

HEATHENISM

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Preface

Before you begin your Bible study, if you are a believer in the Lord Jesus Christ, be sure you have named your sins privately to God the Father.

If we confess our [known] sins, He is faithful and righteous to forgive us our [known] sins and to cleanse us from all [unknown, or forgotten sins] unrighteousness. (1 John 1:9)

You will then be in fellowship with God, filled with the Holy Spirit, and ready to learn Bible doctrine from the Word of God.

“God is spirit, and those who worship Him must worship in [the filling of the] spirit and [biblical] truth.” (John 4:24)

If you have never personally believed in the Lord Jesus Christ as your Savior, the issue is not naming your sins. The issue is faith alone in Christ alone.

“He who believes in the Son has eternal life; but he who does not obey [the command to believe in] the Son shall not see life, but the wrath of God abides on him.” (John 3:36)

THE WORD OF GOD is alive and powerful, sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of the soul and the spirit, and of the joints and the marrow, and is a critic of thoughts and intents of the heart. (Heb. 4:12)

All Scripture is God-breathed, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness; that the man of God might be mature, thoroughly furnished unto all good works. (2 Tim. 3:16–17)

Study to show thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth. (2 Tim. 2:15)

WHAT ABOUT THE HEATHEN?

PEOPLE OF PRIMITIVE CULTURES have lived for centuries in the remote mountains, jungles, and deserts of the world. Wherever they are, these communities are far removed from the mainstream of commerce and civilization despite the advances in communication technology. They may be the Papuans of New Guinea, the Hottentots of South Africa, or an Indian tribe in the Amazon. Inevitably the skeptic of Christianity will ask, "What about the 'heathen' who have never heard the Gospel? How can these people decide for or against Jesus Christ?" If the skeptic truly wants an answer he should ask, "What about those who *apparently* have never heard the Gospel?" Although he may be ignorant of the facts of worldwide evangelism, the underlying implication of his question is clear, "God is unfair! How can a loving God condemn anyone under these circumstances?" This accusation against God is the very reason why we are here in the first place.

THE ANGELIC CONFLICT

Man was placed on the earth to resolve the controversy between God and the fallen angels.¹ How long this prehistoric conflict has been raging is unknown. But we do know that angels were originally created in a state of perfection and possessed volition which could act independently of God's will. Lucifer, the highest ranking and most beautiful angel, used his volition to revolt against God. Isaiah recounts the five arrogant "I wills" of that super-creature as he "walked in the midst of the stones of fire" in the throne room of God (Ezek. 28:12-15).

"But you said in your heart,
 'I will ascend to heaven;
 I will raise my throne above the stars of God,
 And I will sit on the mount of assembly
 In the recesses of the north.
 I will ascend above the heights of the clouds;
 I will make myself like the Most High.'" (Isa. 14:13)²

One-third of all the angels chose to defect with Lucifer (Rev. 12:4). From that time on, two categories of angels exist—elect and fallen (John 1:51; 2 Thess. 1:7; Jude 6; Rev. 12:7-9).³

At some point before the creation of man a trial was held in which God sentenced Lucifer, or Satan, and all of the fallen angels to the lake of fire (Matt. 25:41; Rev. 20). Since the sentence has yet to be executed, we can conclude that the case was appealed. In fact, the titles ascribed to the super angel after his fall lead us to this conclu-

1. R. B. Thieme, Jr., *Anti-Semitism* (Houston: R. B. Thieme, Jr., Bible Ministries, 2003), 11-13; *Satan and Demonism* (2003), 1-4. Hereafter, cross-references to my books will cite only author, title, date of publication (in the first reference), and page(s).

2. All Scriptures in this book are quoted from the *New American Standard Bible* (NASB). Bracketed commentary reflects amplification of the NASB translation taught in Bible class lectures (available on MP3 CD and tape from R. B. Thieme, Jr., Bible Ministries, Houston, Texas).

3. Elect or holy angels are those who remained loyal to God in the prehistoric angelic conflict (Mark 8:38; 1 Tim. 5:21).

Fallen angels, or demons, are those who followed Lucifer in his revolt against God, and continue to serve Satan in his attempts to control history. See Thieme, *Creation, Chaos, and Restoration* (1995); *Satan and Demonism*.

sion: שָׂטָן (“Satan”) and διάβολος (*diabolos*—“the devil”) mean “adversary, accuser, attorney”—one who goes to court and appeals (Zech. 3:1–2). Satan objected that God’s sentence was unfair: “How can a loving God cast His creatures into the lake of fire?” He impugned the character of God.

