniors parents were divided on religion with his mother dedicated to church and church membership while his father was less inclined and did not really trust religious organizations of his day. Same with me.

I spent my youth in mischief, and increasingly became a lover of the **Dark** and all things **dark** which as mentioned in the introduction, came rather naturally to me. I actually hated the notion of faith and mocked it, not understanding much about it at all nor caring to.

Because I had older siblings who were teenagers when I was a child, I cut my teeth on the music of their youth becoming a child-fan of almost all music including Johnny Mathis, Elvis, the Everly Brothers, Bobby Vinton and all the other hit makers from my oldest sister Kathy's collection. I adored and resonated to most that came from my older, now deceased brother (Jeff) and his collection that included the Beatles, Canned Heat, Jethro Tull, Rolling Stones, but at the very top, Black Sabbath.

Speaking of older deceased brothers, Joseph Smith also had an elder brother who, like mine, died unexpectedly which caused great pain in his family as the passing of my brother caused in mine. I was a sleep walker, and recall the experience vividly as I wandered in and out of the house in my preteen years in a literal trance, acting but not knowing why.

By thirteen I became a creature of the **night**, staying up like many teens to all hours but hiding in **dark** rooms during the day. In the earliest teen years I was drawing excessively and trying to express what was nothing short of inner **rage**, inner **despair** and **alienation** with the world around me. Like most teen males (and some females) I loved horror flicks of any kind and was obsessed with The Exorcist, (in fact, that was the first book, written by William Peter Blatty, that I ever cracked open and attempted to read). I was simultaneously obsessed with **sex** - of any kind - and was **sexually** experienced at a young age, first from being preyed upon by others and then through my own volition before I entered grade school as a kindergartener. I remember trying to entice anyone close in age, male or female, into joining me in **sexual** experiences. While my mother was dedicated to the LDS faith and pushed hard for us to participate, she was also very interested in **astrology**, which later led her into what I would call a light pursuit for information into Jewish **kabbalistic** points of view. She relied heavily on the **astrological signs** under which people were born, (I was a Libra, therefore, according to her I sought

justice and equality in things, which is pretty accurate to tell you the truth). Where two of my siblings were Geminis, she determined that they were two-faced (and they were) and rarely did I leave the house without her reading me my horoscope once I became a teen. She was also greatly influenced by **seers, palm readers, fortune telling** and she read numerous books on **Near Death Experiences**.

Perhaps I inherited my own **mystical** outlook from her genetically or maybe it was nurture, but needless to say, I was **esoterically** inclined by the time I entered Junior High and started to read situations and the people around me through some sort of spiritual sense, assessing them and their inner souls even, at times, before ever speaking with them. This often led to my judging others without knowing them, something I had to learn to adjust after I became a Christian. That said, there are still times, even today, when the **vibe** or **aura**, so to speak of certain individuals creates an immediate reaction in me and in the end my assessments often prove themselves correct.

School offered me nothing and I can honestly say, embarrassing as it is to admit, that I went through Jr. High and High School and never brought a book home to do homework. Ever. How did I pass? I played angles, cheated and searched for alternative routes to getting passing grades (never A's or Bs - always C's and D's). In the end when I learned that graduating was in jeopardy, I forged six months' worth of weekly on the job training forms in the name of a phony manager at a phony job. I learned to steal what I wanted from stores (typically candy, then alcohol) and by seventh grade turned my attention to getting the attention of girls, having fun and getting into general trouble.

Amazingly enough, I remained active in Mormonism and because I was inclined to water sports (swimming, water polo, surfing and bodysurfing) I looked healthy, "good" and all American. The reality was I was a socio-pathic cheat, a con that loved using girls as objects (never through violence but always with charm) while behind the scenes I was becoming obsessed with the **Dark** depicted in movies, music, art and life. I can honestly say in that from my early teens to my late thirties I loved the **Dark**.

I mention all the things along with the things I have in common with the Founder of Mormonism because I do believe that there is a connection between Joseph Smith, Jun. and myself. Perhaps it is some sort of **mystical** connection of traits as I do not see myself, in any way, as a reincarnation of the man nor any sort of replacement. But I honestly wonder if my experiences are a means

for me to understand the foundation of the church he established and what drove him to see the **world** as he appears to have seen it. Quite frankly, I don't hold a candle to him in terms of his ability to synthesize vast amounts of information into a cohesive system of faith nor do I possess his amazing abilities to con people in the name of God, but I am convinced that I have personally experienced first-hand some "spiritual" things that he also experienced and in so doing have gotten a front row seat into the con, even the **Dark counterfeit** that **Mormonism** is compared to the abiding Truths of the Kingdom of God.

Interestingly, it was the punk movement that came to California in the mid 70's that took all the **Darkness** of my soul and helped turn it into one cohesive focus. To be sure, it was all still **Dark**, but with it came principles that I saw as authentic, and they served, amidst my very predatory but charming nature, to become an operating system through which I could honestly relate to in this **world**.

See, unlike Smith, who loved community and family, and unlike the **world** around me, I absolutely hated the cultures that presented themselves to me as reliable, good, and worthy of my allegiance. I suppose I was sort of like Groucho Marx who once quipped that he "*would never belong to a group who would have him as a member.*" Perhaps this was due to my psychopathy, or being so socio-pathic that I could never find a place to rest, but by late 1976, there was this scene that, at that time, said:

Be any kind of individual you want to be, dress how you want, teach yourself to do things, mock commercialism and turn your back on all cultures that demand you conform.

That was the credo of early punk.

It didn't take long before the movement began to demand conformity to its own look, music, and attitudes, splitting off like religions do whenever there were enough people who wanted to form their own church (skinheads, straight-edge, Nazi's, goths and metalheads) but in the earliest days of the movement, punk could not be summarized by anything - it was everything and anything the individual wanted it to be.

That was authentic to me. As **sordid** and **twisted** as I was I longed for authenticity. Interestingly, punk was a response, initially in England, to some extreme dissatisfaction their youth had with the status quo of things. Society in the early 1970's was telling them that they had no future; that they needed to accept the

conditions of the **world** as they were, accept their fate as determined, and to go along. These kids looked at what music had become to them - bloviated, **self-indulgent** glamorous productions of pretense and a movement started in response to all of that - known in that day and for a short time as pub music. At first, pub music consisted of long-haired musicians from the 1960's trying to bring authenticity back to music, but it wasn't enough. And the kids of that day knew it. So instead of trying to please the masses through appearance and paying their dues over decades of trying to make it in the fat-cat music industry, punk - sort of headed up by visionary Malcom Maclaren who had been in New York managing the New York Dolls, and came back to the British Isles to create, so to speak, a musical representation that would sing to the age. Ladies and Gentlemen, the Sex Pistols.

Ironically, while the Pistols (which I was exposed to in my backyard at 15 years of age while working in the backyard of my parents Huntington Beach home and listening to a fairly Avant Garde radio station called, KROQ) were kind of a mockery of authenticity for the simple reason that they were "created" in some ways by an image maker, similar to the Monkeys or Milli Vanilli. But they certainly brought something raw, something rude, something unrefined to the **world** of music which paved the way for other bands, more authentically formed, to step forward and speak.

In those days I remember new sounds coming across the airwaves that were called punk that people would laugh at today, like Enya and her new hit, *Orinoco Flow*. But again, it didn't take too long for punk to have a look, a sound and rules. Authentic expression is really hard to maintain in a capitalistic society and I could see things starting to change when I would take friends to live shows and they would get picked on for having long hair or not being dressed right. It was a tell-tale sign, for me at least, to run and not become the music. That said, there was a window in time where you could go to Los Angeles or the Cuckoos nest in Costa Mesa and see punk bands that were anything like punk is seen as today, bands like *the Runaways*, (yes, them) *the Go-Go's* (yes, them) X (who were brave enough to take country riffs and present them without shame) and many others just trying to express themselves. In the end and for a really short time, anything and everything was allowed on stage so long as it was **self-taught**, authentically presented and from the heart.

This culture of non-culture was a beautiful thing to witness and somewhere in my head I found that to be more akin to truth than any orchestrated, manipulated, commercially acceptable culture that demanded conformity.

During those years, I went on a trip to Salt Lake City with a friend to see if we wanted to go on LDS missions and for some reason we decided to attend an LDS General Conference. Thinking we would be influenced by that religious presentation our parents allowed us to fly to Utah and to save **money** we stayed in the basement of one of my friends' cousins and I experienced my first real encounter with the **Dark** (outside of my childhood vision of the murdered woman).

It was midday, and for some reason we were both exhausted and decided to take a nap. Mid-sleep I was suddenly and awfully overcome with a dreaded paralyzing fear that seemed to hold me in its grip. Sleep experts suggest that this occurs when a person wakes up in REM sleep, but I don't think it was that. What caused me to freeze was I felt like my friend's face was a quarter inch away from mine, staring, and I jumped up and turned the light on to catch him - but he was asleep across the room.

I shut the light off, then laid back down and immediately the **feeling** returned. I did the same thing, probable three more times and this unseen force was invisibly around me every time until I hit the light - to the point I just got up and left the room, which apparently caused the **dark** to leave too. I told my mom about it upon my return. She said it was **Lucifer** trying to get me to not go on an LDS Mission which at the time made sense to me but today is utter nonsense on a number of accounts. But more on that later.

Nevertheless, and in the face of this experience I got **myself** fixed up (according to the LDS standards of that day) and was called to serve two years on a full time a mission in Pennsylvania.

The very first night of going door to door once I arrive and what was to be my very first "door approach," (where I did the speaking while my senior companion looked on) a woman opened the door in relative hysterics. She said that earlier in the day a bird had flown into one of the closed windows of the house and striking the glass, killed itself. I had no idea what this meant and she went on to say that this was a sign that someone she knew was going to die. My companion and I left the house dying of laughter and mocking her back-wooded views. The next day, or it honestly could have been a few days later, I was up early in the morning studying at the kitchen table of our apartment alone and I heard a thud and saw something fall to the ground through the closed window. I went outside and found a bird on the dirt twitching. I immediately thought about the woman, and it sort of shocked me - but I laughed it off. That night my mission president called to inform me that

my grandpa had died - which devastated me - but what was really bouncing around in my head was the woman, and the bird, and the timing of his unexpected **death**.

I finished the mission, got married to my wife Mary, and together we embarked on a life of trying to make it in this **world**. We had three daughters who we love, but I was utterly dissatisfied with life - in every way imaginable. Mary and I tried to do the Mormon thing full-force but in my heart it was off, inauthentic, odd - there is a spirit in Mormonism that is light, and seems good, but there is an underlying spirit that is questionable, conflicted and seems to lend to a disingenuousness in the souls of many who embrace it. Add in that I never felt at home inwardly with what I was expressing outwardly and this led to seventeen years of my ardently searching for unquestionable, irrefutable truth.

I started with LDS history and doctrine and before long became an active faithful non-believer in his teachings but doing my calling and attending the meetings along the way. This led to studying Eastern Metaphysics, Islam (bought and searched the Quran and befriended a devout Islamic family in Sri Lanka where I lived for a short time). I got a Bhagavata, turned to existentialism, embraced **Marxism**, and was ultimately led to being a nihilist who was secretly **self**-medicating his mind with stolen prescription painkillers and/or alcohol on the weekends.

In 1997 I had what I refer to as a roadside experience. The road is called Adams Avenue and connects Huntington Beach to Costa Mesa in Southern California. It was while driving to Costa Mesa from Huntington Beach where I heard the Good News over the radio from one Charles Stanley, whom I later met and thanked.

After asking God in Jesus' name to forgive me, and to receive me and to show me His truth, I drove to pick my daughters up from gymnastics practice (in a neighborhood I had long perceived as demon haunted) and laying back in the car while waiting for them exit I was taken in my mind back to three distinct memories of events in my life. After recalling these three specific and influential stories that unfolded at different periods of my life, I opened my eyes and while watching my daughters exit the gymnasium with their friends, I was radically born from above, filled for the first time in my existence with the Holy Spirit and secure in my understanding that there is a God, that He had a Son and this Son saved me nearly 2000 years ago from sin and **death**. At this point I slowly began to more readily identify the **Dark** in people and in places and was better quipped to discern truth from error.

Around 2000, I was offered a job in Park City, Utah at a bank and before moving I was teaching the young men of our ward. These were teenagers and one Sunday before class two or three of them came in and excitedly told me about another member of our class that was in the hospital with a broken ankle or some sort of similar injury. They begged me to go with them to visit him and one of the boys, a large talented football player demanded that he drive. This was Sunday, November 14th 1999. As this large smiling gentle football star drove toward the hospital he was playing what I considered God-awful music and the kid noticed my chagrin and said,

"I've got the perfect song for you, brother McCraney." And he put on Queen's, "Another One Bites the Dust" which caused all of us males to rock out together on the drive. After visiting the kid with the injury, we got in an elevator and for some reason somebody pushed the wrong floor button and the doors opened to a completely **dark** even demolished room that had wires hanging from the ceiling and its windows covered. Suddenly, the kid who drove burst out from the elevator and literally disappeared into the **dark** which caused all of us to call out his name but it took a while for him to come back to us, and he was laughing, of course.

We continued down the elevator all the way to what I think was the basement of the hospital and when the doors opened we existed only to find a corpse in a body bag laying unattended on a table in the hall. The kid stopped and touched it, and we all made gruesome noises then proceeded to find the exit and drove back to the church. Three days later, we got a call that this sixteen-year-old kid died suddenly on the practice field without any apparent cause or warning. The community, along with our family were devastated as he was a light to our community. But again, I was taken back by the experience I had had with him just a few days before. I don't think the experience had any meaning whatsoever to him or his soul before God, but it was another tie to **death** for me and strange events surrounding **death** that caused me to personally wonder and reflect on **Dark** and Light, and **death** and Life.

In September of 2000 our family moved to Park City, Utah, where I took a job as an investment advisor in the aforementioned bank. The night we moved into our home, September 21st, 2000, our bed frames had not arrived and so we decided to spend the night as a family on the open floor of our living room which gave us a fantastic view of the night skies. It so happened that the area was hit by a magnificent, almost **otherworldly** lightning storm right when we laid down to sleep and we watched it together with

amazement as bolts of flashing light came down from the heavens, splitting the black night skies above and casting brilliance over, under and around the grey and black rain-filled clouds.

I laid there on my back musing on the scene after my children fell asleep. Exactly 177 years earlier, to the day if not even the hour, the founder of the LDS Church, Joseph Smith, Jun., took his first journey out in search of **Golden** plates which he claimed were the source for what would become, **The Book of Mormon**. Three years after his claim of what Mormons call, the First Vision in 1820, he said an angel named Moroni appeared in his room to talk with Joseph and reveal that there was a **golden** record hidden in the earth close to his home. This was that same **night**, September 21, only 177 years later to the day.

Moroni introduced himself to Smith as a resurrected prophet from ancient America who had completed his father (Mormon's) record about an ancient American civilization. The next day, September 22, the angel Moroni directed Joseph to go to a hill, not far from the Smith family farm in Manchester, New York, where the records written on **gold** plates were buried in a stone box.

Once there, Joseph pried up a rounded lid from the top of the stone box that held the not only the **gold** plates, but apparently also what he called, interpreters, a breast plate, and a sword from a man named Laban. However, when Smith reached in to take the plates, he was hit by a tremendous shock (like lightning, perhaps) that threw him on his back.

Moroni wouldn't let Smith take the plates that night but instead instructed Joseph to return exactly a year later on the very same date, September 22, 1824, to try again but again he was not allowed access to the said plates at that time. Smith was instructed to return again a year later in 1825, and also again in 1826 and was finally allowed to take the plates when he returned (yet again) on the same night in September of 1827.

Why did Moroni visit Joseph on the same night consecutively? Some wonder if the **fall equinox** played a role for this specific date as the **fall equinox** every year is? That's right, September 21-22. Does the **fall equinox** relate to some sort of **cosmic** calendar clock in the eternal scheme of things? Interestingly, the ancient Israelite calendar has major fall harvest festivals. The Hebrew New Year - Rosh Hashanah (calculated in **lunar** month cycles) occurs on or near the fall **equinox** (Leviticus 23-24), which is the harvest time of the year. To see these visits as **cosmically** tied to the Nation of Israel allows some to see them as indicators of Truth

and Light. But perhaps this was from **Dark** forces as the fall **equinox** also aligns with

Greek **Mythology** where **Persephone** returns to the **underworld**. Persephone is the daughter of the harvest goddess Demeter and was kidnapped by Hades to become his wife.

Or maybe it related to,

Mabon (Euro-American) which is a **Wiccan** celebration of the end of the summer season.

Or maybe it related to,

Ohigan (Japan) as Japan celebrates this **Equinox** as a time to visit the graves of their loved ones gone from this Earth to and care for their burial sites.

In reality, all one has to do is examine the proven **folk magic** practices of the Smith family and compare them to the well-known ties to this specific day to see the connection to **dark, mystical** forces at work.

Why all of this?

Early in the morning, September 22nd, after a long meaningful night of watching the lightning storm from the floor of my new living room, I was in my office at the bank when I received a call from a friend. Through tears he told me that my older brother had unexpectedly died that morning. His journey from this earth began the previous day, lasted through the night and he took his last breath at dawn, September 21st - September 22nd.

The increase of these insights and more into Mormonism, as well as my own inability to hang with it any longer, caused me to request excommunication from that religion the following year. My family went to Southern California for the funeral, and I visited the site of his **death** on several occasions - alone, with my wife and with my grieving dad. The therapist who worked with my brother told his children, and myself, that my brother, "died trying." As I stood near the location of his demise, a passing train caused the arms of the train track crossing to fall and stuck on the arm facing me, was a bumper sticker that read, "died trying," obviously put there quite some time before. I do not attribute these **signs** to either coincidence, God or the **Dark**, but all of them have enabled me to personally experience **powers** from what seem to come from a **supernatural** place, whether as Jungian archetypical

crossovers or demonic or angelic signals, I cannot tell. But what I do concur amidst it all, is there are forces, powers that operate in this **world** - some of God, some not.

Chapter 5 **Hard to believe Insights - II**

Having come to the Lord spiritually, and then pouring myself into understanding spiritual truths through the Word, my ability, for lack of a better word, to discern between the **Dark** and Light, increased since the **death** of my brother. Understand, **dark** is not necessarily present in actions that we determine to be evil nor is light necessarily present in people and activities we deem Good. **Dark** and the Light reside in areas and people that outwardly resemble and participate in both. Sure, locations filled with bars, porn outlets or strip clubs have a tendency to appear/**feel** like **darker** places - and they often are, but the fact of the matter is, some of the brightest souls live in some of the worst neighborhoods and places geographically and some of the **darkest** souls reside in some of the most pristine locales on earth. (i.e., Jeffrey Epstein)

When I came to understand this, I was able to then break from one of the **myths** of religion and of religious people and see people for what they are, refusing to associate them with where they live, how they dress or appear but instead with what they actually say and do. This also helped me break from the deceitfulness of cultural conformity and to learn to see some people who appear good, spiritually, for what they really are - "whited sepulchers full of dead **dried** bones."

Of course, the call on our lives is to love and reach out to all people, but as my initial insight into the soul of some people became more refined it enabled me to meet them where they are at instead of making assumptions about them based on appearances.

Interestingly, when I received what Mormons call, a patriarchal blessing, the patriarch said that I was blessed with "**the power of discernment**." Knowing what I know, I wonder what **power** was able to "**know**" this in the life of a seventeen-year-old fornicator? When I reflect on the "gleam" the LDS church attempts to **seduce** the **world** with, I cannot help but recall the paradoxical words of Jesus who said in Matthew 6:22-23 (listen carefully)

"The light of the body is the eye: if therefore thine eye be single, thy whole body shall be full of light. But if thine eye be

*evil, thy whole body shall be full of **darkness**. If therefore the light that is in thee be **darkness**, how great is that **darkness**!"*

The "eye light" Jesus refers to is not physically known - it is spiritually observed. We love physical **manifestations** of things and are willing to trust people with "a physical presence of light." But that is tricky and can easily deceive us. The real light is spiritually discerned and can only be understood with spiritual minds. Paul wrote the all-familiar words to the church at Corinth saying in 1st Corinthians 2:10-16

*But God hath revealed them unto us by his Spirit: for the Spirit searcheth all things, yea, the deep things of God. For what man knoweth the things of a man, save the spirit of man which is in him? even so the things of God knoweth no man, but the Spirit of God. 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. Which things also we speak, not in the words which **man's wisdom** teacheth, but which the Holy Ghost teacheth; comparing spiritual things with spiritual. But the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God: for they are foolishness unto him: neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned. But he that is spiritual judgeth all things, yet he himself is judged of no man. For who hath known the mind of the Lord, that he may instruct him? But we have the mind of Christ.*

While still living in Park City I was a few years in to reading all about Karl **Marx** and **Engels**. I even read (or attempted to read) Das Kapital and found myself enamored with the principles of Marxism. That particular **night**, I had a vivid dream - extremely vivid and clear as I believed to have been taken back to an apartment in London that **Marx** shared with his wife and five children over the course of many years. I was unaccompanied in this dream, which seemed more like a vision, but I was keenly aware that there were others in the space as I could hear them around me. I distinctly recall actually placing my hand on the back of a high-backed upholstered chair that was threadbare and filthy. I remember how dirty the room was, and could hear an infant screaming amidst loud conversations being carried on between adults who were drinking, laughing and seemed totally indifferent to the pain of the child or its screams. I was overwhelmed with a **darkness** that is frankly very hard to describe except to say it was enveloping the scene before me, and entering my heart like a heavy, heavy weighted blanket. I knew Jenny von Westfallen was there, but I never actually saw anyone - I just heard them and felt the spirit that abided in that place. And I woke up! I actually sat up - in

horror at what I had experienced and took away from that experience. I got up shaken and walked to the window of our room that overlooked our backyard which covered almost an acre of wooded land that sat on an incline. When I looked out I saw thousands of people - maybe ten thousand - roaming in rags like zombies through the trees over the lawn. I knew instantly that this was a direct result of the spirit I sensed in that London apartment. I knew then and there that my wandering down the road of **Marxist** ideology was greatly misguided, and then I woke up. This time for real. In a sweat. Altered forevermore by whatever I had experienced, whether from my own mind, a vision or even a visitation backward in time to the origins of **Marxism**.

After my brother's **death**, our family moved back to Huntington Beach but with me as an excommunicated Mormon. It was here that I began to immerse myself in the Word of God - something I failed to really do before this point with regenerated eyes. As I relentlessly pursued God in spirit and truth through a reading of His Word, I (again) started growing in the capacity to discern the **Dark** from the Light, and therefore began to move from my love and natural proclivities of the **Night** to genuine discernment made possible by the presence of the Day (with a capital D).

More and more I was able to see the **Dark** and **Darkness** around me, and as my perceptions grew, I was able to better discern the **Dark** Light in contrast to the real Light and love of God. And I started to see that spiritual light can be found in the most outwardly evil looking people (who are filled with His selfless love) and that some of the most outwardly beautiful looking people, with bright eyes and smiling souls, can be utterly **void** of inner Truth and the heavenly Light of God. Sure, sometimes the inner **darkness** in a soul runs over and coats them with physical expressions of evil, but I learned to be very careful about judging books by their cover and to instead wait to read people spiritually before trying to size any one up from the outside.

Before long, the world around me began to sort of "peel back," as if I was living in some sort of Matrix and ever so slowly gave me glimpses into what is fruit from the Tree of Life and fruit from the Tree of **Knowledge** of Good and **Evil** (which always leads to **death**). The writer of Hebrews fittingly wrote (in Hebrews 5:14)

"But strong meat belongeth to them that are of full age, even those who by reason of use have their senses exercised to . . . discern both good and evil."

Paul said, however, writing in Ephesians 6:12,

*For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against **principalities**, against **powers**, against the **rulers of the darkness of this world**, against **spiritual wickedness in high places**.*

At this point I began to realize that the Christian battle is not against people chained with the fetters of **Dark powers**, but against the **Dark** with a capital D, by the Light with a capital L, and that I had to fortify and build up the Light if I was ever going to stand up and really have any strength against the **Dark**. After years of researching, attending a school of ministry, learning the Bible beginning to end, and even writing a book called *Born Again Mormon*, I was offered a television ministry that lasted seven years in the state of Utah. This opened my **world** and mind up even more extensively relative to **Dark** and Light **powers** that are at war and seeking to take control within.

In ministerial training they say that men face the temptation of the three G's in ministerial life - **gold, glory** or girls, which wind up ruining many a man. The **power** of **glory** hit quickly as our popularity in the state was almost immediate and I saw very early on that a person in ministry will always face the temptation to **feed their own will** instead of doing the will of God. That is the **allure** of **glory** - for a believer to embrace it as their own, and then carve out their piece of the pie or reject the **glory** and give it all to God. Nevertheless, some of the effects of "**glory**" did slide into my heart unawares, and I had to learn for myself the fading lie that the **glory** of Man is before I was able to turn from it all together.

Money (or **gold**) because of the popularity of the show, became an immediate temptation as well, but because of all I had come from and seen I never had too much trouble keeping everything real in this way - even though some manipulative Christians with **money** attempted to use it to control me. But the difficult one for me was girls (or women) as this is a tap-root problem I had faced since I was very young. When you add local television popularity and a role of leadership where you are seen as a public warrior against a Goliath religion, there are some females who are attracted to this and make their attractions known. I had to face myself here as this was a hill that would take me out of the Light and lead me into the **Dark** recesses of **self**. Relative to spiritual discernment and women, there is one particular event that really challenged my dedication to biblical truth by and through the **power** of **Dark** persuasions.

One Sunday years ago, I was up at the University of Utah where I taught a weekly Bible study that was fairly well attended. As I was teaching, I noticed two women sitting in the audience I had never met before. After the teaching they introduced themselves as having come from one location hundreds of miles away (that was the mother) and the daughter, an attractive woman in her late thirties said that she came from a city about an hour away.

They were both fans of the show and asked if I would be willing to meet them for lunch the following week. This was a common request, and I did my best to comply. After getting my food I sat down at the table where they were sitting, and we started to talk. These women were bright in the sense that they were happy and shining in their attitudes and I appreciated their senses of humor and ways. Over the next few months, the daughter frequented our study and after them, because I had nothing else to do, we would sometimes meet to eat. (I know - bad move and one I admittedly took purposefully to get to know this woman better).

In time she revealed the most radical story. Apparently, when she was a little girl, under ten years of age, she had a **dream**. And in her dream, she saw her future husband who was in her room, but escaped out of the window. She remembered a few key things about this man. First, his name was Shawn. Secondly, he had a mark on his cheek, and third she knew then that he was supposed to be her husband. She then told me that when she turned on the television one night, she saw this man on the screen - and it was me! Of course, the name was correct, but I also have a mark on my cheek that is sort of a combination of a mole/scar that is readily seen if anyone takes the time to look.

What really blew me away is that the next time her mother visited from out of town I asked her about this dream her daughter claimed to have. She smiled and said, *"Oh sure! Everyone in the family knows about her Shawn."* I asked, *"For how long has this story been in the family?"* She said, *"She's talked about it ever since she had the dream. All of her sisters know about it. My husband knows. So, we were all kind of blown away when you popped up on our television screen!"*

The only way I can describe my reaction is I was somewhat taken in by the tale. Of course, I was a married man, with three beautiful daughters, but the information, I might even say, *"and the **power** behind it,"* took me by surprise and I let my guard down to some extent.

In time this woman also introduced to me something that she had gotten involved in a few years before meeting me through a **self-**appointed shaman-type named, James Arthur Ray,¹ who authored several best seller books including "*Harmonic **Wealth: The **Secret of Attracting the Life you want*****" and appeared on **Oprah Winfrey's** popular program which helped the book to take off. This woman apparently learned from Ray a practice she called, Fire-watching, which consisted of lighting a candle and casting all your thoughts and cares into its flame, an act which she claimed would clear the human heart of all the angst, anxiety, fear and dread we carry with us through life. She invited me to try it, but I was very skeptical - at least at first. But the more she talked, and the more she worked to convince me that I was to be her husband, the more I listened, and I ultimately participated in one of her fire-watching rituals.

Admittedly, there appeared to actually be some therapeutic benefits to the practice, but upon reflection I can see that the results were really no different than going to a therapist or talking to a friend. At the time, however, I wanted to expose my family to the process and made one of the dumbest moves of my life as a husband and father - I had the woman fire-watch with my wife and two of my daughters.

Without realizing it, the woman was insinuating **herself** into my life and I was allowing it, even promoting it as time went by. Also, and without being fully aware of it a wedge was being driven between Mary and I, and then between me and my girls. Utter **chaos** and confusion broke out over my life as I was for the first time in my marriage seriously considering divorce, or polygamy, or some strange alternative to traditional marriage, all the while trying to convince my family that what was happening was actually good, healthy, of a benefit to our mental, **emotional** and spiritual health.

The fact of the matter was I had been taken in, like a lamb to the slaughter, and nearly entered into a full-blown adulterous affair which would have served to sever my relationship with the people I hold and held most dear. Interestingly, as I drove one morning to go teach, I turned the radio on to a local channel that, because it was Sunday, gave airtime to local and at times unorthodox programming. On this particular day a native American host was sharing with the listening audience music from the local indigenous

¹In 2011, Ray was convicted of botching a Sweat Lodge ceremony named, Spiritual Warriors, in Sedona Arizona where three people died. He was fined, served time and disappeared into relative obscurity.

tribes and other performers and having tapped into this whole 'fire-watching' operation, I listened intently.

One number came on and it was extremely catchy, and I even started to sing along, trying to groove with the tune and the spirit it offered. It was sung by a Native American and the words were articulated the way a Native American would speak. To me it sounded like,

Aiya, aiya, eeya, eeya, aiya, goia, aiya, eeya

Repeated over and over. The next Sunday, same time of the morning and as I was driving to teach, the same program came on with the same host and she played this same tune. Now I was familiar with it and so singing it came much more naturally to me as did the **feelings** and spiritual meaning. I was really getting into it, thinking that I was breaking through to some inner place of worship when all of a sudden, the words of the song became clear. And I learned the native American singer was only repeating the word, "Spongebob Squarepants," over and over again. And the light came on. I was led like a goat to the slaughter and was going to lose everything in the face of the **deception** which meant not only my family but even my God. It was a hard, embarrassing, damaging lesson which thanks to the longsuffering of my wife and kids we were able to overcome. But I shudder to this day and the **powerful** influences that exist in the **Dark** recesses of so-called spiritual **enlightenment** and the damage it can cause in those who trust in their **power**.

The unveiling of the **Dark** through the presence of the Light has continued to increase for me for nearly two decades now and along the way I have had a number of direct confrontations with what ultimately reveal themselves as having come from the **Dark** rather than God. Sometimes people will spot me from a distance, often homeless souls, and pursue me with invectives. Maybe this is from mental illness, in either them, me or both. Perhaps not. One on occasion I had a very influential LDS leader, called an apostle, after speaking to tens of thousands of people in Anaheim, California, hang around afterwards to shake the hands of those willing to wait in line for the chance to meet him. I was standing in the crowd with my friend no less than twenty-five yards away when, while shaking the hand of someone on the stage and while continuing to speak to them, he looked away from their conversation and stared at me - hard - holding his gaze for more than five full seconds. I sensed his soul, and he was reading mine, then without expression, he turned back to the person whose hand he held and

never looked my way again. I knew him and he knew (or could read) me and there was no love or trust between us.

But over the course of time, I have come to believe that all of these insights, and my possible ability to see spiritual connections, were not necessarily from God. In fact, I now submit that all of the **manifestations** and experiences I have ever had were actually **empowered** by and from the **Dark**, not the Light.

I am able to say this because once I began to receive insights and information from God spiritually, I have been able to see that the way God works and speaks by His Spirit is very different than how the **Dark** works. It can be subtly, but it is, in the end, significantly different. Why I get these insights from the **Dark** or have them operate around me remains a mystery to me, but I have come to see that when God reveals Himself, and His Truth and Light, at least to me, that His revelations are gentle, loving, void of **chaos** and forged on the anvil of complete grace. He is consummately consistent in everything while the information from the **Dark** is more like shifting sands, ephemeral and somewhat stop-gap in nature. Additionally, the **Dark** is always referencing, pointing to or alluding to things of **death** - at least in my experiences. I don't necessarily mean actual **death** (but that too) but to things that are **non-God, non-Light** and **non-living**.

The ways and will of God are only known by the Spirit of God but the **wisdom, knowledge and power of the Dark** is discerned by the spirit of Man, is of **this world** and in some cases, perhaps it oozes out from **Dark realms** that have existed from eternity. I have had contacts from that other side, unsettling contacts where **Dark** forces come to me, always invisibly but with almost audible whispers in the dead of **night**, inviting me to "join them." I've since seen that such things are not in any way of God, but they are from a real, even tangible place of non-God.

Just three weeks ago (as of this writing) I was in the grocery store and watched a man drop a large glass bottle of marinara sauce that fell to the floor and exploded. Employees and customer alike scurried about quickly to come to his aide with what was quite the mess. I thought nothing of it. Six days later I was getting out of my car in a completely different part of town only to almost stumble into another huge fresh pile of marinara sauce laying on the ground of the parking lot. Someone commented that a person dropped a container full of it and had apparently taken the broken container away but left the pile of sauce to bleeding out over the asphalt.

Without warning, the thought came to me, "someone we know who is Italian is going to die." I know, crazy, right? But the message was clear. When I got home, I told my wife about it and she asked, "Who do we know who's Italian?" and neither of us could think of anyone except a young man who owns a gelato shop in town who we haven't seen in years. Four days later my daughter texted us and said that the father of long-time family friends who lived in Huntington Beach died unexpectedly on the golf course. He was so Italian that both of his parents were immigrants from Italy. Their son was Cassidy's first boyfriend. Make sense? Not at all? Another expression of apophenia? Perhaps. But to me, it was all revelatory and clear as day.

I've had personal experience and insight with the falsehoods of **NDE's** (meaning, with the misinterpretation of what they really are relative to **death** and life after **death**) and am close with people who appeal to and use **hallucinogens, esoterica, Gnosticism** and other forms of **counterfeit** sources in life. Before wrapping up this very personal (and admittedly suspect) chapter, when I look back at every single so-called inspiration or insight I have ever had, including

- the vision of the murdered woman as a child
- the bird hitting the window and my grandpa passing
- the events before the teen from church dying
- the signs surrounding my brother's **death**
- the insights from fire-watching
- lost souls on the street calling me out
- false apostles of light staring me down
- visions or dreams of the **Marx** apartment
- forces calling me to "join them," or even
- unrelated bottles of marinara sauce being broken

I realize that all of it somehow speaks to pain, **death, dark, other worldly powers** and even **divorce** and that these experiences or insights are not from God. They are from the **other side** that orbits **outside** of God and speaks to what thrives in that dimension. Today, and for reasons completely unknown to me, I stand before you as someone who, like the founder of **Mormonism**, knows and has experienced the **power** of the **Dark**. For some unknown reason I have been able to pursue the Light that extends only from God and over the years, having learned to identify it am able to readily see the vast difference between them and those who embody them.

Like Smith in his older age, I too have become a portly man; I too have been able to teach, have written some (insignificant) books, and ironically (and not in any way intentionally) I have even

inscribed on plates (mine are acrylic, his were apparently **gold**) but both inscriptions are dedicated to spiritual matters. (His are said to have been taken up by an angel. Mine hang on the walls of our studio as pieces of art).

But along the way I have come to see first-hand that there are unseen forces in the universe vying for the allegiances of this **world's** inhabitants, and in the end I am convinced that all people will show, even prove, what they have loved most, God and His will or, themselves and their own

We are now ready to explore more fully some of the major spiritual **counterfeits** that exist in the **world**.

Chapter 6 Relationships

Before we get into specifically addressing things in this **world** that could be or could become fruit from the Tree of **Knowledge** of Good or **evil** (which all lead to **death**) or fruit from the Tree of Life (which will carry forth or exists in the Kingdom of Heaven) I have to say the following:

*"Earth life is earth life and there is no thing, in and of itself, that is bad nor good - we, human beings, made in God's image, are the ones who determine its spiritual significance and whether it will lead to **death** or to life."*

This is why Paul wrote in 1ST Corinthians 6:12

*All things are lawful unto me, but all things are not expedient: all things are lawful for me, but I will not be brought under the **power** of any.*

And then four chapters later, he reiterates his point, writing

1st Corinthians 10:23 All things are lawful for me, but all things are not expedient: all things are lawful for me, but all things edify not.

I take these words to mean, we are all free in Christ to do as we want, to pursue what we want, and to use what we want - it is our choice, and we are all responsible for the choices made. Those "things," no matter what they are, will either lend to **death** here (literally or they will die or fade away in the hereafter) or,

they will lend to this life (but fade away later) or, they will lend to eternal life. Let me give you some examples:

- Fruit called evil that leads to **death** here - drug abuse.
- Fruit called good that lends to **death** above - zealous fitness and nutrition.
- Fruit from the tree of life - loving others unconditionally who sell you the drugs you abuse or, who are in the gym you attend.

See the spectrum? So in the end, we are going to look at things in the following chapters not as being Good, Evil or of God, but how we can make them lasting or temporary, meaning the way we pursue them will determine whether they will live on or whether they will end in **death**. We will do this by figuratively appealing to the fruit of the Two Trees - fruit from the Tree of Life or the forbidden fruit from the Tree of **knowledge** of good and **evil**.

Our first category will examine plays a huge part in human existence - relationships. From there, we will proceed through things that have the capacity to draw us deeper and deeper into **Dark and Darker** realms.

So, after "Relationships," we will then discuss the "Fashioning our Flesh," then the "Feeding the Flesh," then our "Educational Pursuits," followed by our "Careers, Jobs and Employments," then "**Money** and **Material** Acquisition," and finally, "Politics and Theocracies."

We will then open Part II up by generally discussing "Spirits in a Material **World**" and we will then address, in a descending order of **Darkness**, some of the more spiritually **powerful** sources of **non-God** in the **world** today, including **Prosperity Gospel, Law of Attraction, Hermeticism, Masonry, Mormonism, Eckhardt Tolle, Theosophy, Eckankar, Scientology, Thelema, Theistic Satanism** and finally, **Objectivism**.

So, let's talk about relationships and how we can allow them to be defined in our lives as fruit from the Tree of Life or Fruit from the Tree of **Knowledge** of Good and **Evil**. We know that relationships are vital to the human condition. God Himself said in Genesis 2:18

"And the LORD God said, It is not good that the man should be alone; I will make him an help meet for him."

It seems that in response to this general truth that God took the singular Man Adam and made Him two - "*male and female created He them.*" From that point forward and based on this model, human beings appear to have been created to have a partner - and it's an opposing partner, or one of the opposing side or the opposite sex because in and through the very physical make-ups of men and women where unity and procreated life is possible (meaning there is a potentiality of new life that could come the union of the two).

I fully understand all the variant attractions that come about because of the fall of Man - male to male, female to female, and that these things are realities in our fallen **world**. Thank God for loving this **world** so much that He saved us in our states of missing His mark! Nevertheless, appealing to the original plan, God made human beings male and female so that we would not be alone, to that we could unite with something that will balance us out and make us whole in the physical act of becoming one. Miraculously, when the two become one, new lives are possible.

Because of the fall, these relationships, because of the time and attention that is required to keep them thriving, can have the capacity to become confrontational, sordid and/or **idolatrous**. What I mean by this is when we make our marriages, our families or our friendships more important or more of a priority than our love and relationship with Him it is very easy to begin to move from the Light to Dark without even knowing it. What's ironic about this is when God is removed from a person his or her relationships with spouse, family and friends will get worse, not better.

Over the years I have met with hundreds of people and dozens of couples relative to biblical principles - maybe I should say, I have sat with them, heard them speak, complain and accuse, and in the end believer that every issue with relationships, especially marital relationships, can be handled rightly and effectively when both people are truly eating of the Tree of Life. If one or both step or turn from that act, there is often trouble. The lesson here is pretty simple for any couple who cares - make God and His ways your personal priority and the priority of your marriage, family and friendships and all of them will improve accordingly. I add, "*accordingly,*" here because with Him in the mix some relationships may end. But to choose to operate by our own will and ways? The outcome may be anything but rewarding.

There have been thousands of books written on how to have successful marriages, families and it seems that many approaches has been tried and proved beneficial to marriages and families in this **world**. But the earthly effectiveness of them may not last

into the eternities because it seems like the **knowledge** of those practices of good and **evil** will fade. When people make God their priority, His ways will continue on here and after this life. Why? Because His ways are founded in agape love - and such may last beyond the grave because agape love is selfless, sacrificial and insufferable, and when we embrace such, we build up our treasures in heaven. By turning from the insufferable nature of agape love and whatever things, good or evil that result, cannot last. We could probably do a whole week of training on marriage and family but again, the ultimate point is in what I just said.

The interesting thing is that often in marriage one spouse is living selflessly and sacrificially but the other is living **selfishly**. This leaves the one eating of the Fruit of the Tree of Life to wonder what to do? Here **the world** gives them all sorts of advice from the forbidden tree (**divorce**, take legal action, attack, and all the rest) when the rules don't change on how to respond especially in the face of someone behaving badly. In fact, agape love is really only in operation when it calls for suffering.

Of course, there are times when separation is required in marriage and times when **divorce** is absolutely necessary. But these are last resorts, not the first especially when children are involved. There is no judgement here. We all walk independently and are responsible before our Maker for the lives we choose to love. But choose first agape love which is selfless, sacrificial and insufferable and the promise of adding to your heavenly destination increase appropriately.

One final note: I am somewhat of an unofficial unaccredited expert on **extramarital** affairs - biblically, in meeting with people who commit them and are on the receiving end of them, and unfortunately from my own personal experience. Let me just say this - when it comes to infidelity, those who are involved in them are under a spell - literally, plain and simple. It is an extremely **dark** spell that serves to **blinds** most, turning them into people that become almost unrecognizable to those who know and love them. I've seen it hundreds of times and can spot the signs pretty readily. The sad thing about these spells is they have to run their course if they are not immediately challenged. There is a tactic that can be used to break someone of it, but it consists of really direct talk coming from someone the adulterer loves and trusts. But even then, the spells do not always break. Our ministry does some work with people victimized or participating in **adultery**. If you are one of these unfortunates, look us up!

Chapter 7

Fashioning the Flesh

By now you are probably able to sort of categorize the things we are talking about in this book into one of three general groups

1. Things that Live and Last (from the tree of life)
2. Things that are good but die (From the Tree of **knowledge** of Good and **Evil**)
3. Things that are evil that will also die (same source)

And when it comes to the first level of traps and **allurements**, that we as humans will appeal **outside** of our relationships, we might look to our outward adornments, which specifically I am going to quickly address in relation to nutrition, fitness, fashion, and body modifications. Remember, there is nothing evil unto itself. It's the intentions, the motivations and the purpose behind these things that make all the difference.

So, let's first talk about a growing topic in our day, nutrition. Its a huge and growing industry today because so much of our health and appearance and **feelings** are tied to what we eat. I am forever going to appeal to Paul's words where he says in Romans 14:22:

"Hast thou faith? have it to thyself before God. Happy is he that condemneth not himself in that thing which he alloweth."

Can our diet help our weight and health? Of course, it can. But it cannot become a thing by which we judge others - that is all of the flesh and can actually become a profound place of arrogance and **pride** for some who eat right or have the right metabolism. Jesus said the following about what we take into our mouths,

Matthew 15:11 *Not that which goeth into the mouth defileth a man; but that which cometh out of the mouth, this defileth a man.*

and

Matthew 15:17 *Do not ye yet understand, that whatsoever entereth in at the mouth goeth into the belly, and is cast out into the draught?*

Of course, Jesus didn't live in an age of processed foods, additives and hydrogenation so those seeking to live a more healthy life through nutrition are welcome. I just get anxious, especially as a person who has always had issues with food and weight, and who has forever been on the receiving end of comments from others

in the faith on what "I should or need to do," when they often speak from a place of ignorance and/or arrogance. To me, this steps squarely under the fruit of the Tree of the **Knowledge** of good and **evil** and will all end up as **meaningless** in the Kingdom to come where flesh and blood cannot dwell.

But even anciently diet can become such an issue that we recall the apostle Peter eating with Gentiles freely but when his Jewish brethren arrived on scene he "*withdrew and separated himself, fearing them which were of the circumcision.*" Drinking falls under the same category. The bottom line advice on how to avoid letting our diets overwhelm us with judgement or condemnation of others and their respective, personal dietary choices? Again, what Paul said

Romans 14:6-10 He that regardeth the day, regardeth it unto the Lord; and he that regardeth not the day, to the Lord he doth not regard it. He that eateth, eateth to the Lord, for he giveth God thanks; and he that eateth not, to the Lord he eateth not, and giveth God thanks. For none of us liveth to himself, and no man dieth to himself. For whether we live, we live unto the Lord; and whether we die, we die unto the Lord: whether we live therefore, or die, we are the Lord's. For to this end Christ both died, and rose, and revived, that he might be Lord both of the dead and living. But why dost thou judge thy brother? or why dost thou set at nought thy brother? for we shall all stand before the judgment seat of Christ.

Fitness? Working out? Exercise? Sports and other activities? Same passage from Romans - with a warning. Take it for what its worth, let all people live and do as they wish.

When I was around twelve years of age, I asked my mom to take me to a local gym so I could get a membership. This single act turned me into a gym rat for the rest of my life and exercise is foundational to my existence - believe it or not because looking at me I seem like a guy who has never stepped foot in a gymnasium. In any case, I have spent thousands of hours in gyms and personally know the good, the bad and the benefits. There is nothing evil about them per se, nor much lasting about them either; they are there, really, to help human beings carry out physical activity that is lacking in our modern age. But because they focus solely on the improvement of the flesh, they often become destinations for people who are primarily flesh-driven and because of that they can become a place of depredation for some. Paul, in relation to the Greeks and their focus on athleticism, the Olympic Games and the human physique

1st Timothy 4:8 *For bodily exercise profiteth little: but godliness is profitable unto all things, having promise of the life that now is, and of that which is to come.*

Modern science tells us that in this **world** bodily exercise profits greatly, so we understand that what Paul is talking about is in terms of eternity. Therefore, if it serves to keep us healthy, vibrant and more capable of serving others in love - have at it. This seems to be the best mindset for our physical activities - that it enables us to better serve Him and others around us. But if it serves our **ego, pride, vanity** - we appear to move from eating fruit that is good to fruit that is frankly evil. So again, mindset, perspective, motivation, response - which is key to all we choose to do.

Our next area of adorning our flesh is through fashion or dress. On the spectrum of what lives, what is good and what is evil, it seems to me that evil fashions are based on **self, seduction, arrogance, entitlement, and glorifying** the body in way that will entice others to operating in the **Dark**. This is not to say that there is no **ego-centrism** in modesty or in the wearing of humble-brag prairie dresses - there can be. For this reason, the scripture appeals who what we put on in the following ways with Jesus saying things like:

Matthew 6:25 *"Therefore I say unto you, Take no thought for your life, what ye shall eat, or what ye shall drink; nor yet for your body, what ye shall put on. Is not the life more than meat, and the body than raiment?"*

Or Paul who said in Roman 13:12 *"The night is far spent, the day is at hand: let us therefore cast off the works of **darkness**, and let us put on the armor of light."*

Or remembering what Paul said about the resurrection in 1st Corinthians 15:53-54 when he wrote

*"For this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality. So, when this corruptible shall have put on incorruption, and this mortal shall have put on immortality, then shall be brought to pass the saying that is written, **Death** is swallowed up in victory."*

Or when he wrote in

Galatians 3:27 *"For as many of you as have been baptized into Christ have put on Christ."*

or in Ephesians 4:24 "And that ye put on the new man, which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness."

or in Ephesians 6:11 "Put on the whole armor of God . . ."

or in Colossians 3:12 "Put on therefore, as the elect of God, holy and beloved, bowels of mercies, kindness, humbleness of mind, meekness, longsuffering."

And then finally two verses later when he add

"And above all these things put on charity, which is the bond of perfectness."

All of that said, which are all metaphors for holiness, we must admit that clothing and fashion are important to some people purely as an aesthetic and ought to be seen in that sense. Women, made by God, have a makeup that loves clothing and fashion and are created to be interested in looking nice may, in fact, not dress well not to **seduce** anyone nor be **proud** in an "I am better than you," sense, but instead dress in higher fashions because it makes them **feel** better about themselves and their bodies. These considerations are important to remember when we talk about what people wear and how they look. In the end it is all quite subjective and again, it is all between the individual and God as He looks on the heart.

I would suggest that modesty is a virtue simply because it looks out for the other guy or girl and lends to supporting them in their desires for holy thoughts. But again, we are not judge, we are not jury and selfless, sacrificial love ought to abide with everyone seeking to please the Father.

Finally, we have the incendiary topic of body modifications - which some people consider to be everything from

Make-up,
Tattoos,
Piercings,
Injections,
Enhancements,
Surgery and
all the rest.

I suggest that in all of it, there is freedom. In all of it, we have to ask ourselves, "Will it or does it edify?" And only we can ourselves reply. I suggest that we leave it all alone.

Let it be between you, the individual, and God. Neither demand nor denounce, understanding the driver behind our choices and being responsible for them before our Maker, all the while refusing to alienate or malign anyone for their particular decisions. It's all in the heart and while most of it will have little to do with our eternal place, I would imagine that the motivation behind anything that people choose to is what will determine whether it will be considered good, evil or if it contributes to the state or standard of life eternal waiting in the beyond.

Chapter 8 Feeding the Body

At this point we are going to step closer into the **Dark**, so to speak, which means further and further away from the Fruit from the Tree of Life with its fruit that lasts.

I suggest that we do not ever take something in this **world** and forbid it but instead try to size it up in terms of value, eternal ramifications and spiritual benefits. So, imagine the following if you will.

Tree of Life

LIFE



FRUIT ETERNAL

KINGDOM WORTHY

BRIGHTEST

HIS WILL

Always leads to selfless love

Spiritually derived

Tree of **Knowledge** of Good and **Evil**

DEATH



FRUIT GOOD

earthly good

shadow

human benevolence

selfish love

Emotionally driven



FRUIT EVIL

earthly bad

dark

human depravity

selfish non-love

lust and **pride**

Try to keep these things in mind as we will now sojourn into realms that have a tendency to draw us deeper and deeper into the **power** of the **Dark**. In this chapter we are going to cover those things that our flesh feeds upon, namely food, **sex**, substances and believe

it or not, entertainments. Let's first cover food, which we touched on in the chapter above. Like family, friends and spouses, food is a wonderful gift given us not only because its satisfying to our physical bodies, but God has blessed us with incomprehensible varieties and combinations thereof.

I personally find the variety of foods a fantastic proof of God's existence - which some people find sophomoric - but to me an earth that provides the countless ingredients, flavors, proteins, fats and carbs blows my mind and I find myself worshipping God with every tasty mouthful. So, let's begin by noticing the importance the role food plays in the scripture, how the command from God at the start of the narrative was "eat this" but don't "eat that," and how He, our creator, based obedience on food we are allowed to eat and food that we are not. What this boils down to is our desires and drives or his, right? And really has nothing to do with the intrinsic value of those foods themselves. Bottom line? Human beings need to eat and we need to hydrate - so what better way for God to illustrate the heart of Man than to allow some foods (all the trees of the Garden you may freely eat) and to simply forbid others (the fruit of the Tree of **Knowledge** of good and **evil**.)

From there, eating together, sharing meals, and hosting people was a great expression of love anciently (and on out till this very day). We see this in the stories of Abraham and the heaven-sent visitors that came to him. His response was always to prepare food and treat them with hospitality.

When Isaac was to bless his son Esau, he requested that Esau actually go hunting and prepare him a savory dish so that he could bless him with a blessing. By the time we get to Moses and the Law, God, amplifying the import of His will over the will of the Nation, gave them more restrictions on their diet, again as a means to show how dedicated they were to Him - and possibly for some health reasons as a means to protect them from dangers of which they would remain unaware.

When the Messiah came along, however, we read that he came, "*eating and drinking*," meaning He openly enjoyed food and the response to this from the religious critics was to call Him a "glutton and winebibber." As a means to begin to break down all the dietary laws that the Jews built an super-structure upon, Jesus plainly taught, apparently to show that eating any kind of foods is not evil but what we possess in our hearts reflects the evil within, when he said,

Matthew 15:17-18 *Do not ye yet understand, that whatsoever entereth in at the mouth goeth into the belly, and is cast out into the draught? But those things which proceed out of the mouth come forth from the heart; and they defile the man.*

Of course, Peter was offered all the foods he considered unclean on a net lowered from heaven in a vision and when he refused to kill and eat it, God said

"What God hath cleansed, that call not thou common."

This opened the gates for all people interested in seeking God to eat whatever they want. Enough said. The difficulty with food, like it can be a difficulty with everything else, is when it becomes our God. It's actually a tough one because God has blessed most people with an abundance of choices in the face of our needs to eat, and so we are often thinking about food for a good part of every day. This makes food a very easy idol to embrace and frankly an understandable one; so understandable, I see its draw and our desires for it as completely understandable by God and unless someone is worshipping their food and making it the focus of their spiritual life's ambitions and drives, I think its use in this **world** will be exactly that - that we used it and when our bodies die our use of it is forgotten or transformed into a unique heavenly form. (Revelation 22:2)

There is, however, something that believers can do should food overwhelm them, take them captive or controls them to the point that it become unhealthy - and that is to consider dedicating their eating to the Lord. Bring it to Him and allow Him to work with you. Paul wrote in 1st Corinthians 10:31

Whether therefore ye eat, or drink, or whatsoever ye do, do all to the glory of God.

It's a battle, I know, but the battle is done not to get God to love us more, but to submit every item that pulls us away from Him into His care as He will teach us to manage such. Fasting is individual, biblical and has some excellent abilities to help someone learn to control their eating - but again, it's a personal choice. That last thing I would caution ourselves relative to food is that when we find ourselves "worshipping food" it in another way - and that is when we begin to make the eating of it a form of worship itself.

I'm talking about being grateful for the food item, thanking God for the food item but delving deeply into what might be considered

either an epicurean approach or hedonist form for eating and dining out. If you enjoy either of these approaches, however, and your heart has God as your central focus and desire, then I will not judge. To me eating, relationships, sex, and everything else, can be and perhaps should be seen as things we do as humans - things we enjoy and things we even need - but always as fruits from the Tree of Life, and never as things that should ever take precedence or have a priority over our walk with or our worship of Him.

And this brings us to a biggie in the world of faith - sex. For starters, everything I just said about food I think we can also say about sex, right? It is a gift. It is a blessing. It is of God and in most cases it becomes at times a need for most people. All the same drivers as food. Of course, there are also all the issues that come with a misappropriation of sexual intimacies, which includes all the **misuses, abuses, indulgences and addictions** - they are really no different in tone, and they come from the same place, as the **misuse** of food or substances or any other item we use and appeal to in our earthly lives.

The biggest difference between food and sex is that sex is commanded by God to be an exclusively shared experienced between two people of the opposite sex and these exchanges are supposed to be relegated to marital relationships - the consuming of food has no such limitations. I don't want to belabor the subject of sex and all of the permutations orbiting around it including masturbation, porn, homosexuality and all the other acts and actions people wonder about. The main point I want to make is sex has prescribed boundaries given by God and that when it becomes the driver, focus and/or the most important thing in our lives, it can readily, easily move God off the throne and replace Him with **self-will**.

Self-will, as we have seen, is a fruit that leads to **death**. **Sex**, then, becomes a major distraction for most - typically men, but more and more for women too.

Life on earth is a proving ground and sex is perhaps one of the most **powerful** forces in the flesh that appeals to **self-will** instead of the will of God. The onus of sexual sin has been paid, but the consequences of it overcoming someone and trapping them in the grip of the **Dark** is not small and cannot be denied. For some, the drivers and urges are so overwhelming that their appeals to it, and focus on it can, in fact, serve to cause them to turn from faith altogether. I think we have made a historical collective mistake in the somewhat ubiquitous Christian approach to sex and have seen far too many people turn from God in its wake. The

mistake has been to see sexual relations as evil, dirty and of **Satan** when the reality is God designed it to bless us, it is normal, good, a blessing and something to enjoy.

We might even see sex as a privilege - like driving a motor vehicle - and one that comes with the ability to be responsible, accountable and one that necessitates obeying the rules as means to protect the lives of others around us. In the comparison to driving, the license for sexual relations is only given when these qualifications are met. Of course, that's in a perfect world. But instead of being seen as a privilege that comes with responsibility, many people see sexual relations as a right that comes with owning a human body. The fallout from this latter view has been historically proven. So, what do we say to our children who quickly realize that sex is completely in their hands?

To me we ought to teach our children that sexual intimacy is marriage - period. Not that it's "for marriage," but that it is marriage itself. And that when someone chooses to engage with another person legally and with consent, what they are really saying is:

*I am responsible for taking this person into my life and caring for them until **death** do us part,*

and/or,

By choosing to engage with another person sexually, I am also making a promise to God and that person to not engage with another for life;

By teaching this approach to our children early, they go into the arena of sexual intimacy with a better idea of the appropriate settings around it and might take it a little more seriously. Of course, in many cases, these insights will go completely unnoticed. But having taught these rules that go with sexual expression, we, as parents, put ourselves in a position to work with our children from a foundation of truth when or if they challenge the rule which will enable us to speak to them from a position of principles instead of just decrying the sex itself or accepting it wholesale in the life of a child once it has been acted on (because all is lost and there is nothing left to lose).

In other words, by teaching that "sex is the act of marriage" to our children and that it is "a choice and a serious one that comes with responsibility and flat-out commitment," and that if they choose to engage in sex with someone in their lives then we have

a place to hold their feet to the fire, and to talk with them about planning their wedding, and them getting an apartments, and a job - even if they are only 13 years old! Of course, this approach would terrify most kids that age - to most kids of any age - but this terror would go a long way in helping them understand the sacredness of the act, while not demeaning the act itself and/or making them feel dirty, used or broken. The guilt and shame, therefore, would not be because of the sex, it would be for choosing to participate in sex without the follow through of commitment, responsibility or real love. That is the key.

Forbidding something, as we have seen in the lives of the very first couple on earth, and in most people thereafter, is almost a guarantee that whatever is forbidden will make it occur. Instead of forbidding sex, parents would do better to praise it, describe it in lofty terms in great intimacy and present it as a true gift from God who actually gave us parts of our bodies for pleasure. Then in, with and from that attitude, we can add in the explanation of exclusivity of partners, of sex being the actual act of marriage, and of the biblical fact that God loves the uniting together of our bodies through sex, but what He hates is the breaking apart once the two have become one, that will have a major impact on the utter decline of sexual purity among our youth. This approach will might make the act something far more inviting and far more sacred in the long run along with it being far more acceptable and good along the way, and far less acceptable when or if abused.

Feeding the Fleshly body occurs in more ways than just food and sex - but those are the most ubiquitous and constant areas of life human beings are learning to subject to the Spirit and will of God. We will talk about drugs later.

Chapter 9 Feeding the Carnal Mind

Maybe you have recognized that we are examining life in the Light and **Dark** (offered through the Two Trees) in an ascending (or descending) order of **Darkness**.

We've discussed the biggest and most literal physical elements of life we face almost constantly - food and sex, but we are now going to talk about feeding the **Carnal** Mind, continuing deeper into an ascent (or descent) into **darker** forces and realms thereafter.