Therefore to answer Satan’s appeal, God brought a new type of creature on the scene. Created lower than the angels (Ps. 8:3–5; cf., Heb. 2:7), mankind would be the extension and resolution of the heavenly conflict. Like the angels, humanity was endowed with free will, and that free will would be tested to see whether man would choose for or against God. Consequently, man would come under the close scrutiny of both the elect and fallen angels (Job 2:1–3; Luke 15:7, 10; 1 Cor. 4:9). Human history would demonstrate to Satan and his fallen minions that all of God’s decisions are perfectly just and right, consistent with *all* the attributes of His essence.

THE ESSENCE OF GOD

Derived from the Greek noun οὐσία (*ousia*), “essence” is the intrinsic nature of something. It is both permanent and unchangeable. God in His grace has revealed His intrinsic nature by what He has created (Rom. 1:20), by His activities in human history (John 1:1, 14), and through His infallible Word (2 Tim. 3:16–17). His essence is composed of essential qualities or attributes. These attributes, or characteristics of God, work in complete coordination and prevent any compromise of His character. God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit are One in essence having identical attributes, and are coequal and coeternal.⁴

The Attributes of God

“God is love” (1 John 4:16). The *love* of God is the absolute virtue and benevolence of His thinking. His love exists with or without an object. He does not fall in love, begin to love, or fall out of love. His love is rooted in every bit of truth and knowledge that reside in His

4. Thieme, *The Trinity* (2003).

perfect, absolute existence. God's love can never be separated from His other attributes. God's love is perfect, eternal, uncompromising; it cannot change, decrease, or increase. Therefore, His love is never diminished by the knowledge of sin and failure. His love functions today exactly as it did before the creation of angels, the universe, or man: before anything existed apart from God Himself.

Furthermore, God always seeks the highest and best for the objects of His love (Eph. 2:4–5). But, God is not a 'sweet, soft-hearted guy' who would acquiesce to anything in the name of love. His love can never be partial, biased, sentimental, or emotional (Rom. 2:11). God's eternal, infinite, and immutable love is inseparably united with His integrity.

God is absolute *righteousness* and perfect *justice*. His righteousness and justice make up His holiness, or integrity. God loves His own integrity.

He loves righteousness and justice;
The earth is full of the lovingkindness of the LORD.
(Ps. 33:5)

Righteousness is the perfect standard of God; justice is the absolute fairness of God. Righteousness is the principle of divine integrity; justice is the function of divine integrity. What righteousness demands, justice executes. God cannot ignore sin and evil and disregard the perfect standards of His integrity. Therefore, His justice *must* condemn to the lake of fire all who do not meet His perfect standards. It is impossible for God to render an unjust decision; to do so would be incompatible with His perfect righteousness.

God treats all mankind alike, without bias and with equal opportunity (Rom. 2:11). God's righteousness and justice guarantee absolute fairness in all His dealings with mankind, from His indictment and condemnation of the human race (Rom. 3:23; 6:23a) to His provision of the grace plan of salvation (Rom. 6:23b).

God is *sovereign*. He possesses volition and absolute authority (Ps. 83:18b). God has ordained that divine will and human volition will coexist throughout human history. While God permits man to make negative decisions regarding his eternal future, He does not desire anyone to perish in the lake of fire (1 Tim. 2:4). Rather, God desires that all might be saved.

The Lord is not slow about His promise, as some count slowness, but is patient toward you, not wishing for any to perish but for all to come to repentance [change of mind about Jesus Christ]. (2 Pet. 3:9)

The *omniscience* of God is His perfect knowledge and wisdom. God has always known all the knowable simultaneously. He knows everything about every individual human being (Acts 1:24). He knows who seeks and who does not seek salvation. *Omnipresence* means God is always present everywhere in nature, in history, in all the affairs of mankind (2 Chron. 16:9a; Ps. 34:15). There is no place in the world that He cannot reach with the Good News of salvation through Jesus Christ. *Omnipotence* describes God's limitless power to provide Gospel information to each individual (Luke 1:37). These three attributes insure God's absolute ability to resolve the angelic conflict without tampering with free will.