I once had a mentor of mine say, "Everything, Shawn, is in the mind." Over the years I have learned first-hand the validity of this claim and agree with the scriptural principle that states believers need to renew our minds (Romans 12:2) which appears to come in and through "the washing of the Word," (Ephesians 5:26) when "received by the Spirit." (2nd Corinthians 3:18)

Because everything is in the mind, then we can assume that all of our battles are in the mind, and if and when we seek to abide most fully in the light of life, it seems our minds (or operating systems) have to be right. The mind is not the brain - I am not speaking of intellectualism. I am talking about an amalgamation from something known and captured in our thoughts, heart, beliefs, opinions, soul and views - stored in some unknown location in each of us whether it be our brains, hearts, nerves or combination of such. Having that system "right" or in harmony with the will of God is the essence of repentance. In other words, repentance does not mean changing our behavior - that is what religion wants people to believe and demands. Repentance means changing the mind first, because when the operating system is correct, the actions and choices will often, but not always, follow. Herein, the import of what our minds love, believe, adore and pursue becomes apparent. If we think it, and believe it, and desire it, we will most likely do it with our fleshly bodies, right? But if we think otherwise, and believe otherwise, and desire something otherwise (with otherwise being defined as the will of God), we are better equipped to resist doing whatever act it is that leans to the **Dark**.

The word repent is met-an-o-eo in Greek. It's a compound word formed through adding, "meta" and "noeo," together. "Meta" is sort of hard to grasp in its true meaning but right out the gate it means "beyond, after, or post." When we say, it's metaphysical, what we are saying is the subject matter is

Beyond the physical
After the physical
Post the physical.

The second Greek word used to create "metanoia" is obviously "noia" which means "mind." So, and here is where it gets a little murky, meta (beyond, after and post) and noia (mind) together mean to,

"Go beyond, or after or post the mind." If something is post-mind, or after mind, then what it is speaking to is the changing of the (former) mind. For example, if I once believed that it was okay to get drunk every night but I have a change of mind, I now, in my after-mind, believe differently - from the heart. I have

changed from my former beliefs (that are in the mind) and now, in my after-mind, think about getting drunk nightly differently.

So, repentance does not (I repeat, does not) mean, to change one's behaviors. It speaks more to the heart of the matter and to what God will judge - the state of the mind of every individual. See, our bodies of flesh have a mind of their own. They will always do what flesh wants to do. We cannot change its desires and drives. We can dress the flesh up, put lipstick on it, and high heels, but in the end, the flesh is still the flesh.

We can, however, change the operating system and then from within change the way we think about things, which will go a long way in changing what our bodies actually do and allow. My mind has changed about overindulgence of food, drink and sex. I realize that indulging in such can serve to feed my **carnal** flesh. Will I still sometimes overindulge? Yes. Because my flesh is weak. But my mind has made a stance on the subject, has changed, and this helps me resist the inclination. My mind has completely changed about **pornography, adultery, masturbation, or sexual licentiousness**. I **know** its nature. I **know** the tree from which it springs. Will my body do differently? Perhaps - and that is unfortunate. But since my mind has changed, I will immediately regret the failures of my actions if they are contrary to the way I think. For these reasons, the acts are not really the issue. Quite frankly, the acts and their sinful nature have been paid in full by Christ.

The "mind-change" is the issue - that is what we want in people and that is up to each individual to pursue. But this is why the state of the mind, and the effects it has on our lives, is far more important than acts of the failing flesh. By changing the operating system, the body has a better chance to and this is the thought behind repentance. When in the mind our acts against God are anathema, they serve to bring us to mourning when we externally fail to live up in our bodies to what we truly believe. So, again, the mind is washed by the Word of God when it is read by the Spirit. I wish I could get people to understand this principle as plainly and powerfully as it has become known to me.

Relative to our purposes here, however, the introduction of biblical content, elements, information and attitudes into our minds as spiritual food to feed and thrive off can - might - may serve to renew our minds and distance ourselves from the fruit from the Tree of **knowledge** of good and **evil**. Therefore, the thoughts of the Mind, and the things that effect the mind are far more powerful and significant than those things we engage in or

with through our bodies alone. It's sort of like dust and dirt may affect our desktop computers (dress, fashion, food and sex) but not anything like a virus (what we ingest that alters our operating system).

So, let's look at some of the more apparently benign ways we feed our **carnal** minds (remember, the Word is what washes and reestablishes our spiritual minds) and we will begin with the entertainments we embrace. Now, again, this is not to take away the joy we get in life through the arts. I am a huge fan of film, music, literature while other diligent seekers of Him love other aspects of entertainments like watching sports, dance, opera and the like.

We all have things of which we are spectators that we enjoy, and God gave us these lives to live. Remember there is liberty in Christ, that no-thing in and of itself is evil, but also not all things are expedient. Our choices in entertainments are really subjective and in my life the liberty I find is vast as I am rarely swayed too much in my mind by the contents of what I allow. But even I have limits - and I know them by the Spirit not by the dictates and opinions of others. When it comes to the things we read, the things we watch, and the things we listen to or otherwise participate in, each individual must decide what is harmful, what effects they might have on our operating system, and what leads from Him and His light verse what leads to the same.

The point is, again reiterated, you, by the Spirit, know what moves you toward the Tree of Life and only you know what leads you eat from to the Tree of **Death**. Examine thyself - and live accordingly. Interestingly, I personally have some lines I draw that other believers never would.

For instance, I really enjoy all artfully crafted films no matter what the subject matter so long as they are well written, acted lighted, and directed. But I cannot personally tolerate Superhero, Marvel comics, CGI driven films. They're just not my taste. Similarly, I love almost all music, but especially punk. But I genuinely detest some forms of music the masses love.

Personally, I never have nor would I ever watch South Park, the Simpsons, or any such thing. But I would binge on Asian cooking shows with really bad voice overs. Am I right or better or Godly in my choices? No more or less than someone who loves the Miami Sound Machine, The Office or shopping at Walmart. It's just **world** culture and we are all subject to it. The only caution is to be responsible enough to know when something is turning your thoughts

from God to **self-will**, from faith and love to **faithlessness** and **indifference**.

Chapter 10 Education and Employments

Sometimes I wonder about the purpose of this life and all that it requires in the face of God creating the world and people in His image. I mean, it is a world where we have to constantly choose how to live, how to response, what to pursue and who to be in the face of it all.

On the one hand, we have some believers say that its actually evil to pursue education and employment because God wants to be first and only in their lives (but that doesn't make much sense relative to how He made us) and on the other hand, there are people that see the education and employments we pursue as contributing to the way God values us and who might even be critical of others who have not pursued educational or employment excellence.

One of the most often asked questions I get and have gotten over the years by Christians (especially young ones) is, "*How should I live?*" "*Should I go to college?*" "*Should I pursue gainful employment, or should I only pursue Him and turn from this fallen world and its ways?*"

Looking around at all of the opinions, and at what the scripture has to say, I think we make some egregious mistakes in the faith when we suggest that people should forego all learning, education and employment in this **world** in the name and dedicated cause of Christ. Remember, even Jesus was a carpenter. That is a skilled trade. One that is learned over time. Paul was at the level of a Pharisee in training and as Christian became a tent maker. Knowledge, learning, and education is good and is certainly supported by the Word. The Proverbs are big on learning, saying things like:

Proverbs 1:5 A wise man will hear, and will increase learning; and a man of understanding shall attain unto wise counsels:

Proverbs 9:9 Give instruction to a wise man, and he will be yet wiser: teach a just man, and he will increase in learning.

Proverbs 16:21 The wise in heart shall be called prudent: and the sweetness of the lips increaseth learning.

Proverbs 16:23 The heart of the wise teacheth his mouth, and addeth learning to his lips.

The scripture is clear that human beings were made to work, to labor, as even God labored to create the heavens and the earth, and Adam is commanded to care for the garden given him before the Fall even brought weeds. The ark didn't build itself, nor did Solomon's temple, nor was the wall around it built by angels - human beings, made in God's image can only really live to their fullest capacity when labor is included in the mix.

We read in Daniel 1:17 *"As for these four children, God gave them knowledge and skill in all learning and wisdom: and Daniel had understanding in all visions and dreams."*

And Paul made the importance of labor and earning a living clear when he wrote in 1st Timothy 5:8,

"If any provide not for his own, and specially for those of his own house, he hath denied the faith, and is worse than an infidel."

So, in this short chapter let's be really clear - human beings, all things considered (including exceptions like disabilities and the like) were made by God to learn, labor and to earn money for themselves and their families. And the second thing to remember in the face of this is that when God created most people He equipped us with certain propensities, skills, desires, inclinations and it is up to each of us to discover what those things are, and how we are to approach and utilized them in this life where learning and labor are essential. Not everyone is made nor called by God to be in ministry, to pastor a church, or to spend their life serving the poor. In this **world**, it is super important to "know thyself" (as Socrates said) and to take how God has created us and to then to pursue what He has made us to be and do. This is God honoring.

What someone does - so long as they do it - is not nearly as important as why they do it, meaning whether they were made to do the thing or to pursue the course or not. I suggest that there is no amount of learning or laboring that is bad or wrong if (IF) the heart and mind of the individual involved is in the right place with God. We do not please God, or maybe I should say, "we don't cause God to love us more or less depending on whether we are Christians laboring in the harvest or Christians laboring in the **world**." Not at all. Everything with God is heart-based, priority based in that heart, and seen in who and what we love most. Because of the demands on our lives to learn, get an education, and labor

in jobs or chosen careers, it is very easy to let such things consume us and even choke our ability out to bear fruit unto Him. This is when our labors and interests become a problem - just like with everything else. It's when our **wisdom** and **knowledge** and images of **self** take priority and precedence over His. This is why we read Paul saying in Colossians 2:8,

*See to it that no one takes you captive by philosophy and **empty** deceit, according to human tradition, according to the elemental **spirits of the world**, and not according to Christ.*

Or what Paul adds in Romans 1:22 where, in describing the fallen **world**, says, "*Professing themselves to be **wise**, they became fools,*"

Anyone, doctor, lawyer, trash collector, educated formally or illiterate, can stand equally in the Kingdom irrespective of their education or career choice so long as they "*seek first the Kingdom (and keep it first) and diligently, from the heart and mind, seek to know and love the living God.*" In fact, many people while in their respective occupations do a world of good for the Kingdom because of their placement in the work place. So, again, and as with most things in this human experience, it's the inward heart for God and Truth that matters, not the things that we all have to do to thrive and earn to stay alive while here.

In closing I might add - the choice to go full time into ministry I think has a built-in reward for those who do it in terms of personal satisfaction, knowledge of the Word, and the constancy of having God on the mind. But relative to the Kingdom, and our placement in it, it's not a matter of who does what nor how much is dedicated full time, but if people did what God places on them to do and if they retain them as their priority.

Having talked about education and occupation, it seems most logical to now speak to a Christian biggie - **money** and **materialism**.

Chapter 11

Money and Materialism

Ahhh, **money** and **materialism** - the big one for us humans, right? Huge in the realm of Christianity. Admittedly, it is necessary to some extent for thriving in the **world**. And we know that Jesus used it. Abraham was flush with it. And Mary was praised when she blessed Jesus by pouring an expensive box of lavish lotion over

his head in preparation for His burial. As stated above, Paul made it clear that "unless a man works he will not eat." And that "if he does not provide for his family he is worse than an unbeliever."

But Paul also wisely said in 1st Timothy 6:10,

"the love of money is the root of all evil: which while some coveted after, they have erred from the faith, and pierced themselves through with many sorrows."

Money. A necessary evil that in the end serves as one of the greatest material tests on the character, heart and faith of a follower of Christ. So, let's just get to the root of it and the first thing we might note is **money** serves to prove priorities, focus, and love by proving to the holder where their allegiances lie in this **world**, in the heavens and what they hold most dear in their hearts.

In the extreme, **money** can drive some people to do some utterly horrible things including telling lies, betraying others, ruining others and even wiping them off the face of the earth. It can be the source of **greed, power mongering, infidelities, idol worship, materialism, criminality, violence** and other unimaginable things where human beings actually resort to the ways of the animal kingdom.

When people see **money** as their God and goal, they might choose to rob, lie, cheat and steal to get it, and as stated, even kill. That is how **powerful** the item can be or become if we have our eyes on something other than Him. Taking it down a level from murder, robbery and theft, a **selfish** love of **money** can cause some people who possess it, and have all that they need of it, to harden their hearts in the face of others who are in destitution and drive them to refuse to share or to even be kind.

Some people use their **money** and **wealth** to manipulate and control the outcome of events. Some quickly allow it to make them **proud**, and to look down on others who have less of it.

But, as we have seen, **money**, like almost everything else in this **world**, becomes a item that offers us constant choices - to use it wisely, to be good stewards, and to put it in its proper place or to let it overwhelm us as a pernicious idol that can literally dominate everything about our existence.

Jesus listed "the cares and **riches** of the **world**," as one of two items that have the capacity to choke out a believers capacity to bear the fruit of love, and he used the **luxury** the **rich** man surrounded himself with in life as the only reason he did not go to paradise, saying that he went to prison, "because he lived sumptuously while Lazarus ate only from the crumbs of his table."

Of course, Judas, who loved **money**, betrayed the very incarnate God for thirty pieces of silver - which, when he realized what he had done, cast it back into the treasury and went out and hung himself.

Like our fleshly desires, and our relationship with other things in this **world**, money is really an amazing revealer of our souls and can easily - so easily - become our go to here in the flesh - instead of God. So, in the worst sense of things, **money** can readily become our God or what we think about constantly, seek, pursue and desire first and over of Him. For those in that head space, Jesus clearly said in Matthew 6:24

"No one can serve two masters; for either he will hate the one and love the other, or he will be devoted to the one and despise the other. You cannot serve God and mammon."

(Which is another word for **wealth** or **riches**)

And so, through **money** most of us in this life we are faced with the question - whom we will serve, who reigns, who is our priority and whom do we love more than anything or anyone else? This can become an extremely tenuous factor in our material lives because material lives require material attention and material attentions almost always require **money**.

Believers and not have cars to buy (and gas, oil, tires, brakes and insurance of them), rent and mortgages to pay every month, and bills for everything under the sun (doctors, dentists, food, heat, electricity). This material **world** demands its tax even if a person has an eye single to the glory of God and nobody, not even Jesus, was able to escape the need for it - not completely. But in the face of this, my dear brothers and sisters, try and see this life as a proving ground where every desire of the heart will be tested as to see if it is directed at God or at His many **counterfeits**. There is no intrinsic sin in being **rich** nor is there any intrinsic holiness in being poor. All there is for people to individually decide is what will be our focus, our main driver, our first priority - and to follow it.

Interestingly, but not surprisingly, **money** - its draw, **allure** and the **love of it** - is pretty relentless for most people. So, when it comes to the heart, and its natural desire and hope for **money** that many people have, I would say this:

Money is like the air that we as human beings must breathe in this **world**. We will not need air in the **world** to come neither will we need **money** for **wealth** and **riches** but instead on "treasures in heaven." But while we are here, I suppose we should see **money** as something as necessary as the air we breathe. Think about it - most of the time, unless we are struggling for it - we don't really think too much about breathing, it just sort of happens. Automatically. And when we stop breathing (for good) that will be based on a determination from God. Perhaps, we might embrace this same attitude toward **money** while here. It comes and happens as a by-product of our labors, and we treat it as natural while not focusing too much on making it happen. Yes, we will have times where we have to fight to get it, just like there are times we have to fight to get air. And yes, there will be times when we will worry about it and wonder how we will even survive as it seems to run out just like our air when we are underwater. But the principle to consider here is upon whom will you trust and look to keep you above water and alive?

If it's God, and He is your go-to in every situation, you have your priorities right. If He is a footnote to your love or pursuit of **money**, then the acquisition of it is your life's focus. And let me tell you, this is the way we are made - especially in this fallen **world**. So, He gets it. And He knows that **money** is necessary. Necessary, but never the main focus. And that is the rub.

Pragmatically, Paul gave Timothy (in 1st Timothy 6:17) some practical advice saying,

*Charge them that are **rich** in this **world**, that they be not high-minded, nor trust in uncertain **riches**, but in the living God, who giveth us richly all things to enjoy; That they do good, that they be rich in good works, ready to distribute, willing to communicate; Laying up in store for themselves a good foundation against the time to come, that they may lay hold on eternal life.*

Interestingly, Paul here tacitly accepts the fact that some believers of that day were **rich** in this **world** and he does not condemn them nor criticize them at all. Instead, he simply helps direct how they should approach life when in possession of much.

And this leads us to the positive ways people can use or see **money** and **material** in this life - listen - if so lead and inclined.

Remembering that the definition of Agape love is selfless, sacrificial and insufferable acts and attitudes, someone with God at the forefront might see their material status on earth, or their **riches**, in these same terms, asking:

"Who can I help using my largess?"

"What can I do to sacrifice for another-person's well-being?"

and most importantly, *"how would God want me to allocate my resources?"*

Let every person stand or fall on how they answer and pursue these questions as a believer by the Spirit. And let all the rest withhold judgement. Quite frankly, folks, I would suggest that in this day and age that no organization, no church, no institution ought to be the first in line to take your cash. Instead, perhaps helping a family member or neighbor or stranger in need is just as viable as contributing to a tax-exempt charity. Additionally, a pastor's demand for **tithes** have zero priority on your funds compared to anyone else in their **world** - so don't be fooled. Our courses and this ministry and its charges are not nearly as important as supplying sacrificial funds for someone or something that will not benefit you in the least.

Let the Spirit guide, not the manipulations of Men. Trust in God with your finances and look to Him to inspire you with opportunities to sacrifice for others along the course of your lives.

The only thing I would ever caution anyone about, who follows Christ and seeks to walk in faith and love, is to never allow the cares or **riches** of the **world** to choke out your love or to become your first love in life.

Chapter 12

Politics/Theocracy

Thus far in this book we have tried to talk about principles of **Dark** and Light and have talked gently through some elements of this life and how we might choose to govern ourselves along the way of what I call, "the proving ground." Up to and including the

topic of this chapter, it's really all been about how to approach things that in and of themselves are benign to the believer, pose no outright evil to us and that the ideas of evil and good are assigned to "the thing" by and through our use of it. This last category of benign things believers are free to engage in or not we might see as political and/or governmental involvement. First, let's talk about politics.

Unfortunately, and in my limited estimation, the sacred faith bestowed and offered to the **world** by God has been errantly hijacked and incorporated into the **world** of politics - especially here in the United States where there are giant political forces that are generally viewed as Christian or evangelical.

When we look, however, to Christ and His labors when He was on earth including His ministry and message, it was delivered amidst a **worldly** governmental force known as the Roman Empire and yet we do not find any biblical support for Him or His apostles mixing the faith with any sort of form of political efforts. Jesus plainly said, "give to Caesars what is Caesars and give to God what is God's," and though He was charged with being an insurrectionist, He was innocent of this even to the point of admitting to Pilate, that while He was a King, "my Kingdom is not of this **world**."

For some reason, Christians for nearly two thousand years have forgotten this and have often used the sacred faith for political gain, action and outright manipulation. The end result of this, in our modern age, is Christians are often known more for what they hate and are against in this **world** (abortion, drugs, divorce, gay marriage and the like) rather than for their selfless, sacrificial and insufferable love in the face of such things going on around them!

Many people, wrongly interpreting the context of scripture, believe that the Kingdom of God ("*thy Kingdom Come, they Will be done, on earth as it is in heaven*") is something that will and should exist here materially. With this errant thinking in tow, they often see themselves and the call on their lives as helping to bring the Kingdom of God to earth, even though Jesus plainly taught that "*the Kingdom does not come with observation, but is within us.*"

These often-well-meanings souls might fall under a labeled called, "Kingdom Builders" which, in the end, become to some degree or another, various attempts at establishing a Christian theocracy here on earth to rule and govern Man. Personally, I find the attempts in direct conflict with what Jesus came to do, with

fulfillment and with the stated nature of the faith being spiritual - but I would never break fellowship with someone who felt inclined to pursue this in their view of the faith - again, it's their choice. All I would say is that if it's possible, try not to tie your faith in God with your political resonations, your moral standings in the **world** or, how you believe this fallen **world** ought to be governed. I think it dilutes the faith. I also think it sends an errant message about what the faith actually is and where it is centered - in the heart and mind of those who are His.

I understand all the passionate views God-loving and God-fearing people have toward the unborn and for the sanctity of marriage. I understand the desire to bring "the Kingdom of God" down to earth to govern it through Christian principles. But I have yet to see, historically or otherwise, any attempt at theocratic rule that successfully governed the masses without the faith suffering as a result in some way or another. Whether the Vatican, The English Monarchy, Mormonism or even the reign of Islam in Arab states, damage is always done to the religious message when men try to impose the will of God on the **world** politically.

In the United States where powerful Evangelical lobbyist's push their "Christian agenda's" out on others, true Christianity - especially the Christian idea of fulfillment - is utterly reconfigured and lost.

In the end, freedom yes, and liberty, yes, and all souls going as they are led but caution applied when we are tempted to try and legislate Christian principles into the **world**. At least that is my opinion of all things political.

PART II

Chapter 13

Spirits in a Material World

After covering the general elements that could cause believers to turn and eat of the Tree of **Knowledge** of good and **evil** - clothes, body ornamentation, food, sex, education, employment, money, materialism, and politics - we are now going to leave behind the common daily elements of this **world** and are going to talk now about some flat-out **Dark** realms that can, and in fact will, serve to draw us from the Light of Truth and into the clutches of **death** - with **death** being that they will not lend to our place in the Kingdom but will ultimately and only wrap us in **counterfeit** chains.

We're going to start by generally talking about spirits in the material **world**, then go speak about self-will. From here we will dive deeper and deeper into what I see as spiritually **Dark** forces in what I also see as descending forms (meaning, they descend deeper and deeper into the abyss of the **Dark void** to where the presence of God becomes non-existent.

So, let's talk about what the 80s band the Police called, "spirits in the material **world**." When we look at the Genesis account of the Creation, we remember reading that God separated the **Dark** from the Light in His creating the heavens and the earth.

At that time, I suggested (and I could be incorrect in this) that because God has always been (Light with a capital L) then **His opposite, Dark** (with a capital D) has always existed too and I mentioned that **Dark** is nothing more than the **absence of the Light** (meaning that the **Dark** is the **complete opposite** or **absence of God**). We then assume from reading the biblical text that **Satan** was a created being made perfect, and as an angel of heaven he was part of that host. But when he fell, or better put, when he chooses to embrace the **Dark** and its **powers** over God and His, it seems that he took other beings, other angels with him, who would tempt, try and test humans being on earth.

Simultaneously, there appears to be angels of heaven that remained, also called angels of light, who in their respective ranks of power seem to war against the **Dark powers** in the constant battle over universal ground. Because **Satan** won the "title deed" to the earth by getting Adam to choose **self-will** over God's will he had the **power** over Man through sin and **death** which reigned over the earth. When Jesus, "the Light of the World," and "the Word made flesh" entered in, He had the victory at His cross and sent **Satan** and his angels packing to the Lake of Fire in 70AD at the ultimate destruction of the former age (of the Law and the Prophets). And

I submit to any who will hear that **Satan** and his angels, sin, **death**, hell and the grave are over in terms of **power** and effectiveness in this **world**. However, the **Dark** with a capital D continues to exist (again, in the **absence of God**) and continues to draw souls to its cold **hollow** halls through a myriad of ways. But here is where I go into some conjecture.

If **Satan** and his angels have been cast into the Lake of Fire and have been overcome, then from where does evil come from now? James tells us, which we mentioned in the second chapter of this series when he said,

*"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: But every man is tempted, when he is drawn away of his own **lust**, and enticed."*

It is interesting that James makes no mention of **Satan** here. And this leads me to a big conjecture relative to **dark powers** in the universe. I submit to you that there continues to be Light and **Dark** in the universe, meaning that there are places where God is, there are places where God is fading, and there are places where God is not. The heavens above is the place where God is - meaning in His Kingdom, in the New Jerusalem, sitting on the throne in the resurrected glorified body of Jesus Christ. I submit that **outside** that Kingdom (and its "walls") are gradations of Him and His light in lesser degrees, which means there are some introductions of **Dark**, and I cannot help but wonder if that **Darkness** continues to increase, we might say, in the heavenly neighborhoods, so to speak, until we get to locations in the far reaches of heaven where there is no God at all. And therefore no Light - only the **Dark**.

Stepping back to the New Jerusalem, I submit that as there are those believers who enter the Kingdom of God by faith, wherein they will thrive, based on their resurrected body types, in His Light, then **outside** of it there will be those of non-faith that will abide in lesser and lesser light, until we get to the places (neighborhoods, so to speak) where only the **Darkest** souls gnash in the **Darkest** of locales. And here is where the conjecture reaches itself into a big giant imaginative stretch -

I wonder if the people who abide in the Kingdom of Light actually become the Light itself, with a capital L, meaning they themselves become expressions of the living God, shining, exposing, and cleansing with fire the universe and beyond, and if the souls that abide in the farthest regions of the **Dark** actually become that **Dark** and exist eternally to try, tempt, test the Light and things of it? Perhaps this is the way the Kingdom of God increases

eternally; perhaps there will be ages again where God will say, "let there be Light and those who are His from former ages will be the ones who actually go down and separate the **Dark** as was done in the original Genesis creation account? Maybe, just maybe, an ongoing battle forever exists between those who love the Light and those who love the **Dark**, and when someone chooses to turn from the **Dark** and its ways, the angels of heaven rejoice; and when someone turns from the Light the heavens mourn.

Taking all of this conjecture in hand, all we can say is our war and warfare here is spiritual, that we ought to arm ourselves spiritually and see our warfare as spiritual, and not physical, as Paul wrote in,

*2nd Corinthians 10:3-5 "For though we walk in the flesh, we do not war after the flesh: For the weapons of our warfare are not **carnal**, but mighty through God to the pulling down of strong holds;) Casting down imaginations, and every high thing that exalteth itself against the knowledge of God, and bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ."*

And,

Ephesians 6:13-18 "Wherefore take unto you the whole armor of God, that ye may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand. Stand therefore, having your loins girt about with truth, and having on the breastplate of righteousness; And your feet shod with the preparation of the gospel of peace; Above all, taking the shield of faith, wherewith ye shall be able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked. And take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God: praying always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit, and watching thereunto with all perseverance and supplication for all saints;

and,

*Ephesians 6:12 "For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against **principalities**, against **powers**, against the **rulers of the darkness** of this **world**, against **spiritual wickedness** in high places."*

I therefore submit that the **Dark** with a capital D is always at work, always present in this **world**, and forever trying to move the universe to its ways of Godlessness and rebelliousness. I suggest that the principles upon which the **Dark** thrive are established in some form of godlessness, rebellion, and in the end, **self-will**

over His will in some form or another. Some of these anti-God expressions are almost benign and might be considered gray in the spectrum of His divine Light. Others get progressively more ensconced in **Dark** persuasions, ultimately leading us to the mindset of the most sinister **world** views imaginable. As the scripture suggests, this **Dark** is spirit-based, **void** of Light and can be as gravitational on the soul as a **black hole** in space. Like a **black hole**, the pull becomes greater and greater the closer a person gets to it.

We are now going to sojourn deeper into the realms of spiritually **Dark** places as a means to better understand them for our protection. I want to preface my comments with the fact that I feel very sorry for people - flesh and blood and the departed - that are in the grips of the **Dark** and held captive by its ways. I believe that His love expressed selflessly toward such is what will equip them with the strength to break the chains that hold them bound. This means that in the face of their evil words, ways, deeds and beliefs, they ought to encounter truth in love, acceptance and aid unconditionally, and longsuffering even in the face of their relentless pursuits of **self**. That said, I also readily admit that some souls love the **Dark** more than the Light, and therefore actually hate God and all that He is. I am committed to loving them all personally but understand that there are some who will forever refuse God's loving hand. I submit that the **power** working on them is incomprehensibly strong, even **alluring** and is **empowered** by their literally surrendering up light and life. Therefore, the path of **Dark** must be seen as the easier, less painful path, therefore more enticing, more **seductive** and only inflicting pain once its hooks are set.

We have one more area to cover before sojourning into specific realms of spiritually **dark** places - a short discussion on **self** and **self-will**.

Chapter 14 Self-will

I want to begin by noting something significant in the realms of **Dark** and Light - they are very similar in some ways but in the end, vitally dissimilar in the ways that are eternal and therefore important. Go back with me and think about the two trees in the Garden of Eden. The fruit of one lends to life, the fruit of the other lends to **death** but they are both trees and they both offer fruit that require our eating from them. Eating from them also

requires choice. This is where each tree effectively becomes very different because to eat from one is to choose to do the will of God, and to eat from the other is to choose to do the will of the self. Herein lies the rub in matters of faith - do we, will we, live by the will of God, or do we, and will we, do our own will.

God's will or **self-will**.

One leads to life the other to **death**.

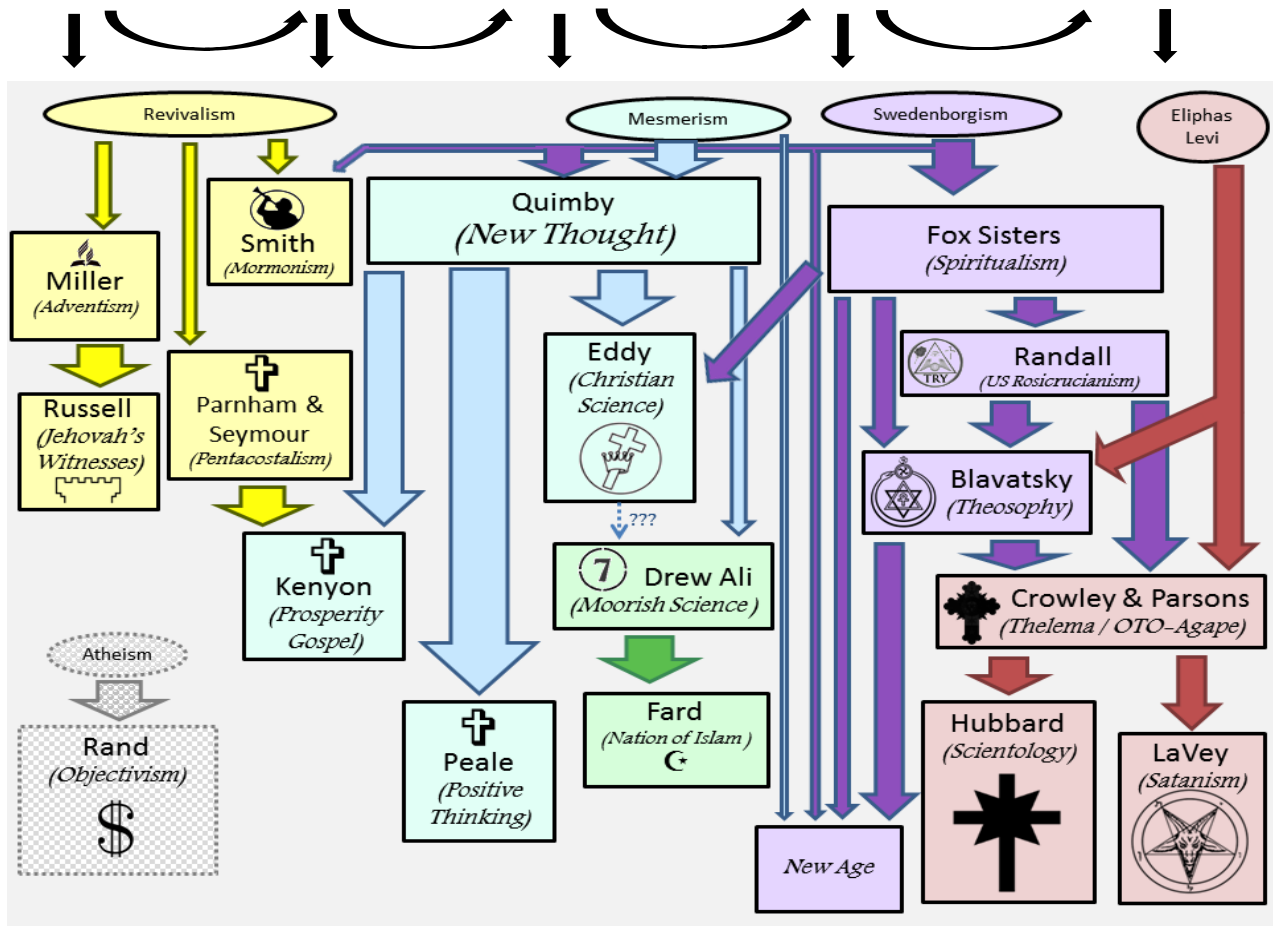
God's will is heavenly, **self-will** is earthly, fleshly and in the end leads to the **Dark**. The first provides true illumination, the second a light that never warms or that genuinely illuminates. What is fascinating about the fruit of **knowledge** of good and **evil** is it claims to offer genuine knowledge, true illumination, and insight into things that are traditionally obscure. In the following chapters we are going to examine the main purveyors of this **secret knowledge**, of **esoterica**, and expose them gently for what they are - **counterfeits** to a true knowledge of God and His Son.

We are going to begin talking about iffy expressions within the Christian faith itself, namely what people call, the Prosperity Gospel and the **esoteric powers** that it claims to harness. We will move into what is called, The **Law of Attraction**, which is closely related to the **Prosperity Gospel**. From there we will touch on the ancient practice of **Hermeticism**, then **Masonry**, and its cousin, **Mormonism**, and from there we will begin and even steeper descent into the **Dark** by looking at **Eckart Tolle**, **Theosophy**, **Eckankar**, **Scientology**, **Thelema**, **Theistic Satanism**, and **Objectivism**

What do all of these expressions have in common without exception? A focus on the **self** and **self-will** over, ahead of, or in some cases even the rejection of the will of God. Simmering it all down into a basic rule, we might even suggest that there is God's will in the universe (or multi-universe) and there is everything else. And if it is not God's will then it is a **counterfeit** to some extent or another. As a means to tease through some of the major **self-willed counterfeit** operations out in the **world** we are now going to try and see what they teach, have in common, and promise. The following chart offers us with a general layout of the origin of most of the expressions we will cover. Take a look and then we will work through some of the major **Dark** players. (a special thanks to the creator of the following illustration I found online but can't seem to relocate in an effort to name)

Dark Players

EMOTIONALISM MONEY SELF-WILL/MIND SPIRITUALISM GODLESSNESS



BIBLICAL WARNING SIGNS	Pros.G.	LDS	Tolle	L of A	Objct	Hrmet	Theos	Ekan	Sci	Thelem	Satan
1 Self-will	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
2 Pride	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
3 All that is in the world	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
4 Emotionalism	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
5 Spiritualism	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
6 Licentiousness	No	No	No	No	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
7 Believe in Christ?	Yes	Yes	No	No	No	No	No	No	No	No	No



Chapter 15

Prosperity Gospel

Prosperity theology (which is sometimes called the Prosperity Gospel, the health-and-**wealth** Gospel, the Gospel of success, or Seed Faith) is founded on a particular belief among some Protestant and Catholic Christians that financial blessings and physical well-being are always the will of the living God and that faith, positive speech, and donations to religious causes will increase one's health and material **wealth**. In the end, therefore, material and especially **financial success is seen as a sign of divine favor**.

Prosperity theology takes the Bible as a contract between God and humans and that contract plainly states that:

"if humans have faith in God, he will deliver security and prosperity to them."

The doctrine apparently emphasizes the importance of **personal empowerment** which is supported by the idea that it is God's will for His people to be materially blessed. **Personal empowerment**, while at time important and applicable in this **world** but it can easily become an expression of **self-will**.

The atonement of Jesus (which brings the reconciliation of God to the **world**) is interpreted by prosperity teachers as to include an alleviation of poor in health and **wealth**, which are viewed as curses today that can be broken by faith. This faith is said to be achieved or expressed through **visualization** practices, the donation of **money** (of course) and what they refer to as "**positive confession**," which is a term that refers to speaking **ones own wishes and desires** into existence by using positive speech.

I would pause here and now and remind you that a soul devoted to God seeks to do His will, and not their own, and speaks into existence what He says and not what they want.

In the 1950's there were "Healing Revivals" where it is believed that prosperity theology first came to prominence in the United States however some say it has its roots in what is known as the **New Thought** movement which started well before in the 19th century. These things morphed in the face of 1980's televangelism to something called, the Word of Faith movement, which was adopted by many Pentecostal and charismatic believers in the 1990s and 2000s.

Beginning as a US trend the movement shifted into the minds and hearts of the world population that was seeking a reprieve from socio-economic despair and poor physical health. According to historian Kate Bowler, the prosperity gospel was formed from "the intersection of three different ideologies: Pentecostalism, **New Thought**, and what she said is "an American gospel of pragmatism, individualism, and **upward** mobility".

This new "American Gospel" was best exemplified by Andrew Carnegie's, "**Gospel of Wealth**" and Russell Conwell's famous sermon titled, "Acres of Diamonds", in which Conwell equated poverty with sin and asserted that anyone could become **rich** through hard work. I would say, "okay? Why not? But is that what a believer wants their labors to be focused upon? **Riches**? What about the treasures in heaven Jesus talked about?"

It should be noted that this gospel of **wealth** is an expression of what some call, "**muscular Christianity**" and sees success to be the result of personal efforts (what the scripture calls, "the arm of the flesh") rather than divine intervention. Again, I suggest every ardent seeker of truth ask, "But where do we find the will of the individual submitting their lives to the will of God in this approach?"

This is not to imply that God hates earthly success or **wealth** nor that He refuses to bless His children with such, but a believer's life, in my estimation, should always be offered up to His will and ways, *seeking first the Kingdom of God* and not the Kingdoms of this **world** and what they offer them.

What was called, "**the New Thought movement**," (popularized by men like Quimby and Mezzmer) which emerged in the 1880s, was responsible for popularizing a belief in **the power of the mind** to achieve prosperity. I think this readily accords with Jesus when He plainly said, "*for where your treasure is there is your heart also.*" While initially focused on achieving mental and physical health, which was popular due to a fad for healthy Christian living in that age, **New Thought** teachers such as Charles Fillmore made material success a major emphasis of the movement. By the 20th century, **New Thought** concepts had saturated American popular culture, being common features of both **self-help** literature and popular psychology.

In the 1890's E. W. Kenyon, a Baptist minister and adherent of the what was called the "**Higher Life** movement" is credited with introducing what were called "**mind-power teachings**" into early Pentecostalism. Kenyon attended Emerson College of Oratory where

he was exposed to the **New Thought** movement and he later became connected with well-known Pentecostal leaders and wrote about **supernatural revelation** and positive declarations. It was Kenyon's writing that influenced leaders of the nascent prosperity movement during the post-war American healing revival. While most leaders of the prosperity movement have denied that he was influenced by the **New Thought** movement anthropologist Simon Coleman states that there are "*obvious parallels*" between Kenyon's teachings and **New Thought**.

Interestingly, Kenyon taught that Christ's substitutionary atonement, embraced by faith, secured for a believer the "right to divine physical healing." I would remind us that Jesus plainly said, "*my Kingdom is not of this world,*" and when He ascended into the heavens He left behind a **world** of suffering, dying people and that millions of faithful Christians today, full of faith in the living God, continue to live, and die, with insufferable ailments including poverty. Is this their fault due to a lack of faith?

Of course, here is where tapping into **unseen powers** come into play as the Word of Faith or prosperity gospel proponents say that health and **wealth**, made available through Jesus' atonement, is only obtained through positive, faith-filled speech and paying generous amounts of **seed money** to others in ministry.

Even more insidiously, word of faith proponents claim that when a believer speaks they have the **power** to create **wealth** and happiness via the same **power** that God used to create the heavens and the earth and to raise Christ from the dead. For them, prayer is often understood to be a **binding**, legal act and Kenyon taught that rather than asking for healing or wealth from God believers are to **demand** healing since they are legally entitled to receive it.

I would ask where is "*trusting in the Lord with all our heart, and leaning not to our own understanding*" is in all of this? Kenyon labeled faith in God and Christ as "overcoming faith" which found a home in the heart of many Pentecostals who have always resonated to faith healing. Apparently, the verbal **power** to heal someone transferred over to the verbal **power** to create **wealth**. I wonder, when Jesus plainly stated that the "*kingdom of God comes without observation,*" and that "*the Kingdom of God is within you,*" why such souls have interpreted the line, "*thy kingdom come, thy will be done, on earth as it is in heaven*" to mean "*my will kingdom come, my will be done on earth in the name of heaven.*"

I suggest that the false selective un-contextual principles extracted from the Bible are more than apparent in this pseudo

form of the faith and stand contrary to the overall teachings of Jesus.

In any case, the movement more and more possessed a strong belief in the **power** of speech (which included a focus on speaking in tongues and the use of **the names of God**, especially the Anglicized name of Jesus).

From Kenyon's influence others would sprout forth and continue to teach similar principles including F. F. Bosworth and John G. Lake. But corruption moves slowly and often begins with the best of intentions. The focus on personal **wealth** spoken into existence did not come about immediately and the first generation of Pentecostals influenced by Kenyon, like Bosworth, did not view faith as a means to attain material prosperity. As a matter of fact, research shows that early Pentecostals tended to view prosperity as a threat to a person's spiritual well-being. By the 1940s and 1950s, however, a more recognizable form of the Prosperity doctrine began to take shape within the Pentecostal movement as it sort of was a natural result of what were called "deliverance ministries" in the hands of "healing evangelists." From that tree of rotten fruit, it was easy for believers to jump from having the **power** to heal and deliver people from demonic possession to creating **wealth** for themselves. Before we knew it, Jesus' teachings things like, "Ask and it shall be given to you," became, "demand in my name and it will happen exactly as you wish."

In 1947 a man named Oral Roberts (pretty fitting first name for a name it and claim it ministry) began teaching prosperity theology. He publicly explained that whoever gave to his ministry, God would return their donations "seven-fold."

My poor grandmother, living alone on subsidy in an apartment in Whittier, California and constantly worried about how to make ends meet, fell prey to Roberts as evidenced by donation mementos magnetically held to her refrigerator door. It was Roberts who coined the term, "seed faith" in the 1970's characterized by calling donations given in faith the "seed" which he said would grow in value and be returned to the donor.

Going backward, in 1953, faith healer A. A. Allen published, **The Secret** to Scriptural Financial Success and offered merchandise such as "**miracle** tent shavings" and prayer cloths **anointed** with "**miracle** oil" to the public. He taught that faith could miraculously solve financial problems and claimed to have had a miraculous experience in which God supernaturally changed one-dollar bills into twenty-dollar bills which allowed him to pay his

debts. Along with practices like these came the natural need for the promoters of name it and claim it to present ostentatious displays of personal **wealth**. There was also the obvious need to attract greater and larger audiences to make more and more **wealth**. This led to the proliferation of guys like Oral Roberts buying up radio and television stations making Roberts among the first to develop a syndicated weekly program that became the most watched religious show in the United States at the time.

In New York city, "Reverend Ike" greatly popularized personal flash and brought style to the game. From him came bigger and bigger expressions of grandeur in clothing, hair, makeup and false teeth. In the 1980s, Jim Bakker became the newest hit on the block but he lost everything when he was implicated in a high-profile scandal.

Might we ask, where is the humility of Christ in all of this, where is "*the broken and contrite heart,*" and "*the poor in spirit,*" and "*those that mourn*" whom Jesus talked about?

In the aftermath of Baker, Trinity Broadcasting Network (TBN) emerged as the dominant force in prosperity televangelism, having brought Robert Tilton and Benny Hinn to prominence.

When we were on full-power television from 2006 to 2013 in the state of Utah we were approached by TBN as Paul Crouch was impressed with programming. Before long we learned that for the tune of \$4,000.00 a week we could have aired our content out to the world. We knew what that meant to reach millions we had to pray on viewers to sustain an image of success and we said, "no thanks."

In 1974 Kenneth Hagin was credited with playing a key role in the expansion of the Prosperity Gospel when he founded the RHEMA Bible Training Center which trained over 10,000 students in this view. Because of the **allure** to western **wealth**, second and third world countries were drawn to the promises made by the teachings of RHEMA and the movement greatly multiplied around the globe. One region that saw explosive growth was in Western Africa, particularly Nigeria. In the Philippines, the El Shaddai movement, part of the Catholic Charismatic Renewal, spread prosperity theology outside Protestant Christianity. One South Korean **prosperity** church, *Yoido Full Gospel Church*, gained attention in the 1990s by claiming to be the world's largest congregation. A 2006 poll by Time Magazine reported that 17 percent of Christians in America said they identified with the movement.

By 2006, three of the four largest congregations in the United States were teaching prosperity theology, and Joel Osteen has been credited with spreading it outside of the Pentecostal and Charismatic movement through his books, which have sold over 4 million copies world-wide.

Additionally, Bruce Wilkinson's *The Prayer of Jabez* also sold millions of copies with content that invited readers to seek **prosperity** and be **rich**. But the man behind the curtain was starting to get noticed.

Kenneth Copeland, a modern American author and televangelist, argues that prosperity is governed by laws, while other teachers portray the process formulaically. Journalists David van Biema and Jeff Chu of Time Magazine described Word of Faith pastor Creflo Dollar's teachings about prosperity as "an inviolable contract between God and humanity."

I see the biblically based inviolable contract that God offers all as being more about receiving His Son by faith in this **world** as one of suffering and not necessarily material suffering (though that is often the result of gathering treasures in heaven) but certainly of the suffering of the soul of a person who chooses to submit and to trust Him.

Some of the more popular scriptural tenants hijacked by Prosperity teachers and promoters of positive confession include:

Malachi 3:10 where God tells the Nation of Israel:

"Bring ye all the tithes into the storehouse, that there may be meat in mine house, and prove me now herewith, saith the Lord of hosts, if I will not open you the windows of heaven, and pour you out a blessing, that there shall not be room enough to receive it."

We have plenty of teachings about the misappropriation of the word, **tithes** to people today and how the command from God is only to be a cheerful giver (if you are a giver at all) and that **tithes** are not a command or law for believers.

Prosperity teachers also appeal to John 10:10 where Jesus says,

"I am come that they might have life, and that they might have it more abundantly."

Shouldn't we ask ourselves, what is the abundant living that Jesus promised? I would maintain that we rarely see Jesus making anyone materially rich, that His healings all served as indications of Him being the promised Messiah and that He clearly describes material life in the flesh as **meaningless**.

Prosperity teachers also appeal to Philippians 4:19 where Paul writes:

"My God shall supply all your need according to his riches in glory by Christ Jesus."

Again, spiritual or **material riches**? God certainly sends the rain to fall on the just and unjust, and I am sure God can choose to give the Midas Touch to whomever He desires, but again, God is about supplying needs, not wants, and Jesus plainly decries **wealth** for the sake of **wealth** in the parable of the **Rich** man and Lazarus.

Why Jesus, as our living template, never surrounds His own life with opulence, wealth and luxury remains a mystery to me in the face of the **Prosperity Gospel** but apparently not them. Then there is 3rd John 1:2 where John writes:

"Beloved, I wish above all things that thou mayest prosper and be in health, even as thy soul prospereth."

If there was a single verse in the Apostolic Record that describes the apostles John's desires for the believers in that day, it would be this one. There is no question that God would want His children to prosper and have health "as their souls" (their mind, will and **emotions**) prosper by the Spirit. But we cannot take the well wishes of the apostle written to the believers in that day and see them as validation for the name and claim it mentality which goes against 99.9% of the rest of the narrative in the Apostolic Record.

Finally, there is the Matthew 25:14-30 teaching of the Parable of the talents. In this case, we must first ask, to whom was it given when it fell from the mouth of Jesus? (Answer: To His Apostles)

Second, What was the setting or context of Jesus even giving it? (Answer: It was speaking to them doing what they were sent to do before the great and dreadful day of the Lord).

Third, did any of the apostles enjoy **wealth, comfort** or **luxury**? (Answer: No, they only lost such until the ultimately suffered miserable **deaths**.)

Unfortunately prosperity theology ignores all of this but makes a leap and suggests that what they teach is "**a reclamation of true doctrine**" and therefore part of a path to Christian dominion over secular society. Understand that claims of "**reclaiming,**" "**restoring,**" and "**revealing**" hidden or lost truths are central to almost every **esoteric** movement on earth.

Some prosperity-type promoters, like a man named, Peter Wagner, who leads the *New Apostolic Reformation*, argues that if Christians take dominion over aspects of society, the Earth will experience "peace and prosperity." In many ways, this leads to the Christian appeal for theocracy, which again, Jesus had absolutely zero interest in when He was on earth.

When it comes to the Prosperity Gospel writ large, what it all comes down to is will believers trust the principles of the Biblical narrative or not? Most churches in the prosperity movement are non-denominational and therefore independent, though some groups have formed networks. Unfortunately, prosperity theology has become popular among poor Americans, particularly those who seek personal and social advancement. It has seen significant growth in black and Hispanic churches and is particularly popular among immigrants. To me, it works very much like any multilevel marketing ploy, holding up the few who reach the top of the pyramid while enslaving the masses below with promises that are rarely seen to fruition. Worst yet, it is not biblically supported (all things considered.)

As a result, many more biblically honest, and less-**emotionally** driven Christians have rejected the Prosperity Movement all together. I am one of them. Completely. Other critics of the Prosperity Gospel, argue that prosperity theology has little in common with traditional Christian theology. Thankfully other prominent evangelical leaders, such as Rick Warren and Jerry Falwell have harshly criticized the movement, sometimes denouncing it as heretical. Warren proposes that prosperity theology promotes the **idolatry of money**, and others argue that Jesus' teachings indicate a disdain for material **wealth**. Additionally, Prosperity theology has been opposed for not adequately explaining the poverty of the Apostles. For instance, some theologians believe that the life and writings of Paul the Apostle, who is believed to have experienced significant suffering during his ministry, are particularly in conflict with prosperity theology. One Cathleen Falsani, religion writer in an opinion piece published in *The Washington Post*, points to the conflict with basic Christian teachings which clearly show that "*Jesus was (purposely) born poor, and he (purposely) died poor. During his earthly tenure, he spoke*

*time and again about the importance of spiritual wealth and health. When he talked about material **wealth**, it was usually part of a cautionary tale."*

Bottom line, the Bible does not promise an easy life to people who choose faith. As an interesting aside, Prosperity teachers often ignore the fact that Jesus himself taught to "give, hoping for nothing in return," and that His command was to, "*Lay not up for yourselves treasures upon earth ... But lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven.*"

In 2015, well-known pastor and prosperity gospel advocate Creflo Dollar launched a fundraising campaign to replace a previous private jet with a \$65 million Gulfstream G650. Interestingly, some observers have proposed that some doctrines and beliefs found in the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints (the LDS or Mormon Church from which I came) are reminiscent of prosperity theology. This includes a similar interpretation of Malachi 3:10 used by the LDS to promote paying of **tithes** and is also supported in what is called the "prosperity cycle" depicted in the founders, Book of Mormon. In addition to reverberations in Mormonism, a Harper's Magazine editorial from 2011 alleged that similarities are found in the Republican Party's economic policies," hence we discover a slight amalgam between the economic principles of capitalism and those who love the prosperity message in the faith.

They are not one and the same. We will be speaking of Mormonism in a few chapters.

Chapter 16

The Law of Attraction

Stepping away almost entirely from the Will of God in our lives (which at least the Prosperity Gospel will include) we now come to something that plays a role in the Prosperity Gospel but goes further by removing Christ all together. It is called, The Law of Attraction. Like the Prosperity Gospel, this view is sometimes considered a **New Thought** in "spiritual or metaphysical beliefs" where the positive or negative thoughts bring positive or negative experiences into a person's life.

Key beliefs in this formula are based on the idea that people and their thoughts are made from "pure **energy**" and that because "*like energy can attract like energy,*" people can change their health,

wealth, or personal relationships by thinking and speaking positive things into the universe accordingly.

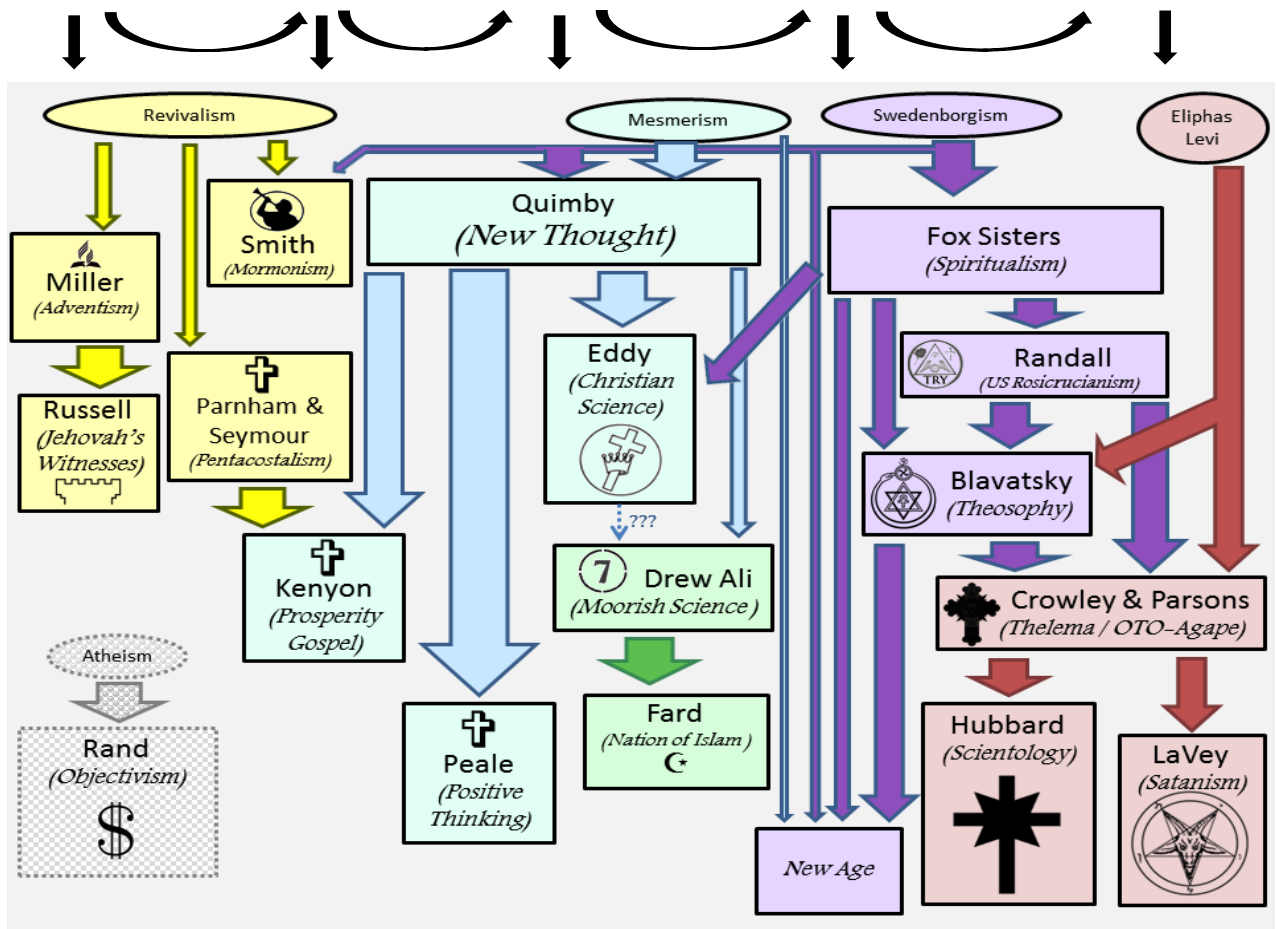
Again, I am now subtracting the principles of what is called, the Law of Attraction out from the **Prosperity Gospel** and talking about it in a purely "absent of God" form. The Law, then, automatically becomes an expression of pure **self-will** without any reliance upon God whatsoever. Contrary to its ardent supporters, there is no empirical scientific evidence supporting the Law of Attraction, and it is widely considered to be pseudoscience - so the term, law, in its title becomes suspect.

Advocates generally combine cognitive reframing techniques with **affirmations** and creative **visualization** to replace limiting or **self-destructive** ("negative") thoughts with more **empowered**, adaptive ("positive") thoughts. A key component of the philosophy is the idea that in order to effectively change one's negative thinking patterns, one must also "**feel**" (through creative visualization) that their desired changes have already occurred. In other words, there is no waiting on God with the Law of Attraction, there is only imaging that the individuals will has already occurred!

This combination of positive thought and positive **emotion** is believed to allow one to attract positive experiences and opportunities by achieving resonance with what is proposed as "energetic law."

Where did this begin - let's revisit the chart we saw a few chapters ago because in terms of history (as supported by this chart) the "New Thought" movement grew out of the teachings of a man named Phineas Quimby in the early 19th century.

EMOTIONALISM MONEY SELF-WILL/MIND SPIRITUALISM GODLESSNESS



BIBLICAL WARNING SIGNS	Pros.G.	LDS	Tolle	L of A	Objct	Hrmet	Theos	Ekan	Sci	Thelem	Satan
1 Self-will	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
2 Pride	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
3 All that is in the world	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
4 Emotionalism	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
5 Spiritualism	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
6 Licentiousness	No	No	No	No	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
7 Believe in Christ?	Yes	Yes	No	No	No	No	No	No	No	No	No

▲
▲
▲
▲
▲

FAITH-BASED? SELF-WILL ATHEIST SPIRITUALISTS SATANISTS

As a young man, Quimby was diagnosed with tuberculosis. Early 19th century medicine had no reliable cure for tuberculosis and apparently Quimby took to horse riding and noted that **intense excitement** temporarily relieved him from his affliction. This method for relieving his pain and an apparent recovery that followed prompted Phineas to pursue a study of what he called, "Mind over Body". Although Quimby never used the words "**Law of Attraction**", he explained his idea of the field of health, saying

*"the trouble is in the mind, for the body is only the house for the mind to dwell in, and we put a value on it according to its worth. Therefore, if your mind has been deceived by some **invisible enemy** into a belief, you have put it into the form of a disease, with or without your knowledge. By my theory or truth, **I come in contact with your enemy and restore you to your health and happiness. This I do partly mentally and partly by talking till I correct the wrong impressions and establish the Truth, and the Truth is the cure.**"*

In 1855, the term, "**Law of Attraction**" appeared in a book called, *The Great Harmonia*, written by the American spiritualist Andrew Jackson Davis. He used it in the context of alluding to the human soul and **spheres of the afterlife**. The first articulator of the law of attraction as general principle was a man named Prentice Mulford. Mulford, a pivotal figure in the development of **New Thought** thinking, discusses the law at length in his essay "The Law of Success", published 1886-1887. From there, Mulford was followed by other **New Thought** authors, such as Henry Wood (1892), and Ralph Waldo Trine four years later. For these authors, the law of attraction was concerned not only about health but every aspect of life.

The 20th century saw a surge in interest in the subject bringing many books and promoters, including, *Think and Grow Rich* (1937) by Napoleon Hill, *The Power of Positive Thinking* (1952) by Norman Vincent Peale, and *You Can Heal Your Life* (1984) by Louise Hay.

In 2006, the concept of the law of attraction gained renewed exposure with the release of the film, *The Secret* which was then developed into a book of the same title in 2007. Both the movie and book gained widespread media coverage. This was followed by a sequel, *The Power* in 2010 which talks about the law of attraction actually being what they call, "*the law of love.*" A revived and modernized version of the **law of attraction** is known as "**manifestation**," a huge term bandied about today from the mouths of its promoters.