God is *eternal life*. He is absolute existence. He has neither beginning nor end. His essence is perpetuated forever (Ps. 90:2; 102:27). Unless we possess His life we cannot have an eternal relationship with Him.

And I give eternal life to them [believers], and they shall never perish; and no one shall snatch them out of My hand. (John 10:28)

God is *immutable*, "the same yesterday and today, yes and forever" (Heb. 13:8; cf., Mal. 3:6; James 1:17). Therefore, it is impossible for God to change His character to accommodate any creature, whether angelic or human. In eternity past God formulated one plan for the salvation of man, and His immutability guarantees His plan of salvation will never change (Ps. 33:11). There is only one way of salvation.

Believe in the Lord Jesus, and you shall be saved. (Acts 16:31a)

Because God is immutable, He is faithful (Lam. 3:22–23). His offer will never be withdrawn as long as man lives on earth (Heb. 6:17–19).

"God is not a man, that He should lie" (Num. 23:19a). God is absolute truth. The *veracity* of God guarantees the truth of His Word and promises. He has promised to reveal Himself in every generation, "in

the hope of eternal life, which God, who cannot lie, promised long ages ago" (Titus 1:2; cf., Heb. 6:18). He will never go back on His Word. God means what He says, be it the gracious offer of salvation on the one hand, or the warning of condemnation on the other.

"He who believes in the Son has eternal life; but he who does not obey [believe in] the Son shall not see life, but the wrath of God abides on him." (John 3:36)

Therefore, when we consider the characteristics of God's essence, there can be but one conclusion: God is absolutely fair! When Satan sinned and revolted, God's decision to sentence him and all the fallen angels to the lake of fire was compatible with all of His attributes, especially His love. Satan had not counted on the love of God providing every aspect of the solution to man's sin problem (Rom. 5:8). This irrefutable evidence of God's love is His answer to Satan's appeal, and Satan's ultimate undoing.

For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten [uniquely born] Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish, but have eternal life. (John 3:16)

God's love is demonstrated in every phase of His plan which we call 'Operation Grace,' the plan of salvation for the entire human race. Grace is all that God is free to do for mankind based on the saving work of Christ on the cross. In eternity past God knew all of our sins, and His righteousness condemned them. Then at the right time in history, His justice imputed and judged those sins in the impeccable humanity of Jesus Christ on the cross. Christ died as our substitute.

For while we were still helpless, at the right time Christ died for the ungodly. (Rom. 5:6)

There is nothing that man can do to earn salvation; Christ did all the work. The gift of salvation is free through faith alone in Christ alone.

For by grace you have been saved through faith; and that not of yourselves, *it is* the gift of God; not as a result of works, that no one should boast. (Eph. 2:8-9)

From generation to generation God's gracious offer of salvation is made available to every member of the human race regardless of geographical location, isolation, circumstances, or linguistic barriers. However, whether God's free *grace* gift of salvation is accepted depends on man's volition.

THE UNSEEN SOUL

In order to understand the importance of man's volition in God's plan of salvation, we first need to understand the soul of man. Two Hebrew verbs connected with the creation of man reveal the formation and design of the soul.⁵ The first verb, בָּרָא (*bara*), means "to create something out of nothing." *Bara* refers to the essential creative act of God who generated human life where no life formerly existed (Gen. 1:27). The second verb, אָשָׂה (*asah*), means "to make," but more specifically "to manufacture something after a pattern."