Proponents believe that the **law of attraction** is always in operation and that it brings to each person the conditions and experiences that they predominantly think about which tacitly suggests that these things are what they actually desire or expect. One Charles Haanel wrote in the book, *The Master Key System* (1912):

*The law of attraction will **certainly** and **unerringly** bring to you the conditions, environment, and experiences in life, corresponding with your habitual, characteristic, predominant mental attitude."*

Ralph Trine wrote in, *In Tune With The Infinite* (1897):

*The law of attraction **works universally** on every plane of action, and we attract whatever we desire or expect. If we desire one thing and expect another, we become like houses divided against themselves, which are quickly brought to desolation. **Determine resolutely to expect only what you desire, then you will attract only what you wish for.***

In her 2006 film *The Secret*, Rhonda Byrne emphasized thinking about what each person wants to obtain, but also to infuse the thought with "**the maximum possible amount of emotion.**" Her claim is that the combination of thought and **feeling** is what attracts the desire. Another similar book is James Redfield's, *The Celestine Prophecy*, which says "**reality can be manifested by man.**"

*The **Power** of Your Subconscious Mind* by Joseph Murphy, says readers "can achieve seemingly impossible goals by **learning** how to bring the mind itself under control." *The **Power***, by Rhonda Byrne and *The Alchemist* by Paulo Coelho make similar claims. While personal testimonies claim the secret and the law to have worked, a number of skeptics have criticized Byrne's film and book. The New York Times Book Review called the Secret pseudoscience and an "**illusion of knowledge**". The **New Thought** concept of the law of attraction is rooted in ideas that come from a variety of philosophical and religious traditions including **Hermeticism**, New England **transcendentalism**, **specific verses from the Bible**, and **Hinduism**.

Hermeticism influenced the development of European thought in the Renaissance. Its ideas were partly transmitted through what is known as **alchemy**. In the 18th century, Franz Mesmer studied the works of **alchemists** such as Paracelsus and van Helmont. Van Helmont was a 17th-century Flemish physician who proclaimed what he called the **curative powers** of the **imagination**. This led Mesmer to develop his ideas about **animal magnetism** which Phineas Quimby, the founder of **New Thought**, studied. The **Transcendentalist** movement developed

in the United States immediately before the emergence of **New Thought** and is thought to have had a great influence on it. George Ripley, an important figure in that movement, stated that its leading idea was "the **supremacy of mind** over matter". Laughingly, **New Thought** authors often quote certain verses from the Bible in their attempts to support the law of **attraction**. An example is Mark 11:24 where we read Jesus saying:

"Therefore I tell you, whatever you ask in prayer, believe that you have received it, and it will be yours."

Of course, this teaching of Jesus is stripped from its context and audience and doesn't include other teachings which balance the meaning of this verse out. In the late 19th century **Swami Vivekananda** traveled to the United States and gave lectures on **Hinduism**. These talks greatly influenced the **New Thought** movement and in particular, William Walker Atkinson who was one of **New Thought's** pioneers. Writing for the *Committee for Skeptical Inquiry*, Mary Carmichael and Ben Radford wrote that "*neither the film nor the book has any basis in scientific reality*", and that its premise contains "*an ugly flipside: if you have an accident or disease, it's your fault*".

As mentioned, Napoleon Hill published two books on the theme. The first, *The Law of Success in 16 Lessons* (1928), directly and repeatedly references the Law of Attraction and proposes that it operates by use of radio waves transmitted by the brain. The second, *Think and Grow Rich* (1937), went on to sell 100 million copies by 2015.

Is it harmful to think and speak positively about life?

Paul does teach that love includes the notion of "*believing all things*" and "*hoping all things.*" But the reality for believers will always come back to what are we believing and hoping for? And if our ideas and drives are **outside** of the will of God, do we look to the Law of Attraction to accomplish them? To me, my will is irrelevant to success if my will is not in harmony with His. If I have the **power to manifest** results in my life that are not His will, then I would have to admit that the source of that **power** is something other than God and therefore something with which I want nothing to do.

Because the **Law of Attraction** draws from principles of **Hermeticism**, we will speak to this odd **world** view next.

Chapter 17

Hermeticism

Hermeticism is a really **philosophical** system based on the purported teachings of an **Egyptian priest king** by the name of **Hermes Trismegistus** (who was a legendary Hellenistic combination of the **Greek god** Hermes and the **Egyptian god** Thoth). So right out the gate . . . stop. Think. Assess.

As we proceed through our examination of Light and **Dark** we are going to appeal to a number of claims (like from Hermeticism and later from Masonry and Mormonism) that have **concocted mythical** histories relative to their origins. To repeat, Hermeticism suggest that its foundation is historical but at least it admits that the history from which it apparently comes is an amalgamation of the **mythical Greek God Hermes** and the **mythical Egyptian God Thoth**. When I write, **mythical** God, I mean **mythical** in their origins and make-up but readily admitting that the God of Ancient Israel can just as easily be construed and described in the same way. What I see as different between these god's is that the God of Abraham Isaac and Jacob revealed Himself in real time and to real people giving them real prophesy in and through a tribe of genetically linked individuals. So, in comparison to this Hellenistic amalgam God we do have a subtle difference.

Additionally, the teachings that are contained in the various writings attributed to Hermes (called, the **Hermetica**) have been produced over a period spanning many centuries (c.300 BCE - 1200 CE) and are often extremely different in content and scope from each other. Where the Biblical narrative is proven to be historically accurate (see, the dead sea scrolls) and to a great degree from identifiable human authors the proof texts for the Hermetica are not so certain. We are not going to make this by any means an exhaustive accounting of Hermeticism, but I just want to give you the essentials of what Hermeticism is all about but understand the various types of Hermeticism can be vast and while the term is used widely it can mean very different things.

Many believe that the Hermetic traditions have contributed greatly to modern science because hermeticism is frequently associated with **alchemy**, which we will discuss. Additionally, and throughout its history, Hermeticism was closely associated with the idea of a **primeval, divine wisdom, revealed only to the most ancient of sages**, such as the **fictional** person called Hermes Trismegistus.

Take a minute and lock into that **phrase** that Hermeticism is closely associated with **divine wisdom** that has been "**revealed only to the most ancient of Sages**" as we will see these terms pop-up in the mantras and descriptions of other movements forthcoming. So it is not surprising that Hermeticism claims that its secrets too were only understood only by "**the most ancient of sages.**"

During the Renaissance, this **wisdom** or **knowledge** is said to have developed into the notion of a "**prisca theologia**" or "**ancient theology**", which asserts that there is a **single, true theology** which was given by God to some of the first humans, with traces of such still being found in various ancient systems of thought.

As stated, we will see similar claims in **Freemasonry, Mormonism, Theosophy, Theonomy, Thelema** and some others. The sages who possessed the **ancient wisdom of Hermeticism** are said to be people like **Zoroaster, Orpheus, Pythagoras, Plato**, the '**Chaldeans**', and or writings in the **Kabbalah**. And here is the bottom line - the notion of such truths were then proposed, by one Agostino Steuco (1497-1548) to be "**one and the same divine truth**" that could be seen in all the religious and philosophical traditions of different periods and places, and should therefore be considered as different **manifestations** of the **same universal perennial philosophy**.

In this context, the term '**Hermetic**' tended to lose specificity and eventually became a byword for the purported **divine knowledge** of the ancient **Egyptians**, especially as related to **alchemy** and **magic**. By the time we get to the 19th and 20th centuries, it was the **occultists** that popularized the centralization of the concepts but the term has been around for hundreds of years.

In terms of the word **Hermetic** itself, it is from the medieval Latin *hermeticus* deriving its title from the Greek god, **Hermes**. One of the foundational thoughts of **hermeticism** is the idea that there is a **universal** and **common spirit** to the whole world. But again, that spirit is only available to a **special** or **elect group of sages**, and is therefore, **sealed**, or **hidden** from others.

The name **Hermes Trismegistus**, who supposedly invented the process of making a glass tube airtight and therefore "**completely sealed**" causes some to refer to **sealed** items as, "**hermetically sealed.**" Interestingly, when it comes to information from the **world** of spirits, this sealing means that the information remains hidden and unavailable to most others - except the select few who have gained access through any number of acts. Of a particular concern is the idea of a "**world spirit**" or what Hegel called a **welt-geist**, which is similar to a **Zeitgeist** or spirit of the age.

Again, and as for me, I see any spirit that is not God, whether universal and vast or individual and small as from another source and give warning to anyone hoping to tap into such. Interestingly, Hermeticism emerged in late antiquity parallel with early Christianity, **Gnosticism**, **Neoplatonism**, the **Chaldean** Oracles, and late **Orphic** and Pythagorean literature. Additionally, Plutarch's mention of **Hermes Trismegistus** dates back to the first century CE, where men like **Tertullian**, **Iamblichus**, and **Porphyry** were all familiar with Hermetic writings as well. These doctrines were characterized by a resistance to the dominance of either pure rationality or pure doctrinal faith and therefore they seemed to endorse an admixture of faith and reason. We might go so far as to suggest that Hermeticism, while claiming to be a **sealed** source of universal **knowledge** was actually an open attempt to merge faith with reason. Nevertheless, the texts surrounding **Hermeticism** are said to have instructed disciples on various teachings of the **hidden wisdom**.

After centuries of falling out of favor, Hermeticism was reintroduced to the West around 1460. In 1678, lost Greek texts, and many of the surviving vulgate books, contained discussions of **alchemy** clothed in **philosophical metaphor**. In 1924, Walter Scott placed the date of the Hermetic texts to be shortly after 200 CE, but W. Flinders Petrie placed their origin between 200 and 500 BCE. Big difference.

In 1945, Hermetic texts were found near the **Egyptian** town Nag Hammadi. One of these texts had the form of **a conversation between Hermes and Asclepius**. A second text (titled, *On the Ogdoad and Ennead*) told of the Hermetic **mystery** schools. It was written in the Coptic language, the latest and final form in which the **Egyptian** language was written. The whole expectation of hermeticism is said to be to "**deify man through knowledge**."

We recall that **Satan**, all the way back to Genesis 3, tells Eve that if they ate of the fruit of **knowledge** of good and **evil** that they would "become as the Gods **KNOWING** good and **evil**." We might go so far as to wrap all of this Hermeticism stuff and everything that comes before and after it as simply the fruit of that tree which leads to **death**.

Dutch Theologian Gilles Quispel, said:

*"It is now completely certain that there existed before and after the beginning of the Christian era in **Alexandria** a **secret society**, akin to a **Masonic lodge**. The members of this group called*

themselves 'brethren,' were **initiated** through a baptism of the Spirit, greeted each other with a sacred kiss, celebrated a sacred meal and read the **Hermetic** writings as edifying treatises for their **spiritual progress.**"

Others, including history itself, suggest that this view is fiction. But the principles remain.

There are three central components today in Hermetic tradition called the "three parts of the **wisdom** of the whole universe" which were purportedly taught anciently in "the Emerald **Tablet**" referred to by Hermes Trismegistus. The three parts "of the **wisdom** of the whole universe are said to be:

1. **ALCHEMY**
2. **ASTROLOGY** and
3. **THEURGY**

Let's talk about them in brief. First **alchemy**, which means, *operation of the sun* and not just turning lead into **gold**. But alchemy can be seen as "an investigation into the spiritual constitution, or life, of matter and material existence through an application of the **mysteries** of birth, **death**, and resurrection." The various stages of chemical distillation and fermentation, among other processes, are aspects of these **mysteries** that, when applied, quicken nature's processes in order to bring **a natural body to perfection**. Such perfection is the accomplishment of what alchemists call, *the Great Work*, which is named in Latin as the "magnum opus").

Astrology is a second part of **hermeticism** and in **Hermetic** thought, the movements of the planets are believed to have **meaning beyond the laws of physics**. Instead, they are believed to actually hold **metaphorical value as symbols** in the mind of what hermeticists call, "the All" (meaning God) which then have influence upon the Earth. **Hermeticists** do not believe that the stars dictate our actions but that **wisdom** is gained when we know what these influences are and how to deal with them. This **wisdom** is called **astrology**, or the operation of the **stars**. The discovery of **astrology** is attributed to **Zoroaster**, who is said to have discovered this part of the **wisdom** of the whole universe and taught it to man as a **sage**.

The third part, called, **Theurgy**, means, the operation of the gods and is seen in two opposing forces, one in Theurgy (or divine magic) which relies on **heavenly spirits**, and the second is called,

Goetia which speaks to black **magic** which is reliant upon **evil spirits** or **demons**.

So, **mystery** transformation, **astrological powers** and heavenly spirits - good and evil (sort of like the forbidden fruit). All of these things serve to bring a person into a closer **connection** to our **higher counterparts** in Hermeticism.

Additional teachings in Hermeticism are **reincarnation**, or what was once known as the **Transmigration** of the Soul (something Jesus was asked about when confronted with the man born **blind**) as well as something that L. R. Hubbard tapped into in his creation of **Scientology**.

Rebirth also appears to be central to the practice of hermetic philosophy. The process would begin with a person (**or candidate**) separating themselves from the **world** before they rid themselves of material vices; they are then reborn as someone completely different than who they were before. Again, we see that rebirth is a common teaching in many religious pursuits but in Hermeticism these alternate voices or forces have the capacity to give people what they would call, "new life" instead of new life coming only in and through God gifting an individual the Holy Spirit.

Finally, and almost ironically (but reasonably), notions of Good and evil are present in Hermeticism with God being the force behind Good and demons being the ones who bring forth evil. And here we must point out that the central, major difference between all these appeals to **rebirth, change, power, enlightenment, good and evil** are not in and of themselves, as concepts, evil but in every case believers must ask,

Who or what is the power behind the **rebirth, change, power, enlightenment, good or evil?**

If it is something other than the living God, then that something other is of the **Dark** - no matter what it promises or brings to the lives of those who embrace them. To a believer, Jesus paid for our sin and because of this, we look to Him, and follow Him and let Him change and empower us - and no other. Ever. We are not going to get into a debate over which system works best in this **world**, or which system empowers people the most, or creates the most **wealth**, or heals more people or gives more people new life.

Not at all.

were real groups, with real skill and their need to protect their trade from novices and interlopers was also real. So, what did they do to protect themselves?

They developed secret handshakes and passwords that only those in their guilds were aware of and privy to - sort of like when some neighborhood boys build a treehouse or fort and develop a special call or password to be given in order to **gain entrance**.

So, Operative Masons, Masonry and/or Freemasonry all refer to fraternal organizations that in reality can trace their origins to the local guilds of stonemasons that, from the end of what is said (but cannot be proven) of the 13th century, regulated the qualifications of stonemasons and their interaction with the **outside** world. Modern Freemasonry sort-of consists of three main recognition groups that rest under two broad categories:

Operative Freemasons, again, which refers to men who actually cut stones using tools and wisdom to perform their jobs, and **Speculative Free Masons**, who take the tools and principles of Operative Free Masonry and use them to teach each other's principles based on those items.

Again, Operative Masonry - those who actually do the job of cutting and setting stone. Speculative Masonry - those who take the act of cutting and setting stone and metaphorically assign meaning to these acts.

The material hub of all Freemasonry is the lodge, and each lodge is independent from the others. Because of this there is very little complete continuity in their teachings or requirements for membership. But there does appear to be some similarities. For instance, most Masonic lodges old or modern insist that their members are "of good reputation." Also, where most speculative free masonry lodges require an open bible on their altars during meetings, do not permit women members and do not allow conversations about religion or politics, most lodges require their members to also admit to a belief in some sort of higher **power**.

So, again, there are operative Masons who actually work their craft with their hands (and I am not too sure if there are many operative lodges around today) who were historically deemed free (meaning, free to find work wherever they could find it) and apparently, these actual operative masons had **degrees** - just like our electricians and plumbers today have degrees and may refer to each other or themselves as, a Journeyman or a Master plumber."

These degrees or grades were assigned to Operative Masons in that day. The entry level **initiate** was known as an "Entered Apprentice," who then rose to what was called, a "Journeyman or fellow" and finally he would reach the level of a "Master Mason." As an Operative Mason climbed to higher and higher heights of his skill level and career, they would gain access to higher and higher levels of skilled masons by being entrusted with new **handshakes, signs, passwords** or **signals**.

So, taking all of that - everything from the need for **secrecy**, the title of **brother**, the willingness to always come to the rescue of a brother, a Masons tools - the plumbline, the square, the ruler, and compass - and then imagine a group of men who decide to take all of these actual things and to spiritualize them or turn them all into allegories or principles by which to live in modern society. This was how Operative Masonry moved into what is called, Speculative Masonry. Those who belong to these Lodges are men who do not typically cut or set any stones but instead learn and operate by principles of virtue and goodness through the **allegorization** of everything related to Operative Masonry.

Now, hang with me - as a means to give Speculative Masonry some credit, someone saw the need to create for itself a history and it seemed that the older the history created the better in terms of respectability.

So, what is a really old history that Speculative Masons could appeal to (which, by the way has zero support from history itself?) Well, when we look to the Bible a really strong person with some actual building credit to his name pops up in plain sight and his name was Solomon. Solomon was King David's second son by Bathsheba and the first son they had together after their legal marriage (according to 2nd Samuel 12:1-31). It is believed that he followed his father to the throne early in life (like 17 or 18 years of age) and the prophet Nathan, to whom his education was entrusted, called him Jedidiah, which means, "beloved of the Lord" as he was the first king of Israel who was "born in the purple."

His father David chose him as his successor, passing over the claims of his elder sons, and saying:

"Assuredly Solomon my son shall reign after me" and we find his history recorded in 1st Kings 1-11 and 2nd Chronicles 1-9. It was during his long reign of forty years that the Hebrew monarchy was most magnificent. The first half of his reign was, however, by far the brighter and far more prosperous because in the latter

half Solomon embraced **idolatry** which he probably took from his many wives and concubines of **pagan** intermarriages.

Solomon surrounded himself with all the luxuries and external grandeur of an Eastern monarch, and his government greatly prospered. He entered into an alliance with the king of Tyre, named, Hiram, who greatly assisted him in his numerous undertakings to build things and Solomon built many things (hence his becoming the natural choice to make him the fictional source of Speculative Masonry).

His most noted creation, however, was a temple that bore His name, Solomons Temple.

Before his **death** David, Solomons father, had "with all his might" provided materials in great abundance for the building of the temple on the summit of Mount Moriah.

But Solomon went well beyond what David provided him and took huge blocks of stone from the subterranean quarries located at Jerusalem to create the foundation and walls for this edifice. These stones were prepared for their places in the building under the eye of Tyrian master-builders. One of these master builders was named in the Bible (1st Kings chapter 7) Hiram and the Speculative Masons parlayed his story and skill into their fictional beginnings, calling him Hiram Abiff. But where does his apparent last name come from? In 2nd Chronicles we read at 4:16

The pots also, and the shovels, and the fleshhooks, and all their instruments, did Hiram his father make to king Solomon for the house of the LORD of bright brass.

Apparently, the line, "Hiram his father" is a way to signify a master operator and inventor and is taken most likely from the **Chaldee** language. Since Father in Hebrew is *ab* or *abba*, the created name, *Hiram Abiff* came to life in the creation of a Speculative Masonic history. Speculative Masons around the 14th to the 17th century took all of this stuff (again, from the Bible) and then begin to create or concoct, using the actual tools of Operative Masons, teachings or instructions on how to go from one degree to another higher degree as a means to become closer and closer to God by becoming better and better. Remember, fruit from the tree of **knowledge** of good and **evil** leads to **death**. And the biblical model of human beings rising from one place to another is founded plainly in the inner workings of the Spirit as made possible by Christ and the indwelling of the Spirit. Scripture is plain when it says that, "He is the vine we are His branches and that all

personal reform is by and through the operation of the Spirit. Recall what John said in the first chapter of his gospel, speaking of Jesus:

John 1:11 He came unto his own, and his own received him not. But as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on his name: Which were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God.

All of these appeals, systems of Men, degrees earned, and levels of advancement are of this **world**. All of them. And because they are of this **world** they are born here of flesh and end or die here in flesh. There is no **secret, mystical process** passed down among men by which human beings are sanctified before God. All of such winds up in the grave. The only thing that we do that will carry on beyond this place is obtained and derived from God through the Spirit of His Son. Seeking higher **esoteric Dark powers**, and learning principles based on plumb lines, secret shakes and special words all fall in the ground below a tree that is not the tree of life.

In Speculative Masonry (and perhaps even old School Operative) a candidate of these three degrees is progressively taught the meanings of the symbols of Freemasonry and entrusted with **handgrips, signs**, and words that signify to other members that he has been rightly **initiated**. These degrees are part an **allegorical morality play** with its associated lecture. While Masons will gather in their lodges and do a lot of things that are found in other small groups - eating, fellowshiping, business matters and the like - the bulk of Masonic ritual consist of these **degree ceremonies**. The first degree is an Entered Apprentice. Thereafter that person will receive what is called the degree of **Fellowcraft** and finally these can be raised later **raised** to the degree of **Master Mason**. In each of these three ceremonies, the candidate must first take the new obligations of the degree, and is then entrusted with **secret knowledge** including **passwords, signs and grips (secret handshakes)** confined to his new rank.

Speculative Masonry was huge in Europe and Early America. In the early 1820's however, a Speculative Mason decided to break the strict rules of Masonry (which is **secrecy**) and wrote a book or big pamphlet revealing all the well-kept **secrets** of his lodge. Resorting to their vows of **death**. This man, named William Morgan soon disappeared and was later discovered to have been **murdered**. This taking of life caused an outcry in the Eastern United States among its citizens and Masonry has never really been the same

though there are said to be about six million practicing Masons in the **world** today.

When Morgan was killed, one family in the Eastern US was particularly troubled - the family of Joseph Smith Senior, his wife and their sons, many of whom were practicing Masons at the time and active members of their lodges. One of those sons, who believed it was his call to restore Christianity back from a world-wide apostacy, simultaneously believed that it was also necessary for him to restore the lost elements of Freemasonry back to earth at the same time.

His name was Joseph Smith, Junior. And we will discuss the **Dark knowledge** and influence of Freemasonry in his creation of what he called, **The Restored Gospel** back to the earth next.

Chapter 19

Mormonism

It is called, the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. The Mormons after a book its founder presented to the world. What makes Mormonism so extremely unique and really tough to narrow down is that its founder, Joseph Smith, Jun. was without question what I would call the greatest synthesizer of divergent thoughts to ever walk the earth. Bringing it all back to the Garden and the two trees - the Tree of life (that leads to life) and the Tree of **Knowledge** of good and **evil** (that leads to **death**) Smith took fruit from every tree of the Garden and made up and appetizing fruit salad.

From a strictly biblical perspective, the LDS teachings are easily refutable to a well-read reader of the Bible as Smith had no qualms mixing and meshing all sorts of extra-biblical information into his new religion. Like Mohammed and his Quran, Smith called his Book of Mormon, "*the most correct book on the face of the earth*" and (said) "*that a man would draw closer to God through its precepts over any other book.*"

It is here that people are literally brought to the edge of a theological cliff - either the Bible is the Word of God and we look to it and trust its contents as sufficient when read by the Spirit or there are other ways, **other forms of knowledge**, other books, other fruit from other trees, other forces and other **powers**, that can do the same thing equally well or even better than knowing and trusting the Bible.

If the latter stands correct, how are people to know what is reliable, trustworthy and good in this **world**? Can we say that everything is trustworthy and good, or some is? Let me share some reasons why I endorse the Bible when read by the Spirit as the written source for human kind and reject all others out of hand.

When read in context, the overall message from the Bible, start to finish, although there is a ton of information in between, is that God is love, and He commands that His creations love Him first and that we love others next. This love that the Bible describes is not a **feeling** kind of love, though we certainly can feel things, but this love is best understood as selfless, sacrificial and insufferable actions and attitudes. That is the love that God is and that is the love the Bible ultimately instructs its readers to possess. Any subtraction from this overall message, and any addition to the same will contribute or take away from this overarching charge.

The Bible also plainly states in ten thousand ways to Sunday that this love is manifested rightly by faith. It is not a **feeling** love that people want to give and share but it is best understood as a choice form of selfless, sacrificial insufferable love. And it sort-of works like this:

A higher power has spoken to humankind and has explained what He wants from us. He ultimately did this "explaining" through the life, **death** and resurrection of His only human Son, Jesus Christ, who taught a number of things relative to how people should live. And He said things like:

"forgive all."

"forgive seven times seventy"

"If sued for your coat, give your cloak also."

"If struck on the face, turn the other cheek"

"Go the extra mile"

"Give to those who ask"

"Return evil with good."

"Do good to those who do you harm."

And so much more.

If people place their faith in these teachings, they will then choose to love others in response and this love manifests itself in the way Jesus described. They will forgive. They will suffer. They will do good even to those who do them wrong.

Now, when I have looked around the **world** at all the other systems - **religious, philosophical, metaphysical, physical** - whatever, none of them approach human beings this way and none of them therefore offer the outcome that such an approach promises - which is liberty.

Instead, they all create or produce something different, the Fruit from another Tree. And the something different is never, ever superior to what is contextually supported by scripture - beginning to end. If someone or something could prove itself superior, in the here and now and in the afterlife in terms of justification for sin, I would take it up - but they don't. In fact, they can't. Worse yet, these other approaches also fail to answer innumerable other things relative to the human condition in terms of meaning of life, origin of life, justification, sanctification, justice, mercy and the like.

Returning to Mormonism, for example, and actually getting a little ahead of myself in our discussion of it, the admixture of what the LDS call the Restored Church and reformed Masonry utterly fails in creating and upholding Agape love as the Bible describes. Instead, it becomes a works/righteous burden that lands heavy on the shoulders of any and all who receive it.

That is not Good News.

Like several other expressions that came out around the same time, (the Seventh-day Adventists that formed in 1830, the Jehovah's Witnesses sprouted up forty years later, which was around the same year as Mary Baker Eddy's Christian Science expression popped up) Mormonism was the brainchild of one central figure - a man named Joseph Smith, Jun. But he seems to have had some help in crafting this amalgamation of Masonry and Christianity.

Many of you know that I was a member of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints for the first forty years of my life and I understand the religion fairly well (we have crafted over 400 hour long videos that discuss its doctrine and practices and written two books to accompany them). So, while I am not going to spend too much time on Mormonism itself I am going to try and explain how it promotes a gospel of **self-will, mysticism** and **Masonry** through its uniquely **counterfeit** message to contextual biblical truth.

Like Calvinism, Mormonism's gospel presentation is "seamless" so long as a person takes their eyes off the biblical text and allows for divergent views to be inserted along the way. Smith used the

sources around him in that day (early to mid 1800's) including those from his family, from acquaintances and from modern topics of conversation that were popular in the news. But he also borrowed extensively from information thriving in religious circles as both the inspiration to both create his extra-biblical books, (*The Book of Mormon, Doctrine and Covenants*, and *the Pearl of Great Price* (including, *the Book of Abraham*) along with numerous other unique practices and views.

Today it is more than clear that he readily, even unabashedly borrowed directly from other written sources as well, including from

- Local newspapers and current events
- A religious fervor alive in what is called the burned-over district
- A book called, *View of the Hebrews*
- Native American interests popular in that day
- And common discussion among the Campbellite movement surrounding Christian issues they believed were in need of reform - all which were especially garnered from the influence of a man named Sydney Rigdon.

In addition to these and several other contributing factors Smith was influenced (it seems perhaps more than anything else besides the Bible) by the order and practices found in Freemasonry.

This cannot be overstated so I will repeat it - Mormonism is a mixture of revised biblical Christianity and his revised version of Speculative Freemasonry - and the evidences to support this claim are readily available in an outstanding book called, *Method Infinite* from Greg Kofford books.

The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, formally established in 1830, stands on this admixture of ideas that are admittedly unique (compared to orthodox Christianity) and these things include but are not limited to:

- *The teaching that God was once a man, who has a father, who has a father who has a father* (known as an eternal regression of gods)
- *That God reigns over this **world**/universe in His resurrected gloried body.*
- *That God and His wives created spirit children out of spirit intelligences that have always existed and these spirit*

children includes Jesus, the first and brightest, and Lucifer and then the rest of the human race;

- *That every human being, therefore, has always existed in some shape or form in a pre-mortal existence state and when we come to earth it is to take on bodies and learn to overcome the tests and trials of this **world** as a means to progress with the ultimate destination being our becoming gods - just like God did;*
- *And that Smith uniquely taught that anything that can be considered real must be material; that matter cannot be created nor destroyed (even by God Himself) and that the notion of immateriality, even of spiritual things, is a lie.*

These basic but very distinct tenets serve to equip Mormonism with its purpose and their meaning of life which is for the spirit children of a material God (and his wives) to come to this earth, face the tests and trials of mortality, and ever since Smith's Restoration, to receive the LDS "restored Gospel" (made available through their founding prophet) which includes **rites, rituals** and **covenants** accessed only by people who join their church, receive their **restored priesthood**, attend their **temple** to receive a litany of restored **temple** rites and to then return to God (their spirit father) and progress to becoming gods like their father did before them.

The idea of **overcoming** and **progressing** cannot be overstated in Mormonism nor can the amalgamation of Christian principles with Mason rituals as this is the resulting formula for such.

Mormonism was also focused (in the early years of its creation) on the belief that Jesus was returning shortly in that day (early to mid 1800s) and that it was the responsibility of members of the Mormon Church to prepare the world for His arrival where He would then reign over the world through a material Kingdom that they would help Him establish and govern.

Everything in Mormonism - its doctrine, practices, organization, **temple** and overall aims can be said to take "*bad men and make them better and to take good men and to make them great.*" They accomplish this through a magnificent hub and spoke method, as I have partially illustrated below:



All of these things - plus much, much more that serve as sub-headings under each category - are said to collectively represent the "**Restored gospel**" to the earth which was formerly lost shortly after the **death** of the last living apostle of Jesus Christ. Part of this restoration is the claim that Smith brought back the **ancient temple rite** of people which includes couples being **sealed** for time and all eternity, endowments bestowed, baptisms for the dead, and other **sacred/secret rites** and **rituals**. Families being **sealed** together on earth for time and all eternity is a restored benefit to being a faithful member, something Smith included in his version of restored truths too.

Looking back over the creation of the faith, it is apparent that Smith out-churched Christianity in almost every way, making it a modern-day standout by earthly comparison in governance, operation and missional outreach.

If the Bible tells the story of an ark, Smith's **Book of Mormon** describes submergible crafts that crossed the sea, **illuminated** by rocks touched by the finger of God.

If the Jesus of Christianity suffered for sin on the cross, Smith's Christ paid the price for sin in the Garden of Gethsemane through the shedding of His own blood caused by the pressure upon His human body;

Where Christians see marriage as ordained of God in the Garden, Smith made marriage and families eternal through his **proprietary priesthood** and adherence to his re-imagined **temple ordinances**.

But not only did Smith out-do Christian doctrine and practice, he gave certainty to every question about the faith that existed in his day, even out-doing American politics by explaining the meaning of liberty and freedom from tyranny! This caused the man to run for President and even to be privately **crowned king** over the **worlds** political system in preparation to bring Jesus back to reign. But as we have already noted, Smith took what was a popular and accepted organization in his day, Freemasonry, and revised all of its Speculative claims as a means to integrate authentic Masonry into authentic Christianity and come out with is nothing less than "**Mormasonry**" (a little pet name I created).

It has been said that libertine Christians understate biblical truth, removing principles that have long stood as proven and accepted while the cults add to these truths without a care. Few things are more readily applicable than what Smith accomplished by both altering and removing from Speculative Masonry and Christianity then meshing them into one operative and speculative whole.

In the end, Mormonism is really nothing more than a top-down, member based social reform club that takes Jesus Christ and offers the organizational and doctrinal means for people to become like Him. Their claim is essentially, "better citizen, better governance, better marriages, better families, better leaders of commerce and better Christians." Central to these aims is the ever-abiding principles of **self-reliance**. Therefore, the religion naturally favors the capable while subtly rejecting (though they'd deny it) those weak in the **world**.

Unquestionably, the packaged product of Mormonism **works in this world** as the Latter-day Saints teach its people to prepare themselves, to get an education, to be gainfully employed, to serve and volunteer, to lead, to stay out of debt, to keep a distance from mortal sins and on and on and on through what is really a quasi-military organization, with top-down levels of authority and chains of command that are observed and followed by eager and devoted members.

But what is often overlooked, even ignored, is that in Christianity, **self-reliance**, is anathematic to the overall biblical narrative. Consider the following passages:

Jeremiah 17:5 *Thus saith the LORD; Cursed be the man that trusteth in man, and maketh flesh his arm, and whose heart departeth from the LORD.*

and,

Proverbs 3:5-6 *Trust in the LORD with all thine heart; and lean not unto thine own understanding. In all thy ways acknowledge him, and he shall direct thy paths.*

Or John 15:5, where Jesus plainly says,

I am the vine, ye are the branches: He that abideth in me, and I in him, the same bringeth forth much fruit: for without me ye can do nothing.

Certainly, human beings do participate in the lives they live as even Paul said, "if a man does not work he will not eat," but Mormonism, like all **counterfeits** to biblical truth, strip-mines certain biblical truths, removes them from the context of relying solely on God, meshes these concepts with other facets from the **world** (Masonry) and extrudes a product back out for people to embrace as truth which they prove in and through the effectiveness of their system in making "bad men good and good men great."

Central to almost all of the **counterfeits** described in Part II is **self** - whether it be a focus on the **self**, **self-indulgence**, **self-reliance**, **self-awareness** or promoting the will of the **self** over the will of even God, **self** is central to every alternative where the real McCoy is never **self**, but God.

The outward appearance of LDS members is also central to the faith as physical representations of health and **wealth** are key to it being seen as the "true" and for its members to be seen faithful and therefore blessed by God with earthly success. This is where Mormonism hearkens to some principles of the Prosperity Gospel which we have already discussed. Like them, Latter-day Saints strongly believe that when a person is blessed materially in this life it is because God is pleased with them and is rewarding them accordingly. What becomes troubling is the method or means by which their prosperity comes when everything is said and done. And it sort of looks like this:

God gives commandments and directives to His children. In Mormonism these commandments and directives are numerous and require a determined dedication to follow. Some are easier than others but all of them are requisite for God to bless them. The

LDS teachings go so far as to say that members can literally "bind God's hands" and in some ways force Him to bless them but if and only if they are absolutely obedient to His directives.

In Smith's collections of revelations (called *the Doctrine and Covenants*, section 82:10, he literally has God himself say,

"I the Lord am bound when you do what I say, but when you do not what I say you have no promise."

The idea then is that when a mortal obeys a law from God then God must - not might, not may, but must - respond to their obedience with blessings. In other words, God is bound by the obedience of the person and therefore by their obedience to His Laws humans can actually bind God and force Him to do their will.

These laws sort of stack up upon each other and are offered up to people in steps - which are similar to the advancing of Masons to the place of becoming Master Masons. With the LDS there is water baptism where **covenants** are made by the recipient with associated blessings. There is receiving the LDS **priesthood** (for males) which is another advancement and this is initially given as an Aaronic **priesthood** and later as a Melchizedek **priesthood**.

When a **priesthood** holder honors these two farcical expressions of **priesthood** the males are made deacons, then teachers, then priests, Elders, and then **High Priests!** (just like what the writer of Hebrews calls, Jesus). Once a male has received the Melchizedek **priesthood**, they are typically invited or prepared to "go to **temple**," where there, on their first visit, they receive all sorts of advancements with associated blessings via washings, **anointings, endowments** and even sealings that are applicable to their respective persons and then they are promised to be made Kings and Priests to the most high God if they are worthy.

Worthy, in LDS parlance, means that a person keep all of the **covenants** and promises that they have received and made both secret, sacred and are subject to themselves. What can be sobering and even frightening (at least to me) is that when a person is faithful and gives their allegiance and attention to all of these **covenantal** promises there actually can be earthly rewards as a result like health and **wealth**. But the question remains - does that make it right? Not any more right than someone selling their soul to the **devil** and receiving all that the **world** has to offer.

Admittedly, the LDS system of making and obeying **covenants** and the apparent success that follows might just be a result of people

living very principled lives. Or perhaps they are, in fact, being rewarded by God for their determination, or by the **Dark** for honoring what are not biblically based principles. This is not my point. My point is that the biblical message Jesus gives to those who choose to follow Him is a promise to suffer, to incur loss, and experience trials. This cannot be denied.

We also learn that the result of taking on a King whose Kingdom is plainly stated as not being of this **world** is to admit that His rewards are not promised on earth but are said to be rewards in heaven. Finally, the result of all of the biblically based promises is humility - including possessing a broken heart and a contrite spirit. The end result of Mormonism, when fully embraced and lived is often **the opposite - pride**. Mormonism then is very much tied to many elements of the Prosperity Gospel. When we add in the non-biblical teachings of Smith (and what they actually suggest and meaning relative to the biblical narrative) Mormonism as a whole automatically pulls further away from the Light of God and deeper into the **Dark** with a capital D.

Why?

Because at the end of the day, Mormonism is about the **self-will**, about personal glorification, even the exaltation of Man. These are the very same drivers that motivated Eve to eat of the forbidden fruit. It is of supreme interest to remember that the LDS rejoice in Eve's choice to eat of that fruit that leads to **death** as they openly teach that it was a "*fall upward*."

Mormonism goes so far as to describe human beings as being "born" children of God, where the scripture makes it plain that human beings only become God's children by adoption through faith. That again, is why John wrote in the first chapter of his gospel

John 1:11 He came unto his own, and his own received him not. But as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on his name: Which were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God.

and,

Galatians 3:26 For ye are all the children of God by faith in Christ Jesus.

So, while Mormonism is extremely effective in "managing the flesh," of governing the things of this **world** and getting people to conform

their outward fallen state to laws and rules that can make a real material difference in their lives here and now, the fruit of Mormonism is actually from the Tree of **Knowledge** of good and **evil** and eating it will only lead to **death**, meaning what it offers is viable here and now, but loses all value in the world to come in the sense of any of it having any power in the Kingdom above.

It is super important to understand (and to remind ourselves) that the biblical stance is clear, Christians are to:

Proverbs 3:5-6 Trust in the LORD with all thine heart; and lean not unto thine own understanding. In all thy ways acknowledge him, and he shall direct thy paths.

Christians are to consider Jeremiah 9:23-24, where we read:

*"Thus saith the LORD, Let not the wise man **glory** in his **wisdom**, neither let the mighty man **glory** in his might, let not the **rich** man **glory** in his **riches**: But let him that glorieth glory in this, that he understandeth and knoweth me, that I am the LORD which exercise lovingkindness, judgment, and righteousness, in the earth: for in these things I delight, saith the LORD."*

That we recall and believe what Paul wrote in Galatians 2:19-20

For I through the law am dead to the law, that I might live unto God. I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me: and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me.

And that we rejoice in Jesus' teaching where he said in John 15:

John 15:5 I am the vine, ye are the branches: He that abideth in me, and I in him, the same bringeth forth much fruit: for without me ye can do nothing. If a man abide not in me, he is cast forth as a branch, and is withered; and men gather them, and cast them into the fire, and they are burned. If ye abide in me, and my words abide in you, ye shall ask what ye will, and it shall be done unto you. Herein is my Father glorified, that ye bear much fruit; so shall ye be my disciples.

The fruit we bear as His disciples is not ever from **self-will**, discipline of the flesh, or conformity to prescribed **laws, rituals** or **rites**. There is no fleshly formula that God has in place to advance men and women up through ranks to perfection. We bear fruit as branches in Him, not by and through the **self** or through

the perfection of the **self**, the will, or by ambition. Biblically speaking the human **self** is reidentified and reformatted in the faith as of being by and through Him and His power alone, through the Spirit of Him that in us and one that not retained and amplified by practices, **covenants** or commands. What Mormonism represents, perhaps better than any other institution on earth, is *religion*. It is a perfect, seamless body of religious laws, practices and approaches to God that serve to clothe all who embrace it in **fig leaves**, sewn and constructed by the crafty hands of Men who are seeking to hide behind "image" and their outward works while offering up items to God that "appear" to please Him but never have, never can and never will.

Jesus made it clear - no man comes to the Father but by Him - our vine, our new identity, our Way, Truth and Life. Not by will. Not by flesh. Not by religion. Him. Alone.

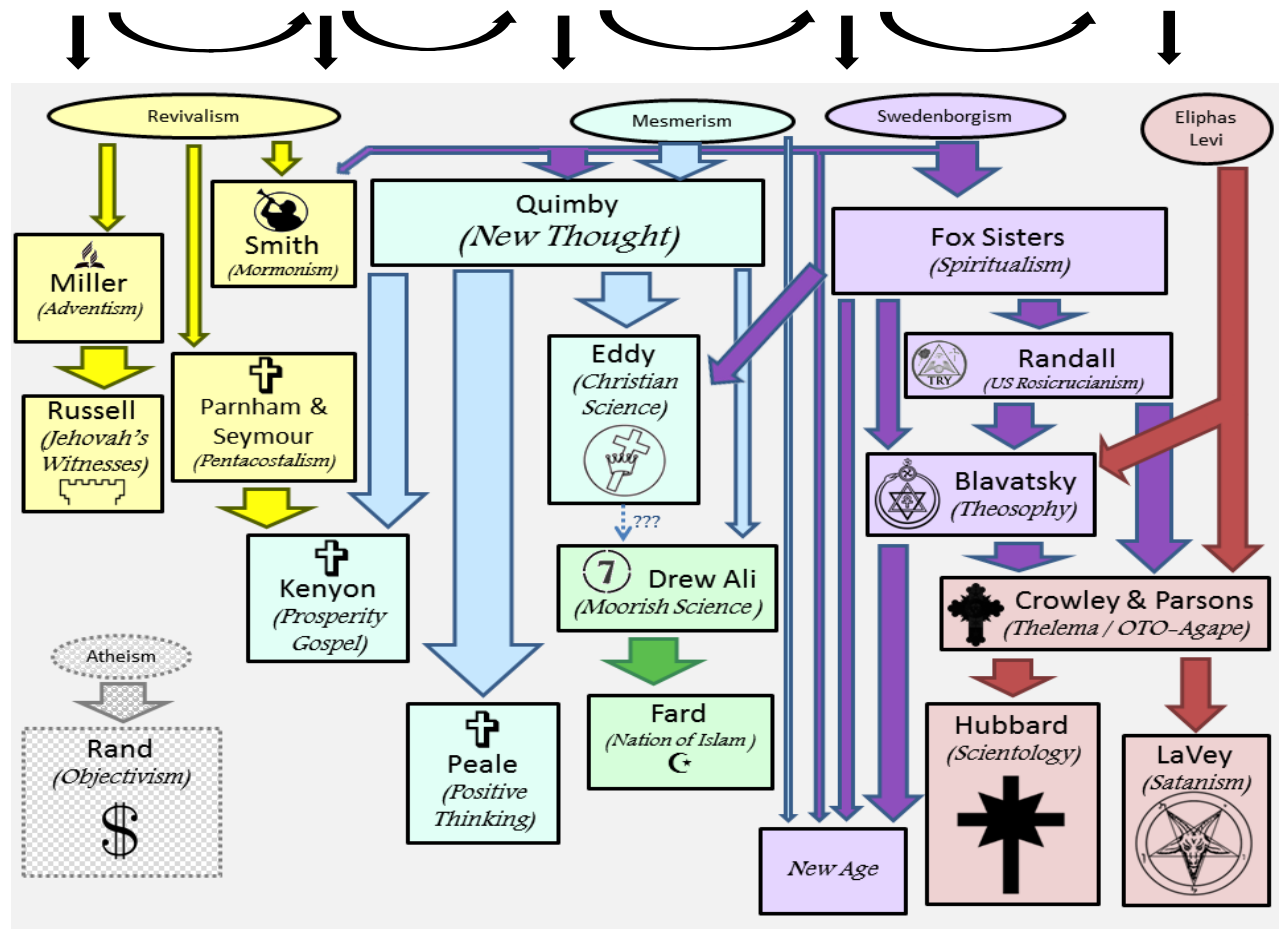
At this point we are going to depart from religious gatherings that surreptitiously use Jesus name (but don't follow His teachings and often include elements from the **world**) and we are going to walk deeper into the **Dark** by exploring other entities that in greater and greater degree promote Man, **self**, **flesh** and therefore, **non-God** to all who embrace them.

Chapter 20

Eckhart Tolle

There are a lot - I mean, a lot of people who, overtime, have come out and claimed **enlightenment**, **illumination**, visions and experiences - to some degree of success or another. We presented some of the highlighted ones in our discussion of the chart we appealed to below:

EMOTIONALISM MONEY SELF-WILL/MIND SPIRITUALISM GODLESSNESS



Some of the bigger gurus of the Spirit include major well-know players like

- Zoroastor
- Confusius
- Buddhah
- Krishna
- Ernest Holmes
- Baba Nanuk
- Hakunin Ekaku
- Emanuel Swendenborg
- Mary Baker Eddie
- Charles Taz Russell
- Helena Blatvasky
- Rilke
- Kalihl Gibran

The Dali Lama
Tony Robbins
Depak Chopra

and many more who pop up in the psycho-spiritual, non-biblical realms of psychology, philosophy and other types of spiritual movements happening around the **world**. These appeals only scratch the surface. In this chapter we are going to use just one individual to generally represent the focus or approach that is present in all of these individuals listed above. Remember, there are many "spirits" out in the **world**, and I would image that these spirits bring all manner of deceptive angles to the table that that are essentially not of God. John the Beloved wrote:

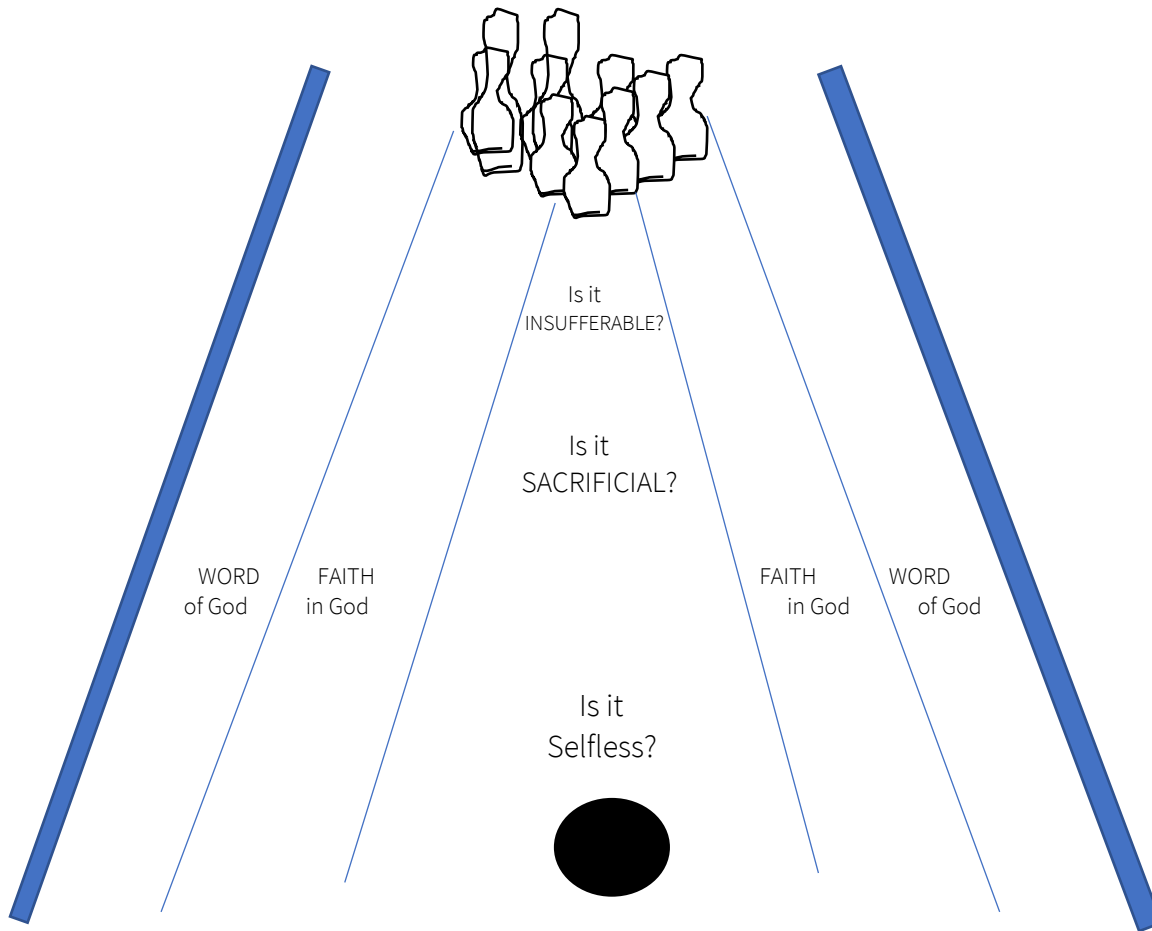
1st John 4:1 Beloved, believe not every spirit, but try the spirits whether they are of God: because many false prophets are gone out into the world.

The word translated "try" here in the Greek is *dokimadzo* and it means to "test" (literally or figuratively); by implication, to approve as a means to *allow, discern, examine*. The single most important question we have to ask ourselves then in the face of this advice is "how?" How do we test or try or examine the Spirits to see if they are of God?

I maintain that we "test all things" including the spirits in the same ways a person could most effectively throw a bowling ball down a lane for a guaranteed strike - with the guaranteed strike being an arrival at the truth. And that this might look something like this:

STRIKING AT THE TRUTH

(note that all pins must fall to actually strike the truth)



Attempts at striking at the Truth

In other words, in our search for Truth with a capital T, we proverbially stand at the line with our desires in hand. On both sides of the lane, we have the Word of God preventing us from throwing a gutter ball. Understanding the Word, we then have another form of protection, our faith in what we have read and heard. Finally, governing the ball right down the lane to the exact point where we need to hit the pins is love, defined as selfless, sacrificial and insufferable. And by this love and the definition of it, our attempts to discern a premise, teaching or principle are made accurate. Let's give an example.

Someone like Ayn Rand promoted a teaching that extols **selfishness**. So we stand at the line with our attempt to discern the truthfulness of this teaching. And we first consult the Word of

God and what it has to say about **selfishness**. That keeps us out of the gutter of human inclination and in harmony with the written word of God. Consulting the word of God is not a passive activity because we don't want it to just confirm our biases, but we really want it to help us understand why **selfishness** is not what God suggests. Then we ask ourselves, "do we trust in what the word says or in what Rand says?" Why? What are the stated reasons why God's advice from His Word is superior to Rands? And once we have decided to trust God's word over Rands, we then ask, "What does Rand's advice look like in the **world** relative to agape love?" Does it support agape love or is it in conflict with it? The answers we end up with will help us discover truth from error and therefore enable us to choose rightly on how to live.

The example on Rand is pretty easy to solve if someone consults the Word of God and places their faith in the idea that loving God and Neighbor are paramount to a believer. But what about a religious teaching that is biblical, is promoted but fails the above tests? Like the practice of polygamy?

Coming from an LDS background I cut my teeth on the idea that plural marriage was of God, that He did in fact allow it at times, and that according to the founding prophet, it is an eternal principle that will forever be practiced - if not on earth, then in heaven. Let's go back to our bowling alley model and toss a ball at the pins of the premise in an effort to discover the truth.

While polygamy was certainly in the Bible a contextual reading of it shows it a, was not in the beginning, b, was introduced to humanity after the fall by Cain's son, c, caused a lot of problems in the lives of those who practiced it, and d, was ostensibly removed from the lives of believers when Christ came and established His church. Placing our faith and trust in this information, we then subject the practice to the command to love God and neighbor as self. While loving God could justify polygamy (if He commanded it) polygamy utterly fails in loving others and leaves women, children and even some men in despair and pain. Failing the love part and seeing that monogamy better guides the ball to a strike, we have our answer to the truthfulness of polygamy. Simple as that.

Without question, most of the aforementioned souls mentioned above tap into "elements of truth" (I mean, if their stuff were complete lies or did not make sense how would they serve to deceive people?) Additionally, most of them do relate to the human experience and can even speak to genuine principles about God, faith and love. Perhaps they are even at times 99% "true" but the question remains,

are they fruit from the Tree of **Knowledge** of good and **evil** and they will lead to **death**? Let me reiterate - seekers of truth do not want to tap into forces or sources that merely "work". Crime can work. Human sacrifice may "work." **Wealth** will "work" in this **world** to a certain extent. But believers instead seek to diligently seek the Living God and to only do His will amidst all the other spiritual voices, forces and spirits, whether they work or not. And as we said, there are many of them.

So, ask yourself, "*are you willing to embrace something that **works in this world** if it is not of or from God?*" It's a serious question; central, I would say, to the way a son or daughter lives their lives while in the flesh. Yes, God allows all of His creations to seek out and live by other systems - systems that temporarily "work" (so to speak) in this realm, but is that our goal? Is that our God? Not for a son or a daughter.

So, let's consider a man who has been called a Christian **mystic** as a vehicle to help guide us through some of the approaches that sort of appeal to principles of Christianity while sidestepping Christ (to some extent or another) or add to Him and His finished work. And the man of whom I speak **named himself**, Eckhart Tolle.

Born Ulrich Leonard Tolle, he was born on February 16th, 1948 and is considered by millions to be a German-born spiritual teacher and **self-help** author. His books include, *The **Power** of Now: A Guide to Spiritual **Enlightenment*** (1997), *A New Earth: **Awakening** to Your Life's Purpose* (2005) and a picture book titled, ***Guardians of Being*** (2009). When he was 13 years old, he moved to Spain to live with his father, where he says he "*refused all forms of formal education between the ages of 13 and 22, preferring instead to pursue his own creative and philosophical interests.*"

At 15, he was "heavily influenced" by the contents of five books by the German **mystic** Joseph Anton Schneiderfranken (who is better known as **BO YIN RA**, another **self-assigned new name** that he had given himself). **Bo Yin Ra** was an author/artist who wrote a number of books promoting silence, mediation and **repeating words** that have meaning to the speaker. These books served as a springboard for Tolle into **pure spiritualism** or **mysticism** which in the end dislocates itself from the written Word of God and relies solely on **spiritual experience**.

When Tolle was 19, he moved to England and taught German and Spanish for three years at a London language school. After attending the University of London, he enrolled in a postgraduate

program at the University of Cambridge in 1977. According to Tolle, one evening in 1977 when he was 29 years of age, he was suffering a great period of depression and says that he experienced an **"inner transformation"** through a life-changing **epiphany**. Recounting the experience, he said,

*"I couldn't live with myself any longer. And in this a question arose without an answer: who is the 'I' that cannot live with the **self**? What is the **self**? I felt drawn into a **void**! I didn't know at the time that what really happened was **the mind-made self**, with its heaviness, its problems, **that lives between the unsatisfying past and the fearful future, collapsed. It dissolved. The next morning, I woke up and everything was so peaceful. The peace was there because there was no self. Just a sense of presence or "beingness," just observing and watching.**"*

Where **self** and **self-will** are at one end of the humanist spectrum, seen in and through many facets of **Masonry, Mormonism** and the **Prosperity Gospel**, Tolle ironically serves to bring people away from **self** to some extent with the hopes of **extinguishing** it altogether! This is a subtle but powerful shift - like going from being sober and in control of the **self (Mormonism)** to getting really high on **psychedelics (Eastern Metaphysics)** and disconnecting from who God made us to be - unique, individual and in His image. Herein lies the essential difference between the "do it yourself" mentality in the West (which is not biblical) and "destroying the self" of the East (which, again, is not biblical).

Christianity is better understood as human selves submitting their will, ways and person over to God and allowing Him, through the Spirit of His Son, to lead, guide and direct them. It is based on a give and take exchange between dying to fleshly self and will, but then living with the renewed aware self more abundantly through Him. Christianity admits that, "without Him we can do nothing," all the while retaining a "we" in the mix. Tolle recommends the destruction of self or the human identity all together, taking our person into the arms of some sort of living Nirvana. It's important to see that both East and Western approaches are unbiblical, both are not part of the way God has orchestrated things and both are therefore moving away from Him and deeper into the **Dark**.

Tolle recalls going out for a walk in London the next morning after his experience of the **end of self** and finding that *"everything was miraculous, deeply peaceful. Even the traffic."* He said that **"the feeling"** continued, and he began to **feel** a strong underlying **sense of peace** in any given situation. This state for him was so

overwhelming that he stopped studying for his doctorate, and for a period of about two years thereafter he spent much of his time sitting, "in a **state of deep bliss**," on park benches in Russell Square, Central London, "**watching the world go by**."

Notice the focus on **personal experience**, on detaching from **world reality** (so to speak) and on **deep states of bliss**. Notice the inference to escapism - which all **experiential** approaches to living ultimately promote. Contrast this **escapism** with the fact that Jesus lived an actual life, that it was difficult, and that when He escaped it was only to commune with His Father alone. Christianity is not monastic. It is active, involved and at times painfully present as we learn to submit our will to Gods amidst the trials and difficulties of life wherein we are actively engaged. It is work, which is a synonym for agape love. Also notice Tolle's frequent references to **feelings**, and **emotions** in his recitations. Zero in on the **inwardness** of what Tolle reports. The **navel gazing**. In the faith, these Socratic periods of **self-reflection** are always in light of God through Christ, always point to Him and His will and always plays out in acts of love we consciously choose to do. **Feelings** and **emotions**, while having a purpose and place in the human experience, have zero intelligence. And they alone can lead us to believing and doing any and all sorts of things that stand contrary to the will of our Creator. We do not feel our way to God, we, fully aware of our person and identity, consider Him and His ways, and choose to submit ourselves to Him, or not. These are acts of volition, not **feeling**; they require hard choices that are usually contrary to what we **feel**.

In my soul, my mind, will and **emotions**, I constantly **feel** the desire to get high, to punch a tailgater in the face, to steal my neighbor's wife. What's the old saying, "**the heart wants what the heart wants**." Those are **feelings** speaking. **Emotions**. Zero intelligence. Unfortunately, **feelings** and **emotions** are what truly govern the **world** and its citizens. They are the lingua franca of all that is in the **world**. And almost everything that is in the **world** appeals to them and their feet of clay.

No, we are God's creations. We have a **self**, a soul that is intrinsic to His seeking relationship with us. The self is not abolished and overcome as our Eastern **Metaphysicians** claim to the point that **self** is lost in **Nirvana**. Instead, we willingly take ourselves, we submit ourselves to the presence of God, and we, like Jesus did, submit our will to His as well. This is not a **feeling** or an **emotional** act though **emotions** can be involved. It is not a **mystical experience** (generally speaking) but it is a choice and choices can only be made when a **self** is in operation.

Thus far, we have Tolle describe a loss of self, (so much so that he said there was, **no self** left after his experience. And what he describes sounds **inviting**, and certainly smacks of what some would believe is of God!

But take note - doesn't God call the selves that He has created to accountability before Him? Adam and Eve? Job? David? Doesn't Jesus and his apostles plainly teach about a day of accounting for all people (souls/selves)? And don't all the things in this **world** in contrast speak to the loss of self through experiences? At **raves, concerts, drug abuse, sexual licentiousness, affairs, vacations, luxury living, money and material acquisition**? Don't we, tired of the stressors of life, resort to getting drunk, going to movies, taking pain pills, staying high? Can you see the difference between how Jesus confronted life (by going to His Father alone and in prayer) and the philosophies of this **world**?

Again, in the Bible there is clearly a self - mind, will and **emotions** that are captured in a body that chooses to be responsible to God or seek escapes. In Christianity, it would be impossible to overcome the self if the self ceases to exist. It would be impossible to choose God and Light if the self that does the choosing is lost or surrendered over to some unseen force or realm. These are subtle but remarkable differences. With the Faith, God is working in and through us as we, our "selves," responsibly choose to allow and embrace His every effort to restore our person to Him. Along the way, there is zero loss of the individual, only the reformatting and restoring of individuals as they allow it.

The drug cultures - especially those that operate in **hallucinogens** like **THC, mushrooms, DMT, LSD, Peyote** and other such things all play to the "loss" or "**absorption of the self**" into something bigger and greater. **Sensory-depravation tanks** appeal to the same. But God created us in His image as a means for us to exist, to choose and to thrive in how we were made.

Tolle offers what many other promoters of spiritualism offer as well. In fact, he has simply synthesized what has been around for ages in the minds of many **mystics** who have come before him. I tend to see the main difference between his brand of religion and the biblical faith as similar to the difference between a planet like earth being given life and producing flora, fauna and life verses a **black hole** in space which absorbs everything into itself leaving nothing in its wake - including light and sound or self.