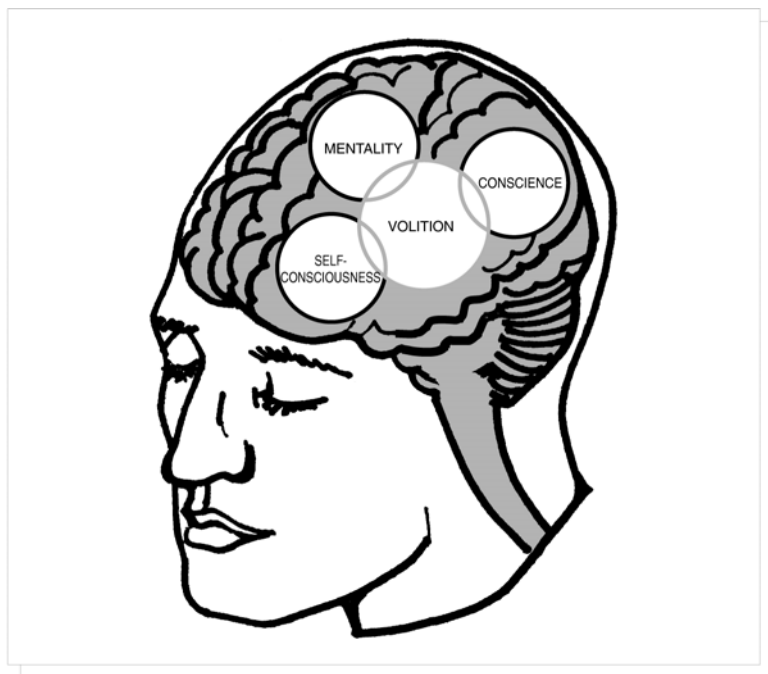
Then God said, "Let Us make [*asah*] man in Our image [בְּצִלְמֵנוּ, *betselem*], according to Our likeness [דְּמוּתֵנוּ, *demuth*]." (Gen. 1:26a)

And God created [*bara*] man in His own image [*betselem*], in the image [*betselem*] of God He created [*bara*] him; male and female He created [*bara*] them. (Gen. 1:27)

God used both *bara* and *asah* to emphasize the uniqueness of the human soul. The soul was "created" from nothing, and "made" after a pattern which was "in His own image." *Betselem* conveys not a physical, visible structure, but a "shadow image," something invisible but real. God created human beings with an invisible soul endowed with certain rational, moral, and relational capacities patterned after His own real but invisible essence.

The characteristics that make up the essence of man's soul include self-consciousness, mentality, conscience, and volition. *Demuth*, "according to Our likeness" emphasizes that man's personality is derived from his soul essence.

5. Thieme, *The Origin of Human Life* (1993), 3–6.



ESSENCE OF THE SOUL

Just as all three members of the Trinity have identical essence but each is a different personality, so all members of the human race have the same essence of soul yet each is a different personality. Although man's soul essence is inferior to God's perfect essence, his soul is the element that establishes his superiority over creatures. Of all God's earthly creation no other is said to be made in His image.

The mechanics for the creation of soul life are clearly revealed in Genesis 2:7.

Then the LORD God formed [יָצַר, *yatsar*] man of dust from the ground, and breathed [נָפַח, *naphach*] into his nostrils the breath of life [נְשָׁמַת חַיָּה, *neshamat chayyah*]; and man became a living being [נֶפֶשׁ חַיָּה, *nephesh chay-yah*]. (Gen. 2:7)

Yatsar, the formation of the human body from the dust of the ground, describes the original divine creation of biological life. The verb *naphach*, translated “breathed into,” resulting in *neshamat chayyah*, “the breath of life,” paints a verbal picture of incorporeal soul life bestowed directly by God. Until God exhaled His breath, or soul life, into the first human body, Adam could not be a *nephesh chayyah*, “a living [human] being.” This pattern continues for all of Adam’s descendants. God still creates soul life and imputes it to biological life creating human life at the moment of physical birth (Isa. 42:5; John 1:3; Col. 1:16).⁶

God creates the soul of every human being for His own glory (Isa. 43:7). But man can choose not to glorify God. It is this free will in the soul of man that is the battleground of the angelic conflict.

INDEPENDENT VOLITION

God created a human will which can act independently of Himself. Had man been created without the freedom to make his own choice for or against God, there would have been no parallel to the case of Satan and the fallen angels, and no resolution of the angelic conflict. The same free will that demonstrates the solution to the angelic conflict also makes it possible for man to sin and separate himself from God.

God placed Adam in perfect environment on the earth and provided for his every need. In order that his volition might function, there had to be a test. Therefore, two trees were planted in the center of the Garden. The first, the tree of life, from which Adam and the woman were allowed to eat, related to positive volition toward the plan of God. To partake of this tree meant continued response to God, and appreciation and orientation to His plan. The second, the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, from which Adam and the woman were forbidden to eat, related to negative volition (Gen. 2:17). This tree represented the plan and policy of Satan.

The tree of the knowledge of good and evil became the focus of the angelic conflict. The prohibition of eating from the tree was not only a warning against Satan’s policy, but also the test of Adam’s volition to

6. Thieme, *The Origin of Human Life*, 7–12.

obey or to disobey God. Adam, who was created perfect, was capable of only one sin in the Garden; to act independently of God by eating the forbidden fruit. Because of His character, God could not and would not coerce Adam's decision. Adam of his own free will chose to act apart from God when he partook of the forbidden tree, and he knew exactly what he was doing (Gen. 3:6).