Tolle describes this state as peaceful - and while to our bodies of flesh it certainly would be - but this is not the peace Christ brings. It is the peace of **nothing**. Even an atheist peace which strips existence, and therefore accountability before our Maker away. The peace Christ brings, which is NOT of this **world**, is alive and active and encourages selfless sacrificial action, light and life, not the erasing of a human soul. We cannot forget that Jesus Himself clearly took His "self" all the way through His mortal life, even to the point of asking God, "why have you forsaken me?" Even after He rose from the grave, He said to Thomas in John 20:27

"Reach hither thy finger, and behold my hands; and reach hither thy hand, and thrust it into my side: and be not faithless, but believing."

I get the value of taking a break from this **world**. Jesus did it when he would leave everything and go out into the wilderness. But note that this was always to commune with His Father and not to become one with all things while disappearing from himself.

Tolle stayed with friends in a **Buddhist monastery** and slept in various places while his family thought him "irresponsible, even insane." It was at this time that he **changed his first name** from Ulrich to Eckhart. Some say that this was in homage to the German **philosopher** and **mystic** called, **Master Eckhart** whose writings influenced him so greatly in years past. The title **mystic**, perhaps even "**Christian mystic**," is what the 13th century **Meister Eckhart** was deemed and it is perhaps the best way to describe Eckhart Tolle and some who are like him. Terms like **mystic** in the faith are super nuanced and mean different things to different people at different times. Admittedly, the Christian faith is **mystical** as it is in the hands of the Spirit and operates in and on us in ways that are not of this **world**. I get that, but I stridently and ardently maintain that everything - views, ideas, insights, philosophies, schrooms and opinions - have to be founded on sound, contextually understood biblical principles which work in reality; if they don't, they are a product of human minds or some **otherworldly** forces and are not from the living God working to be in relationship with those made in His image.

These "avenues of spirituality" that we are discussing in this book can quickly become quite dangerous to spiritual truths and I have yet to see any biblically unsupported teachings or experiences that can hold water relative to contextual biblical truth. What I mean by this is I have never seen "an **alternative** route" that has truly helped anyone when it is fully embraced compared to what God

has established through His Son. The former truly does bring **death**, while the latter truly brings real life. There are always "chinks in their armor" and these chinks often lead people into stronger chains of **Dark** rather than liberty that abides in His light.

Overall, Christian **mysticism** might be summarized as "the tradition of **mystical practices** and/or **mystical theologies** within the realm of Christianity which are focused on "preparing a person a direct and **transformative presence** of God." Until the sixth century the practice of what is now called **mysticism** was referred to in the Latin as "**contemplatio**," or in the Greek, "**theoria**" which means "looking or gazing at or being aware of the Divine." In time, these practices were described by some as the "process of coming to know God" and included but were not limited to:

- prayerful **meditation** of Holy Scripture; and/or
- contemplating the very presence of God which could result in "theosis" which is described as spiritual union with God and/or and ecstatic visions of the soul's **mystical** union with God;
- mortifications of the flesh;
- experiential **wisdom** and the obtaining of special **secret knowledge**

I'm not going to get into the specifics on **theoria** other than to say it is highly subjective, is difficult to examine but that it mimics what the people of **India** refer to as **darsana** and travels down the road of **experiential** religion. Because Christian **mysticism** deals with "**encountering God**" it seems to try to heighten what the scripture describes as what is already present in all believers - which is God Himself by the Spirit. The question becomes, "Why are external hypnotic sensory experiences necessary to a Christians whom scripture says Christ is already with and in them? Why these extra amplified encounters?"

William James in his landmark book, *The Varieties of Religious Experience*, notes that most religions offer "rebirth" experiences of peace, change and that of experiencing new life. In other words, Christianity does not have a corner on the market of being reborn. People can experience significant alterations to their person and perspectives through all sort of things including music, intimate fellowship, drug use, concert-going, a major accident, or even by encountering the **Buddha** in their minds **third eye**. It happens all the time. Many a lost individual can find identity and new life through a stint in the military, at a retreat in the mountains and by people laying hands on them to pray. The ultimate question however, is has a person been born again by the Spirit of

Christ who has taken their sin and made them whole, giving them access to the Father? In my estimation this is the fruit from the Tree of Life. "Seeking more of God by or through the flesh" is a problem because for many it is interpreted as them obtaining something or some access to **knowledge** that is presumably hidden, making the **knowledge** or **experience** "special," new, and available only to the select few willing and able to discover it. The end of this road is **Gnosticism** which ignores the open accessible truths God has given the **world** and makes them only available to the limited few.

Bottom line - **mysticism** is the attempt to bring the presence of God into oneself as a means to help individuals **transcend** themselves, or to lose oneself all together. **Mysticism** therefore becomes an extremely personal matter where each person is cultivating an **inner state** of **tranquility** and **equanimity** before a god rather than allowing the God to enter them by faith in His Son and then choosing to let Him work on their soul through the Spirit.

Christian mysticism is perhaps most evident in Eastern Orthodoxies as they have an entire side-structure dedicated to its practice but it is also found in the promotions and teachings of men like Tolle.

Getting back to this specific spiritualist, his friends and acquaintances at Cambridge began to ask Tolle about his beliefs which apparently caused him to take on work as "**a spiritual counselor.**" I am always amazed at the number of spiritual counselors the **world** offers us when Christ by His Spirit is The Counselor. I am always amazed at the plethora of prophets this world presents when the scripture plainly tells us that He is our Prophet. I am amazed at the number of books written (including this one) when He is the Word of God made flesh.

Speaking of books, Tolle's first, *The **Power** of Now*, was published in 1997 by **Namaste** Publishing. It was republished on a grand scale by **New World** Library in 1999 which is essentially a new age publishing house. In 2000, **Oprah Winfrey** recommended, *The Power of Now* in her magazine. In August 2000, it reached The New York Times Best Seller in the category of advice, miscellaneous and Hardcover list, reaching number one two years later. By 2008, the book had been translated from English into thirty-three languages. In July 2011, it had appeared on the list of the top ten best-selling Paperback Advice & Miscellaneous books for 102 weeks.

His website sells his books and an array of materials offering **spiritual guidance**, and a separate website streams video of monthly group **meditations**. In 2005, Tolle published, *A New Earth*. In January, **Oprah Winfrey** selected it for her book club, and in the four weeks following this announcement, 3.5 million copies were shipped. It was ranked number one on The New York Times Best Seller list 46 times by the end of 2008. Also in 2008, Tolle partnered with **Winfrey** to produce a series of webinars, each one focusing on a chapter from his books, with discussions, silent **meditations**, and questions from viewers via Skype. The third webinar attracted more than 11 million viewers. By October 2009, the webinars had been accessed 35 million times.

In September 2009, he appeared with **the Dali Lama** at the Vancouver Peace Summit. The same year, he published, **Guardians of Being**, a picture book illustrated by Patrick McDonnell. By 2009, the total sales of *The Power of Now* and *A New Earth* in North America were estimated at 3 million and 5 million copies respectively, and The New York Times stated that Tolle was "*the most popular spiritual author*" in the United States. In 2016, Tolle was named in **Winfrey's "SuperSoul 100"** list of visionaries and influential leaders. Resistance to Tolle has come in with much less strength or success. In 2003, Andrea Sachs characterized *The Power of Now* as "*awash in spiritual mumbo-jumbo*", while in 2008, an article in The New York Times stated that Tolle is "*not identified with any religion, but uses teachings from Zen Buddhism, Sufism, Hinduism, and the Bible*." In 2008, an article in *The Independent* noted that "*Tolle's theories are certainly seen by many as profoundly non-Christian, even though Tolle often quotes from the Bible*", but that "*Tolle does have fans in academic, even Christian, circles*."

Tolle has settled in Vancouver, British Columbia where he met his wife, Kim Eng, a **spiritual teacher** and the creator of **Presence Through Movement**. She leads retreats and workshops internationally in partnership with Tolle.

Summary? Tolle and others like him, do not distinguish any ultimate difference between God, Jesus and human beings - none. These views takes us even further away from the Light of Biblical Truth and into that deceptive **Dark** and its fruit of **Death**.

Chapter 21

Theosophy

Several years ago my middle daughter Cassidy went to Point Loma Nazarene University to meet the volleyball coach as she was considering attending the school and playing for that team. The Lord lead her on a different path but her younger sister, Delaney, eventually attended Point Loma and graduated four years later.

On that campus, which is set in an utterly gorgeous location overlooking the Pacific Ocean, are what can only be considered some strange building architecturally which I always wondered about when visiting. One day I decided to investigate these buildings and I learned that the Nazarenes bought the location from a **spiritualist** group that was once headquartered there known as **Theosophy**. We will focus on Theosophy in this chapter as we travel deeper into realms of **spiritual darkness** and therefore away from the Light of biblical truth.

Theosophy was founded primarily by the Ukrainian Helena Blavatsky and draws its teachings predominantly from Blavatsky's writings. Categorized by scholars of religion as both a **new religious movement** and as part of the **occultist stream of Western esotericism**, Theosophy draws upon both **older European philosophies** such as **Neoplatonism** mixed with some elements of **Hinduism** and **Buddhism**.

You will quickly notice that where men like Eckhart Tolle is considered to be somewhat of a **Christian mystic**, Theosophy is truly not influenced by biblical Christianity in the least and is what serves to fully disconnect Christ from its philosophies. According to Blavatsky, Theosophy teaches that there is an **ancient** and **secretive** brotherhood of **spiritual adepts** known as **the Masters**, who, although found around the **world**, are centered in **Tibet**.

These "**Masters**" are alleged by Blavatsky to have **cultivated great wisdom** and **supernatural powers**, and Theosophists believe that it was they who initiated the modern Theosophical movement by disseminating their teachings (**through Blavatsky**). Notice the line of thought:

*There are **masters** of old who communicated with Blavatsky and she brought their **wisdom** forth to the rest of the **world**.*

To Blavatsky, these Masters are attempting to **revive knowledge** of an **ancient religion** once **found around the world** and when they do it will **eclipse** the existing **world** religions with its light. Specifically speaking, Theosophical groups do not refer to their system as a "religion". Instead, it too preaches the existence of what they call, "**a single, divine Absolute**." Theosophy promotes

what can be seen as "**an emanationist cosmology**" which means that the universe is perceived as **outward reflections** coming from this **Absolute**.

Theosophy teaches that **the purpose** of human life is **spiritual emancipation** and says that the human soul undergoes **reincarnation** upon bodily **death** according to a **process of karma**. It promotes values of **universal brotherhood** and **social improvement**, although it does not stipulate particular ethical codes. These are clearly some "good" intentions and stated purposes - but the question becomes, "*by what means does this universal brotherhood exist to improve our **world** socially?*" All of the fruits we have thus far examined from the Tree of **Knowledge** of good and **evil** seek the same things, in my estimation.

The Prosperity Gospel claim God wants to make everyone **healthy and wealthy** and these things should first be **manifested** mentally in the heart of people and then they will become the reality.

Masons then Mormons maintain that fallen human beings can be systematically led through a series of **principled initiations** that will serve to make them successful and in harmony with God's design for the human race.

Eckhardt Tolle and many others like him promote the eastern idea of losing the selves (that God has made beautifully and wonderfully) and this is the way to **enlightenment**

and now we come to Blavatsky who says she has tapped into the **world** great "masters" who have the key to life in this **world** and in the next.

The Bible is clear - human beings are made in the image of God, we have capacities beyond the animal world and that we have choice. The material **world** fell into sin and God so loved this **world** that He gave His Son to save us from it and its wages (which is **death**). The only way to live and please God, which the scripture makes plain literally is by faith (Hebrews 6:9) which is ultimately proven to exist in those who possess it through selfless, sacrificial and insufferable love. The way is not through the human will, not through the **self**, not via **death** of the self and not through accessing an unseen ancient panoply of spirits, sages or masters. Faith in Him. Period. Then love by Him. All the rest, all the other angles, are appeals to **counterfeits** and diligent seekers of God in spirit and truth will discover this even if they get sidelined along the way by these other deceptive approaches.

We cannot overemphasize that to truly arm oneself against the subtle promising influence is to know and understand the real McCoy, which comes by a reading and hearing of His Word by the Spirit which bears the fruit of selfless love.

Theosophy was established in New York City in 1875 with the founding of the Theosophical Society by Blavatsky and Americans Henry Olcott and William Quan Judge. In the early 1880s, Blavatsky and Olcott relocated to **India**, where they established the Society's headquarters at Adyar, Tamil Nadu. Blavatsky described her ideas in two books, *Isis Unveiled* and then in, *The Secret Doctrine*. Following Blavatsky's **death** in 1891, there was a schism in the Society, with Judge leading the Theosophical Society in America to split from the international organization. Under Judge's successor Katherine Tingley, a Theosophical community named Lomaland was established in San Diego - that location is what ultimately became Point Loma Nazarene University where my daughter attended. The movement hit a peak in the late 1920's with artists and writers embracing the tenets but has gone into a steady state of decline over the years. So, why even mention it here?

Theosophy, in my mind, serves as a **darker shade** of non-truth and from a historical perspective helps move us into some even **darker** realms of **experientially-based** expressions including the esoteric expressions (like the **Golden Dawn**) and on out to outright Theological **Satanism**. But what fully bridges the gap between the former expressions in earlier chapters and the chapters to come is a formalized teaching called, **Eckankar**.

Chapter 22

Eckankar

Eckankar? Sounds pretty **ancient**, right? Like it's straight out of **Egypt** or something. But Eckankar was founded by a man in 1965 named Paul Twitchell who, like Tolle, **changed his name** to, Peddar Zaskq.

Presently, Eckankar has most of its members in North America, Europe, Asia and Africa. The spiritual home of the movement is called, the **"Temple of ECK"** which is located in Chanhassen, Minnesota. The movement teaches simple **spiritual exercises**, such as singing **"HU"**, which they call, "a love song to God" and which believers say by singing it over and over again they are able to "experience the Light and Sound of God" and to "recognize the

presence of the Holy Spirit." But understand clearly that what they call, the Holy Spirit is not the Holy Spirit of the Bible but a universal spirit with different purposes and origins.

Twitchell was known for adapting **Sanskrit** words into English, and the word Eckankar is likely Twitchell's adaptation of the sacred phrase "**Ik Onkar**" of **Sikhism**, which means "**One Om**". According to the Eckankar's glossary, the term Eckankar means "**a co-worker with God.**" Our purpose of discussing Eckankar is because it introduces us to an even deeper dive into what is called, **cosmological** theology, which might be defined as something that argues the existence of God through facts about the universe.

Where **Helena Blavatsky** claimed to have **tapped** into **the Spirits of great masters** who teach the **singular truths of the Universe**, Eckankar makes the claim that it will **take its members** personally into a place that exists **outside of their person**.

Again, in the Christian faith, the person the individual soul always exists. But we must question Paul's Eckankar-like experience when he wrote of being caught up to heaven and that he could not tell "*whether he was in his body or not.*"

Peddar Zaskq remained Eckankar's spiritual leader (and was called, the "**Living ECK Master**") until his **death** in September 1971. He was succeeded by Darwin Gross (who went by the **spiritual name**: Dap Ren) then in October 22, 1981, Harold Klemp (spiritual name: **Wah Zee**) was announced as the successor spiritual leader to Gross.

Peddar Zaskq?

Dap Ren?

Wah Zee?

Between 1981 and 1987, both Dap and Wah Zee claimed to be the Living ECK Master and each had their own followers. Currently, Eckankar is registered as a nonprofit religious organization in the United States with members in over 120 countries around the **world**. Its teachings have been translated into more than twenty-five languages. Members are known as **ECKists** and their number is undisclosed but believed to be about 50,000 adherents and as mentioned, its **world** headquarters (including a thing called, "the Temple of ECK") is located on a 174-acre campus with two miles of contemplation trails that are open to the public.

One of the basic tenets of EK is that soul (referred to as the **true self**) may be experienced **separate from the physical body** and, in full consciousness, can travel freely in "**other planes** of

reality." Here, we see a further distancing from the Biblical idea that the soul is inextricably tied to the Spirit of God entering man and his becoming a living soul. Biblically speaking, for the soul to leave the body by definition would mean that the body would have to be dead. This then makes one wonder if something else inhabits the body of the wandering soul while it is on its travels to different planes of reality.

Like most of these deviant expressions mentioned in earlier chapters, **Eckankar** is very **experiential** and is associated with **mystical** out of body experiences heightened by repetitious chants that promise to induce **altered states of awareness**. To **Ecks**, "**Soul Travel**," is the shifting of body awareness to a focus on what they call **the inner planes of existence**. These exercises are said to help people **experience divine love, healing** of the heart, **solace** in the face of pain and have the capacity to **bring peace** to the lives of those who embrace them. **Dreams** are also regarded as important teaching tools in Eckankar and members often keep **dream journals** to facilitate deeper investigation.

OBE's (**outer body experiences**) are huge in Eckankar and are defined by Ecks as someone experiencing **spiritual liberation**. One wonders about the claims of Eckankar relative to Jesus words about people "losing their souls," (Matthew 8:36) and about evil spirits "wandering in desert places." (Matthew 12:43)

The membership card for Eckankar states:

*"The aim and purpose of Eckankar has always been to take Soul by its **own path** back to its **divine source**."* That aim doesn't sound so bad but it's the process and approach by which it performs this that gets really questionable. Biblical seekers understand that the only means "back," so to speak, to God, is via faith in His Son. This faith places demands on the believer to embrace or not and if not, then they are not accepting of His will in their lives and perhaps do not really long to join Him. Eckankar seems to bypass all of this and place the reconciliation of human beings to God as being entirely up to the individual and available through some means of **astral projection**. Interestingly, Eckankar speaks to the belief that human beings **exist before birth**, and have likewise made choices before birth that effect the conditions of their lives today. These views are not novel and were considered viable by Plato, Jews in Jesus day (John 9:2-3), Immanuel Swedenborg, Joseph Smith, Jun., Walt Wittman and L. Ron Hubbard, founder of our next chapter's subject, Scientology.

Thetan, in Scientology can continue to pay fees and experience audits at deeper and deeper levels. By ultimately paying hundreds of thousands of dollars some Scientologists are introduced to what they call, "*the Bridge to Total Freedom*," again, noting the similarity to what Christ offers all who come to Him but "without cost, and without price." (Isaiah 55:1; Revelation 21:6; 22:17)

Even though the teachings behind the audits and such are held very close to the chest by the Scientology organization, the bottom line is they believe all people, as **thetans**, existed in **extraterrestrial cultures** before coming to earth to live. It is in these cultures that pain is incurred and retained by the core **thetan** entity inhabiting our bodies here and now.

Going even deeper, Scientology doctrine states that any Scientologist undergoing "**auditing**" will eventually come across and recount what is called "*the Incident*" where an alien ruler over a confederation of planets 70 million years ago brought billions of aliens to earth and then destroyed them with nuclear weapons. This is then **mythological framework** upon which Scientology operates to clear its paying members of so as to help liberate them from the painful outcome of the Incident event. Interestingly, while Hubbard wrote primarily about science fiction in his early life he was involved in a movement what we will discuss in our next chapter, called, **Thelema**.

In the late 1940s Hubbard created, **Dianetics**, a set of practices which he presented as "**therapy**." Over time, he came to consider auditing useful not just for problems of the mind, but also of the spirit, and subsequently developed Scientology as an expansion of what was originally known as, **Dianetics**. Although he had framed **Dianetics** as a science, it was ultimately reframed as a religion.

Like Mormonism, the Church of Scientology is a multi-factional conglomerate where its religious outreach only represents some of its interests in the **world**. Sociologist Stephen A. Kent describes it as "*a multifaceted transnational corporation, only one element of which is religious*," and as the historian of religion, Hugh Urban, said, it is "*a huge, complex, and multifaceted movement*". One reference described scientology as representing a "**rich syncretistic blend**" of sources, including elements from **Hinduism, Buddhism, Thelema, new scientific ideas, science-fiction, psychology** and from popular **self-help** literature available by the mid-20th century. Some see its ceremonies, structure of prayers, and attire worn by ministers in the Church as all reflecting an influence of Protestantism. Hubbard claimed that Scientology was "**all-denominational**" and members of the Church are said to not be

prohibited from active involvement in other religions. Any Bible reading Christian knows that the teachings are extra-biblical and would naturally force someone to have to ultimately choose between the Bible and the imaginations of Hubbard. Interestingly, Hubbard said that the name scientology means, "**knowing about knowing,**" or "**the science of knowledge.**"

As noted, elements of the Eastern religions are evident in Scientology but in particular the concept of **karma** found in **Hinduism** and **Jainism** and in some links to **Taoism** and **Buddhism**. According to the *Encyclopedia of Community*, Scientology "*shows affinities with **Buddhism** and a remarkable similarity to first-century **Gnosticism.***"

One J. Gordon Melton writes that Scientology has its roots in **Esoteric** thought but he also states that it can be tied to **Manicheanism, Freemasonry and Theosophy**. And at this point in our study of Light and **Dark** we begin to see a continuous thread connecting all of the **Dark knowledge** found in all of these **alternative** views - all of it **esoteric**. All of it **secret**. All of it promising **access, advancement, insight and knowledge** not typically known in the **world** at large, and all apparently giving human beings the information necessary to get to, or even become, their own gods.

The study of the Church of Scientology is wide - even just reading the Wikipedia on it uncovers almost countless examples of how the church preys upon others through its fictional history and tales. It is certainly godless in the sense of honoring or appealing to One Grand Creator and to me sits squarely in the lap of the fruit that leads to **death**.

Chapter 24

Theistic Satanists

Returning to the focus on **self**, independent thought, **chaos** and **anarchy** is often seen in the collective mindset as being formulated by a man named Anton Lavey back in the 1960s in something that was generally known as, **Satanism**.

Lavey's form of **Dark** attitudes really had nothing to do with a personal being named **Satan** (because to Lavey to admit a created being, albeit a **dark** one, would mean he was admitting to a Creator, which is something he denied). So, there are different players in the game of worshipping and appealing to the **Dark** Prince commonly

called Lucifer or **Satan**. Some choose to worship the tenets of **Dark powers** (like Alistair Crowley, who we will discuss in the next chapter) and Anton Levey and his church of **Satan**. But I want to talk about those souls who actually believe in and worship a created being called **Satan, Lucifer** and/or **Baphomet**.

These sorts are known to practice what is called, "**Theistic Satanism**," which is also referred to as "**religious Satanism, spiritual Satanism, or traditional Satanism** - which all sit under the umbrella of the idea that a being called **Satan, the Devil, or Lucifer** objectively exists as a supernatural entity or spiritual being worthy of worship and supplication, and to whom individuals may contact or convene. This, again is in contrast to the atheistic archetypes, metaphors, or themes of evil used by Laveyan **Satanism**.

What makes this form of **Satanism** really repugnant (to me) is that it actually stands, in spirit, against the will of God - openly and directly fighting against His Light and Love with tools and **powers** from the **Dark**. Now, understand, I trust the biblical narrative and it contextually tells me that **Satan, Lucifer, or the Devil** has been beaten and cast into the Lake of Fire prepared for him and his angels. (Revelation 20:10-14) So, any appeal to **Satan** or Lucifer as an active "being" today makes me laugh, in one sense, because the joke is on those who give it their allegiance. What does not make me laugh is that while thinking they are appealing to that fallen, no longer-existing angel, they are still appealing to something that is **anti-God, anti-light, anti-truth** and **anti-Christ**. That force is frighteningly **powerful** in the way a **Dark hole** is **powerful** and to me, appealing to anything non-God is a grave error in judgment or wisdom.

In any case, all of these **Satanist** groups can in my estimation be lumped into one - **seekers, worshippers** and **promoters** of **Dark** and therefore eaters of some of the rottenest Fruit from the tree of **Knowledge** of good and **evil**. Admittedly, the individuals and organizations who uphold theistic **Satanist** beliefs are typically small, loosely affiliated, or independent groups and cabals that ironically have a really difficult time staying united due to the constant vying for **power** among themselves.

Prominent characteristics of theistic **Satanism** is the use of various types of **magic** and most theistic **Satanist** groups exist in relatively new models and ideologies, many of which are dependent of the Abrahamic religions. Since the first half of the 1990s, the internet has increased the visibility, communication, and spread of different "currents and beliefs" among these **Satanists** and this has ironically led to more conflicting and diverse groups

not more unity - but generally speaking, **Satanism** has always been a heterogeneous, pluralistic, decentralized religious movement.

As an aside, any group that can exist in unconditional love for one another, resisting the urge for **power** and allowing all people the freedom to live and believe as they are led are described by Paul as being mature believers, and not backbiting critics who are babes in the faith. So, whenever believers find themselves majoring in the minors, breaking up and parting ways and incapable of remaining united to the common cause they **know** what spirit from which they imbibe, and it laughingly is no different than the spirit that thrives in Theistic **Satanism**.

Religious academics, scholars of New religious movements and sociologists of religion who focus on **Satanism** have sought to study it by categorizing its expressions according to whether they are **esoteric/theistic** or **rationalist/atheistic**, and they have referred to the practice of working with "a literal **Satan**" as theistic or as "traditional" **Satanism**. This kind of **Satanism** was depicted in Roman Polanski's famous film, *Rosemary's Baby*. It is generally considered that a prerequisite to being considered a theistic Satanist is that the believer must accept a theological and metaphysical canon which involves one or more gods that are either considered to be **Satan** in the strictest, Abrahamic sense (the Judeo-Christian-Islamic conception of the **Devil**) or a conception of **Satan** that incorporates "adversarial" gods from other religious sources (usually pre-Christian polytheistic religions) like what are called **Ahriman** or **Enki**.

Many theistic **Satanists** reject any one form of systematized worship but tend to incorporate all sorts of views into their respective practices including elements from the Judeo-Christian ethic, **Gnosticism**, **Hermeticism**, **Neo-Paganism**, what is called, **the left-hand path**, **black magic**, **ceremonial magic**, **Crowleyan magick**, **Western esotericism**, and other **occult traditions**.

Theistic **Satanists** who solely base their faith on Christian ideas about **Satan** are referred to as "**Diabolists**" or "**reverse Christians**" which are typically used pejoratively toward them by other theoretical **Satanists**. Do we have a modern source that we can trace some of these Luciferian models to? It seems we do through a man name **Eliphas Levi**, who, like so many others in the game of spiritual **counterfeits** had a given name, **Alphonse Constant**, felt lead to changed it.

Levi was born in 1810 and was seen as a French **Esotericist**, poet and dabbler in **Magik**, **Kabballah**, **alchemy** and **occultism**. At age 26,

after pursuing Roman Catholicism, he abandoned it all together. Thirteen years later he was known as a **ceremonial magician**. He was influenced by **Freemasonry, Rosicrucians, Swedenborg** and **Plato**. Interestingly, he and other **Satanists** who followed in later, have strong often **secret ties** to **socialism** and frankly work quite hard to bring it about in the **world**. I mention **Eliphas Levi** only because he is sort of a focal point to the genesis of **Dark arts** in recent history. The diversity of individual beliefs within theistic **Satanism**, while being a cause for intense debates within the religion, is also often seen as a reflection of **Satan**, who blanketly encourages "**individualism**."

The first recognized **esoteric, non-Laveyan Satanist** organization that we really know of was called, the **Ophite Cultus Satanus**, which claimed to have been founded in 1948 by a man named **Herbert Arthur Sloane**. Their doctrine relies on a **Gnostic conception of Satan** as "*the liberating serpent and bestower of knowledge to humankind*" instead of as a malevolent fallen angel that hated humanity. Fascinatingly, what **that demon seduced** Eve to actually do was her **own will**, and to **please herself**, and to **seek wisdom and knowledge** that came from a source **outside** of God's wisdom and knowledge. Also interesting is the fact that the LDS church teaches that Eve decision to eat of that fruit was good, a "fall upward" and necessary for the progress of Man.

Some scholars equate the veneration of **Satan** to the **Egyptian god "Set"**. However, the doctrine of the Temple of Set, an occult initiatory order founded in 1975 by Michael Aquino as a splinter group from Lavey's **Church of Satan**, heavily relies on the writings of **Aleister Crowley** with elements borrowed from **ceremonial magic, the left-hand path, Western esotericism, and mysticism**. Just to let you know, **the left-hand path** is an appeal to **esoteric magik**.

Anyway, the "practices" of the Aquinos's group was primarily centered on what they called, "**self-development**." Isn't it revelatory? The thread woven through all of these expressions from the Garden of Eden to today is the **self**:

Self-realization
Self-analysis
Self-esteem
Self-respect
Selfishness
Self-actualization
Self-reliance
Selfies . . .

All of which stand counter to Him, the Great I AM along with our person in relationship to Him as our Creator, God and King and Lawgiver who seeks to make us more like him and not more human-like. In theistic **Satanism**, some refer to **knowledge** as **the Black Flame** which they say was given, sort of like Prometheus, to humanity by **Satan**, who stands as a being independent of the **Satanist** himself, but who can dispense to the **Satanist** whatever **knowledge** he or she seeks.

Without going into all the various groups and their wild claims and names, they can, for the most part, be seen along a spectrum of **shadow** leading to blackness which embrace everything from **white and black magic, incantations, readings of lore, spells, drug use, sex-magic, self-indulgences, criminality, the promotion of chaos, animal and even human sacrifice**. Some groups are notably very political and have aims to govern the **world** from behind the scenes. Seeking **knowledge** is seen by some theistic **Satanists** as being important to **Satan**, due to **Satan** being equated with the serpent in Genesis who encouraged the first human beings to partake of the fruit of the Tree of **Knowledge** of good and evil against God's will.

From the basis of **knowledge** first sought by our first parents the idea of faith becomes laughable to theistic **Satanists**. Some groups perceive **Satan** as a creation of what **Éliphas Lévi** created in his vision of **Baphomet** – a **half-human and half-animal hermaphroditic bestower of knowledge**. Like **Masonry, Mormonism, Eckhart Tolle, and Madam Blavatsky, "self-development"** is important to theistic **Satanists**. This is due to the **Satanists'** idea of **Satan**, who is seen to encourage individuality and freedom of thought, and the possessed the personal quest to **raise oneself up** despite resistance from God and through means such as **magic incantations, bloodletting and various initiations**. Such believe **Satan** wants a more equal relationship with his followers than the Abrahamic god does with his. From a theistic **Satanist** perspective, the Abrahamic religions (chiefly Christianity) do not define "good" or "evil" in terms of benefit or harm to humanity, but rather on the submission to or rebellion against God. Theistic **Satanists** seek to remove any means by which they are controlled or repressed by others and forced to follow the herd, and reject all non-governmental forms of authoritarianism. As **Satan** in the Old Testament tests people, theistic **Satanists** may believe that **Satan** sends them tests in life to **develop them as individuals**. Paradoxically, where some **Satanist** value taking responsibility for oneself, they also believe that **Satan** has a will for the **world**, and they must do all they can to bring that will to fruition. This idea is depicted in the popular film series, *the Omen*.

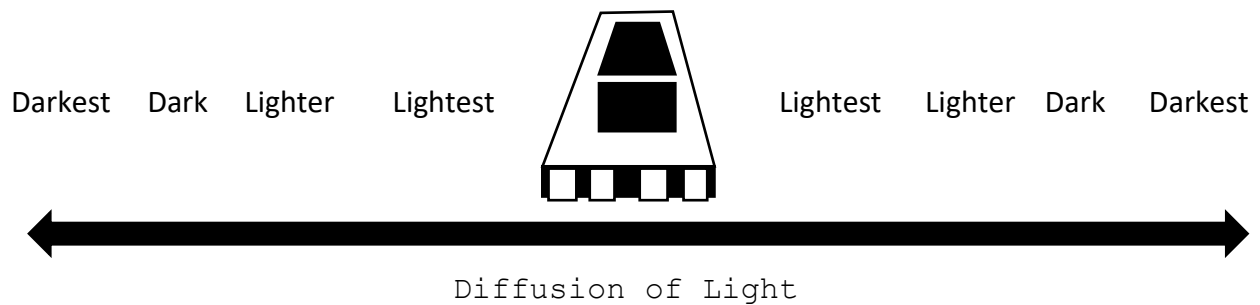
Additionally, some **Satanists** believe that **Satan** can help them meet their **worldly** needs and desires if they pray or work **magic**. At the far **dark** end of the Theistic **Satanist** spectrum are those souls willing to do great harm as a means to bring about what they see as a more beautiful **world**. Historically, **Satanist** was a pejorative term for those with opinions that differed from predominant religious or moral beliefs as **Satan** himself was used as a tool to punish people that did not conform. Somewhere in this **world** lies a balance between placing ones entire faith and trust in the Living God alone, looking to Him by the Spirit to teach and lead us, and our independence from man and his directives. I am certain that this balance refused all **self-will** or all the **wisdom** or **knowledge** of this **world**, but it seems instead to involves His will and our freely but willingly choosing to eat only from the fruit of His Tree - the Tree of life.

Chapter 25

Thelema

Prior to addressing our next expression, called **Thelema**, I want to look at a cheesy little graph to help you sort of realize what we are about to enter and what has always existed. In the Apostolic Record, John recorded Revelation which was given to the seven actual churches in Asia Minor (to whom it was actually written) and John describes what the new heaven and new earth would look like in the later chapters. What he says is there is the New Jerusalem, which is above and that this is the place where God and His Christ dwell. He says there is no night there because God and Christ are what give this heavenly Kingdom its light, and He describes the New Jerusalem as being surrounded by four walls that have gates in each that are open day and night.

We might lay this description out on this two-dimensional surface as sort of looking like this



The point I want to make is that where from this view the greatest distance from the Kingdom of Light (which sits in the center) are at the furthest reaches of the spectrum but if we were to grab each **dark** end of these furthest points and bring them together, making a circle in the process, we would see that the Lightest part of the heavens (located in the Kingdom) and the **Darkest** areas would actually meet **directly opposite** from each other with the result being the light being the most light in the face of the **opposing Dark** and the **Dark** being most **Dark** in the face of the opposing Light!

What we are about to discuss in the next three expressions (**Thelema, Theological Satanism and Objectivism**) in my estimation, will take us into the heart of some of the **Darkest oppositions** to God on earth. And while every thread weaving through each of these **counterfeits** come from the same source, the reality is some are more sinister than others, but the reasons why may surprise you.

Let's go back to 1904 when an English writer, **mystic, magician** and **occultist** claimed that he had received a body of text (which he called, **spiritual writings**) which were **dictated to him by a non-corporeal entity** named, **Aiwass** when the man was visiting **Egypt** on his honeymoon. This received text would serve as the foundation of **Aliester Crowley's** religious and philosophical system he called **Thelema**. He called the Book, the **Book of the Law**.

Out the gate we note how some of the more influential and long lasting movements are founded in received books.

Mohammad said the angel Gabriel came and dictated the **Quran** to him. Joseph Smith said that an angel told him where to find a book inscribed on **golden** plates which gave him **the Book of Mormon**. He also claimed other inspirations and texts that helped him create two other books. The texts of **Scientology** claim to reveal the **myth** of an **ancient alien** civilization, and **Madam Blavatsky** claimed to have recorded the words of the **world's** greatest **master's** from our **ancient past** in a series of written accounts.

Of course, **Eckart Tolle** has filled and sold millions of volumes of his books with his spiritual insights, and we have others too - the **Urantia** out there, the **Bhagavata**, and hundreds and hundreds more, all presumably containing secret or hidden truths of seekers to discover. From almost every movement, and their every claim, these systematized insights have been received and printed and every one of them either comes from one source, without a verifiable actual footprint on earth, (a history) and teaching **mysteries** unknown to most people groups. Doesn't all of this

readily smack of the very template given to the **world** by God Himself? That prophets of old wrote by inspiration and over time all of those writings were gathered and held sacred? The difference, however, between the literary claims made by the **counterfeits** and the biblical narrative is the Bible literally came from the writings of numerous individuals that were tediously copied then passed down, historically authenticated, and supported in real time by historical sites and economies? All the rest of them - all of them - come from a single source or from a time in the past lacking historical similar validity.

With his *Book of the Law* in hand, Crowley then identified himself as the **prophet** of a new era in **humanity's spiritual development** which he called "*the Æon of Horus.*"

According to Crowley, the facticity of his prophethood was mainly predicated upon his reception of the *Book of the Law* that he received from **Aiwass**, which became the experience that formed the crux of a broader **spiritual** ordeal that he and his wife, Rose Edith, underwent in Cairo, **Egypt**, in March of 1904. According to Crowley, **Aiwass** contacted him through Rose and subsequently dictated *The Book of the Law* to him (also called, *Liber AL vel Legis*), which outlined the principles of **Thelema**.

There were three primary narrators or speakers communicating to Crowley in his bringing forth of the *Book of the Law*. These three were collectively included in what he called, **the Thelemic pantheon**, which is a collection of all the gods and goddesses who either are said to literally exist or who served as **symbolic archetypes** or **metaphors adapted** from the **ancient Egyptian** religion. Their names are **Nuit, Hadit, and Ra-Hoor-Khuit**. It must be noted that in at least one instance, Crowley described these deities as a "literary convenience". Suggesting at that time that they were fictional. But this did not stop Him from creating a system around their names and their apparent **powers**.

The highest deity in the **cosmology** of **Thelema** is the **goddess Nuit** (also spelled **Nuith**). She is **the night sky arched** over the Earth symbolized in the form of **a naked woman**. She is conceived as the "**Great Mother**", the **ultimate source of all things**, the collection of **all possibilities**, the "**Infinite Space, and the Infinite Stars thereof.**" **Nuit** is derived from the **Egyptian sky goddess Nut**, and is referred to poetically as "**Our Lady of the Stars**" and in *The Book of the Law* as "**Queen of Space**", and "**Queen of Heaven**".

In scripture, there is a reference also to the **pagan Queen of Heaven** God that the Nation of Israel once pursued. Truly, there

is nothing new under the sun. Simply put, this first God is an appeal to **astrology** and again, **Egypt**.

The second principal deity of Thelema is **the god Hadit**, conceived as "the infinitely small point," and is the **complement** and **consort** of **Nuit**. **Hadit** symbolizes **manifestation, motion, and time**. He is also described in *Liber AL vel Legis* as "*the flame that burns in every heart of man, and in the core of every star.*" **Hadit** has sometimes been said to represent a '**point-event**,' and all individual **point-events** within the **body of Nuit**. What gets actually frightening is that in the *Book of the Law*, Hadit is said, to be "**perfect, being Not**," and that, "**men speak not of Thee as One but as None.**"

This is a perfect description of the **Dark** with a capital D that God's spirit brooded over in the Genesis account. It perfectly describes the **absence of what is Him**, the I AM (or the very person of God) verses "**the perfect being of None**" - like a **black hole**. I will not take the time here but the appeals to **none, nothingness, black voids** and the like are almost ubiquitous in the **nihilistic** philosophies of this **world**.

The third deity in the **cosmology** of **Thelema** is called **Ra-Hoor-Khuit** which is a **manifestation of Horus**. Horus is an ancient deity of kings, protection, healing and the sun and sky. He is found in **Mormonism's cosmology** and referenced, it seems, as the "all seeing eye" from **Freemasonry**. His **mythical** conception is noteworthy. **In Thelema, Horus** is symbolized as a **throned man with the head of a hawk who carries a wand**. He is associated with the Sun and the active energies of Thelemic **magick**. But there are other deities within the **cosmology** of Thelema including **Hoor-paar-kraat**, god of **silence** and **inner strength**, the twin of **Ra-Hoor-Khuit**, called, **Babylon**, the **goddess of all pleasure**, and **Therion**, the **beast** that Babylon rides, representing the wild animal within man, a force of nature.

Crowley's later writings included related commentary and hermeneutics on Thelema and Thelemic topics, but he was also "*inspired*" to compose writing he collectively termed, "*The Holy Books of Thelema.*"

He associated **Thelemic spiritual practice** with concepts rooted in **occultism, yoga, and Eastern and Western mysticism**, especially the **Qabalah**. Aspects of Thelema and Crowley's thought in general inspired the development of what is today referred to as "**Wicca**" which, to a certain degree, has given rise to **Modern Paganism** as a whole, as well as what is called, "**chaos magick**," "**sex magick**,"

and some variations of **Satanism**. Some believe that Crowley influenced **L Ron Hubbard's Scientology** but I would say it's all from the same non-God source of **Dark that was present in the beginning, is opposite of God, is uncreated and was the very fruit of the tree of Knowledge of Good and Evil.**

There has been a long and not always apparently evil use of Thelema over the course of ancient history. I am not going to cover these expressions but will ultimately get to Crowley's general meaning of the term. In the end, the primary sum of Thelema, referred to as, *the Law of Thelema*, is

"Do what thou wilt shall be the whole of the Law."

This main theme is supplemented by a second, follow-up statement that oddly proposes, **"Love is the law, love under will."**

These two statements are generally believed to be better appreciated or better understood by considering a third statement which is, **"Every man and every woman is a star."**

And these three specific statements have particular meanings:

"Do what thou wilt shall be the whole of the Law" means that adherents of Thelema should seek out and follow what they call their **true path**, which means to find or determine their **True Will**.

Remember, the true will of a believer is to do the will of the Father and not their own. But the very will exerted by Eve was that of her own, disregarding the will of God altogether.

The statement, **"Every man and every woman is a star"** is a reference to what Crowley described as our "body of light," said by Plato to "be composed of the same substance as the stars." Persons doing their Will are thereby like stars in the universe: occupying a time and position in space, yet distinctly individual and having an independent nature largely without undue conflict with other heavenly bodies.

Finally, **"love is the law, love under will"**, paradoxically says that the nature of the **Law of Thelema** is love (which sounds pretty great) however (and this is significant) however, love itself is **subsidiary** to finding and **manifesting** one's authentic purpose or mission in life. And here is where **Thelema** becomes as **black as night**. Listen carefully to the way that Thelema defines love. It says that Love itself is **"SUBSIDIARY to FINDING AND MANIFESTING ones authentic purpose and mission."**

The Two Great Commandments of Christianity and Judaism are to love God and neighbor without any attention to it being subsidized to the finding ones authentic purpose or mission. We plainly read in Deuteronomy 6:5:

"And thou shalt love the LORD thy God with all thine heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy might."

Such love would never agree to subsidize itself in the cause of **"finding ones own will or how to get that will to manifest."** So, while every individual has a **"True Will,"** according to Crowley, and while it should be distinguished from the ordinary wants and desires of the **ego, True Will** is essentially one's "calling" or "purpose" in life. To Crowley, *"To do what thou wilt shall be the whole of the Law"* does not refer to **hedonism** or fulfilling our everyday desires, but it is acting in response to that "true calling" we have upon us (again) "no matter what." From a natural man or woman's point of view this is construct is utterly diabolical because in the flesh we are all barbaric and willed to do what is **selfish, self-willed** and predatory. Hence the eating of the forbidden fruit in the first place. True will of Man, then, is a path to that literally leads to **Dark Death**. According to **Thelemite sources**, anyone who bases their actions on striving to discover and accomplish their "true will," they are *"like an orbit, with their niche in the universal order, and the universe assists them."* Herein lies a connection to **The Secret** and even the **Prosperity Gospel**. It is based on **self-will** appeals to "a universe" instead of to the will of a personal actual God and our acceptance of Him and what He demands. Thelema is a straight up foundational appeal to all appeals to **self-will**, all appeals to the **Dark** and all of it rejects the biblical command for human beings to seek to do the will of the living God.

Jude, borrowing from Old Testament texts, wrote the following description of people in his day that perfectly describes the core teachings of Crowley's Thelema in men of his day, saying:

Jude 1:8-13 *Likewise also these **filthy dreamers defile the flesh, despise dominion, and speak evil of dignities.** Yet Michael the archangel, when contending with the **devil** he disputed about the body of Moses, durst not bring against him a railing accusation, but said, The Lord rebuke thee. But these **speak evil** of those things which they know not: but **what they know naturally, as brute beasts, in those things they corrupt themselves.** Woe unto them! for they have gone in **the way of Cain, and ran greedily after the error of Balaam for reward, and perished in the gainsaying of Core.***

12 These are **spots in your feasts of charity**, when they feast with you, **feeding themselves without fear: clouds they are without water, carried about of winds; trees whose fruit withereth, without fruit, twice dead, plucked up by the roots; Raging waves of the sea, foaming out their own shame; wandering stars, to whom is reserved the blackness of darkness for ever.**

From his lofty but erudite yet ultimately extremely **dark** perspectives, Crowley believed that in order to discover the **True Will**, one had to "**free the desires of the subconscious mind**" from the control of the "**conscious mind**" and this was especially true **when it came to sex**, which he associated with the **power** of divine creation. Finally, the spiritual quest to find what a person is "meant to do" and to then do it without subsidy to any one or any God, Thelema calls this "**the Great Work.**" Again, all on and about the **self**. All caused by the **self** eating of the Tree of **Knowledge** of good and **evil**. All appealing to what the **self** wants but never pauses to ask, "*What does God want for me? What does He want be to be? What are His plans for me as I follow Him and allow Him in to work?*" Like most **twisted counterfeit systems**, when we get to the end of the row the water starts to back up and flood over faith. Crowley wrote several additional documents presenting his personal beliefs regarding individual conduct in light of the Law of Thelema. Crowley wrote in Liber Oz the meaning of, "**Do what thou wilt**" saying

**live by one's own law;
live in the way that one wills to do;
work, play, and rest as one will;
die when and how one will;
eat and drink what one will;
live where one will;
move about the earth as one will;
think, speak, write, draw, paint, carve, etch, mold, build, and
dress as one will;
love when, where and with whom one will;
and kill those who would thwart these rights."**

As we can see, the end result, like the end result of all of these **counterfeit** approaches, is diabolical and absolutely antithetical to the biblical narrative believers read which plainly has Jesus tell God, "*Not my will, but thine be done.*"

Our next and final chapter is going to take a look at a philosophy promoted by writer Ayn Rand called **Objectivism** which is perhaps one of the most **powerful** philosophies for living on earth in terms

of principles, while remaining one of the most **diabolical** and **antithetical to God**.

Chapter 26

Objectivism

In my early college years, I was given a book by a friend that is usually read by most kids in high school. It was called *The Fountainhead* and was written by a Russian-American writer and philosopher named, Ayn Rand. In her fictional and non-fiction writings she proposed the principles of what she called, "**Objectivism**" which, according to her own description should be seen as

*"the concept of man as a **heroic being**, with his **own happiness as the moral purpose of his life**, with **productive achievement as his noblest activity**, and **reason as his only absolute**."*

It did not take me long to realize that Rand was a **hardened atheist** and while her writing is profound and flowing it ultimately preaches a form of **Dark** that is not only counter to the will of the living God it is directly in the face of the biblical narrative where Man is defined very differently from the mouth of God.

How? Rand **promotes selfishness**.

She first outlined the principles of Objectivism in *The Fountainhead* (1943) and amplified it in *Atlas Shrugged* (1957). She later refined it even more in later non-fiction essays and books. After her **death** a man named Leonard Peikoff, a professional philosopher and Rand's designated intellectual heir and lover, gave the philosophy a more formal structure. Peikoff characterizes Objectivism as a "*closed system*" meaning its "*fundamental principles*" were set out by Rand and are not subject to change. He admits, however, that "*new implications, applications and integrations can always be discovered*."

Objectivism's main tenets include:

- that reality exists independently of consciousness,
- that human beings have direct contact with reality through sense perception (see direct and indirect realism),
- that a person can attain objective **knowledge** from perception through the process of concept formation and inductive logic,

- that the proper moral purpose of one's life is the pursuit of **one's own happiness** (akin to what is called **rational egoism**),
- that the only social system consistent with this morality is one that displays full respect for individual rights embodied in laissez-faire capitalism, and
- that the role of art in human life is to transform humans' metaphysical ideas through a selective reproduction of reality into a physical form (called, "a work of art") and
- that this art must be what another can rationally comprehend and to which one can then respond to **emotionally**.

Objectivism has been a persistent influence among libertarians and American conservatives and Rand was, in fact, a heroine to past Chairmen of the Fed, Alan Greenspan. I am not mentioning Objectivism because of its political **allure** nor do I see it as the most obvious philosophy leading to **Death** (I tend to see absurdism, nihilism, and even some forms of godless existentialism as equally repugnant to biblical truths) but Objectivism sounds so damn reasonable, and therefore good, but more than almost any other ist or ism, it is a **deceptive** form of a fruit that will lead to **death** despite it appearing "*pleasant to the eyes, good for food and something that would make **one wise**.*" Getting even more to the point, Rand idealized and promoted what she called, "***the Virtue of Selfishness***," and depicts her main protagonists (Howard Roark, John Galt) in the most heroic and **seductive** lights possible as they live out **selfishness** to an enviable extreme. At this point it is clearly a redundancy that, **selfishness** is absolutely antithetical to the central message of Jesus Christ and I have placed Rand's philosophy last because it can only be described as vehemently, but **seductively**, "**anti-Christ**."

Because God literally gave me new life twenty-six years ago, while I still praised the insights and teachings of Rand, I hold her views up as one of the best examples on earth of the **Dark posing as Light**.

The name "Objectivism" derives from the idea that **human knowledge** and values are objective - meaning that they "actually do exist" and are determined by the nature of reality which can be discovered by one's mind and are not created by the thoughts someone happens to have." Rand stated that she chose the name because her preferred term for a philosophy that was based on the primacy of existence ("**existentialism**") had already been taken. Interestingly, I was also ensconced in the trappings of existentialism for most of my lost years which dovetailed nicely into my admiration for Rand in that age.

Rand characterized Objectivism as "a *philosophy for living on earth*," again, one which she says must be based on reality. She intended Objectivism to be a method of defining human nature and the nature of the **world** in which we live. Again, she said:

"My philosophy, in essence, is the concept of man as a heroic being, with his own happiness as the moral purpose of his life, with productive achievement as his noblest activity, and reason as his only absolute."

Can I break this down into bite-sized anti-Christ pieces?

"My philosophy" (meaning, I created it not some **mythical** god)
"Is the concept of man as a heroic being" (not in anyway sinful, broken, corrupt but heroic)
"with his own happiness" (**self**)
"As the moral principle" (His own happiness as the moral purpose!)
"of his life" (Not the life God has given him)
"with "productive achievement" (not faith, not love)
"as his noblest activity" (**self-centered** nobility)
"and reason" (not faith and the subjugation of faith to reason)
"as his only absolute." (meaning, forget God all together).

The value and truth of that statement, embraced and promoted by the LDS, Masonry and existentialists alike, cannot be overstated and can even appear to smack of heavenly things. After all, did not God command the first man to go and till and take care of the garden, and did He not give him the freedom to choose how to proceed? Did not God create Man in His image, which must, by definition, be noble? And are we not supposed to reason together?) Isn't productive achievement an integral part of the human experience and to create akin to being god in whose image we are made?

Initially, and from the flesh, Rand's definition of objectivism seems to ring true. But the fact of the matter remains that between the lines of Rand philosophy sits the **darkest of lies** because everything she promotes is of the **self**, from **self-will**, for the **self here** and now including **happiness of self** at all costs. This philosophy embodies the **seduction** behind the Tree of **Knowledge** more plainly than the often very difficult philosophical ideas found in **Kant, Hume, Hegel, Nietzsche, Sarte** or **Wittgenstein**. Her philosophy begins with three axioms, which she defined as "a *statement that identifies the base of knowledge*" (there's that word again) and she gave three words to identify this base of **knowledge, existence, consciousness, and identity**.

More particularly, to Rand, "an axiom is a proposition that defeats its opponents by the fact that the opponents have to accept the axiom and even use it in the process of any attempt to deny it." In other words, an axiom "is not a proof that the axioms of existence, consciousness, and identity are true but it is proof that they are axioms, and that they are at the base of **knowledge** and therefore they are inescapable."

Rationally, Rand said that existence is the "perceptually **self-evident** fact at the base of all other **knowledge**," meaning, "that existence exists." In some ways this echoes Descartes's, axiom, "I think therefore I am." She further said that "to be is to be something, therefore **existence is identity**". In other words, to Rand, "to be" is to be "an entity of a specific nature made of specific attributes".

So far, not too many issues, right?. And then she wisely says, "that which has no nature or attributes does not and cannot exist"; that the axiom of existence is conceptualized as "differentiating something from **nothing**," while "the axiom of identity is conceptualized as "differentiating one thing from another." Making this more clear, she wrote, "A leaf ... cannot be all red and green at the same time, it cannot freeze and burn at the same time... A is A."

Unfortunately, these axioms, which sound so good, wind up denying anything that "transcends" existence (our reason of it, our existence in it) making *Objectivism* utterly **atheist** and **Man-centered**. Instead of looking to the **transcendent** soul of Man, Rand argued that our "**consciousness**" is only "the faculty of perceiving that which actually exists" and therefore might be seen as the only thing which is actually real. As she put it, "to be conscious is to be conscious of something", which means that consciousness itself cannot be distinguished or conceptualized except in relation to an independent reality (which again, can ONLY be observed by the senses). Objectivism therefore posits that the mind does not create reality, but rather, it is a means of "**discovering reality**." In other words, "existence has "primacy" over consciousness, which must conform to the realities of existence around it." Rand called this view, "the primacy of consciousness", and this went to war against any form of metaphysical, spiritual or embraced theism up to that point.

Bottom line, for Rand, faith thrived in the absence of proofs, therefore faith was an absolute enemy to her philosophy and **world** view on how human beings should live. She saw faith as "**blind**

acceptance of a certain ideational content, acceptance induced by feeling in the absence of evidence or proof."

According to Rand, *"entities act, and every action is the action of a real entity."* The way entities act is caused by the specific nature (the *"identity"* of those entities) and if they were different they would act differently." The thinking is sublime and I couldn't agree with her more up to a point. But her views on faith are supremely short-sighted and contribute to the overall failure of Objectivism as having value. According to Rand, *"attaining **knowledge** beyond what is given by perception requires both volition (or the exercise of free will) and performing a specific method of validation by observation, concept-formation, and the application of inductive and deductive reasoning."* Ever the **rationalist**, she ignores evidence from our perception and observations that lend to the notion of God and **selfishly** only sees them somehow as evidence of something else. Because the work of perceiving an all-Mighty hand goes contrary to Rands promotion of **self-interest**, she concludes the existence of a Creator unimportant to her philosophy on how to live life on earth (or otherwise). For her, *"the fact that a living entity is or exists plainly determines what it ought to do"*. Again, a huge observational shortfall in the face of human history.

Like the atheist **Albert Camus**, Rand concluded that *"there is only one fundamental alternative in the universe: existence or non-existence which pertains to living organisms. The existence of inanimate matter is unconditional, the existence of life is not: it depends on a specific course of action. It is only a living organism that faces a constant alternative: the issue of life or **death**".*

This culminated in the notion that the primary emphasis of a living human beings free will is to *"think or not to think."* Accordingly, she says that human beings, possessing free will must, choose their values: that one does not automatically have one's own life as his ultimate value and this caused her to conclude,

*"Man has the **power** to act as his own destroyer—and that is the way he has acted through most of his history."*

From here, where she has made great strides in her understanding of the human experience, Rand rips God away from being a benevolent helper, comforter or source of information to thinking Man, and places him directly in charge of his every thought. She concludes:

"Man's mind is his basic tool of survival. Life is given to him, survival is not. His body is given to him, its sustenance is not. His mind is given to him, its content is not. To remain alive, he must act and before he can act he must **know** the nature and purpose of his action. He cannot obtain his food without **knowledge** of food and of the way to obtain it. He cannot dig a ditch—or build a cyclotron—without a **knowledge** of his aim and the means to achieve it. To remain alive, he must think."

Everything Rand says is potentially true but that is what makes her ultimate conclusions so **hollow**. After all, if Man is all that he can see, discern and think about, and if his life's happiness is founded on his choices in the face of his observations, then the only conclusion would be **selfishness** - carried out without apology. What makes her novels so inviting is she rightly emphasizes the importance of productive work, or romantic love, of art and creativity reflecting the most noble things of life, and the **selfish** pursuit as the key to human happiness. She summarizes this **selfish** virtue with the term, "**Ethical egoism**," which she claims is "the logical consequence of humans following evidence to its logical conclusion."

The only alternative would be living without orientation to reality - which she would see, in part at least, as living by faith. Rand hated altruism and subjectivism, which she equated to hedonism and weakness. For her, to value what God values would be an act of **self-denial** which winds up causing the **self** to actually disappear in the mist of non-existence. What make her Gospel so appealing is that, like Masonry, Mormonism, and any other systems or philosophies focused on **self-improvement** and **honest living**, is while she extols the virtues of rationality, honesty, justice, independence, integrity, productiveness, and **pride**, she has no basis to assess such, leaving everything subjectively determined, which she detested. The essence of her Objectivist ethics is summarized by the oath her Atlas Shrugged character John Galt adhered to, saying:

"I swear-by my life and my love of it-that I will never live for the sake of another man, nor ask another man to live for mine."

At the end of the day, Galt posits an anti-Christ doctrine, where He Himself said in John 15:13:

Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends.

On paper, Objectivism, like Marxism and other ists and isms, sounds pretty good. If they didn't, nobody would ever follow them. In novels, they portray abundant fruit from the Tree of **Knowledge** of good and **evil**. But the reality remains - the biblical text makes the relationship between the Living God and Man plain - we look to Him in faith, and in so doing refuse to implement our will and ways into the human experience but instead let Him be our constant source of strength, inspiration and decision making. Not easy. Not always most effective. Not always rewarding. But of Him in whom we trust.

Conclusion

Whew! That was a long journey, wasn't it? So much to think about. So much to consider, to balance, to embrace and to reject. That is one of the facts about being made in God's image - we have the relentless, endless demand to choose and each and every one of those choices will ultimately be found to be based in truth or error and leading to life, liberty, love and light or **death, bondage, self and dark**. Because we are, as Jean Paul Sartre said, "*condemned to be free*," we really cannot escape what we have before us each and every day - choice. As a means to help ameliorate this constant demand, men and women, demons and angels, Light and **Dark** have stepped forward with systems, helps, insights and philosophies bombarding us with options. All are promising freedom and liberty through **wisdom** and **knowledge**; all are proposing that their respective approaches are good, right or most powerful - with or without God being in the mix.

Like many of you, I have tested the waters of our **world's** philosophers and their religions. I have embraced systems that promised to elevate me to my rightful place in the human race. I've eaten of the fruit of the Tree of **Knowledge** of good and **evil** and in every case, in every instance, found and find all of it wanting - from sex, drugs, every entertainment, literature, art, education, business, **money-making, materialism** and every form of material religion - all of them fall short in bringing lasting inner peace, solace in the face of my failures, and the hope that can only be found through diligent seeking Him.

Along the way, and perhaps by design, life is filled with options and alternative views to Him and His will. Some of these options actually work - bringing a type of peace, a form of rebirth, and even strength from **powerful** insights. In them people have found healing, insights and **illumination**. Some find reward in speaking their will into space and reaping the harvest from their **manifestation**. Others have become living swamis, tapping into all manner of knowledge - both good and evil. But I would ardently suggest the following as we wrap this book up together:

God is the self-existing one. And His will, ways and directives cannot be overshadowed or beaten down for the human beings He has made in His image. He gives and gave choice, all the way back to the beginning in that of two central trees - of that brings and produces genuine life and one that brings a kind of **knowing** that only leads to **death**. He said, "*I know best. Look to me in faith and live. Or not.*"

I suggest looking to Him, His will and His ways to live. Not our own and not from so-called sages, seers and those who promise liberty but only produce bondage. Diligently seek Him in spirit and truth. Test all things and hold fast to what is genuinely good - and not only that which is good in this **world**. You will never regret it.

Yeshuans.faith
cult.love