Satan set the pattern; his was the first sin and it was an act of negative volition. Adam's original sin stemmed from the same exercise of negative volition. In all cases the origin of sin came from the creature, *not* the Creator. God is *not* the author of sin. The Creator is perfect righteousness, and perfect righteousness can have nothing to do with sin.

The Consequences of Adam's Decision

The moment Adam ate from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, he acquired the sin nature to which his first sin was immediately imputed (Rom. 7:8–20; 8:3–4; Eph. 4:22).⁷ The result was spiritual death, separation from God (Rom. 6:23). His human spirit was lost;⁸ his body and soul continued to operate, but under the control of the sin nature.

When Adam sinned in the Garden, he was the ruler of the world and the representative, or federal head, of the human race. His decision to sin was a decision to sin for all of us.

Therefore, just as through one man [Adam] sin entered into the world, and [spiritual] death through [the] sin [of

7. Except for Jesus Christ, the sin nature is an integral part of every human being, the center of man's rebellion toward God. The sin nature is the "old man" of Ephesians 4:22 (KJV); the Adamic nature of "flesh" of Romans 8:3–4; the principle of "sin" of Romans 7:8–20. See Thieme, *The Plan of God* (2003), 7–16; *Reversionism* (2000).

Imputation is the action of the justice of God whereby either condemnation or blessing is assigned, credited, or attributed to a human being. See Thieme, *The Integrity of God* (1998).

8. The human spirit is the immaterial part of mankind that enables man to have a relationship with God and which was designed by God to make spiritual phenomena understandable to the soul. The human spirit is regained by every believer at the moment of salvation and is the home for eternal life.

Adam], and so [spiritual] death spread to all men, because all sinned [when Adam sinned]. (Rom. 5:12)

When Adam chose to sin, he not only surrendered the rulership of the world to Satan (John 12:31; 14:30), he secured the condemnation of the entire human race because the entire human race was seminally in him.

At conception Adam's sin nature is transmitted to each of us genetically; every cell of biological life is contaminated with the sin nature. At birth Adam's original sin of cognizance is imputed to us for condemnation (1 Tim. 2:13–14). His sin nature becomes our sin nature; his sin, our sin. We are condemned not because of our own sins but because of Adam's original transgression. We are born physically alive, but spiritually dead. In spiritual death we cannot have a relationship with God. Therefore, God is bound by His righteousness and justice to send spiritually dead mankind to the lake of fire along with the fallen angels.

Although the imputation of Adam's sin might seem at first to be unfair, it in fact represents the genius of God's grace plan. Condemnation must precede salvation. Because Adam chose spiritual death and passed it to his progeny, the entire human race is made a candidate for grace.

STRATEGIC VICTORY

When the Second Person of the Trinity came walking in the Garden, Adam and the woman attempted to hide themselves. But no one can hide from omniscient, omnipresent God. Adam and the woman were simply manifesting their condition of spiritual death. Jesus Christ broke the silence, called Adam from his hiding place, and began to question him. Out of this interrogation, and the subsequent sentencing of all the offending parties, a Savior was promised. That Savior would assume the guilt of the man and woman and indeed, of the entire human race (Gen. 3:14–19).

In the status quo of spiritual death Adam faced a second test of volition. A new tree, the cross, was now the issue, as announced by the Lord's indictment of Satan in the Garden.

And I will put enmity
 Between you [the serpent, Satan] and the woman,
 And between your seed and her seed;
 He [Christ, the Seed of the woman] shall bruise you on
 the head [at the Second Advent],
 And you [Satan] shall bruise him on the heel [Christ at
 the cross, the First Advent]. (Gen. 3:15)

There will always be enmity between grace and evil—between God's plan, represented here by the woman, and Satan's plan, represented by the serpent. The woman would be the means of bringing Jesus Christ into the world. Because Satan failed to win a decisive victory in the Garden, he would strike at Christ—"you [Satan] shall bruise him on the heel [Christ on the cross]." Satan hoped the death of Christ would be the fatal blow. But in fact, Christ's substitutionary spiritual death paid the penalty of Adam's sin and opened the way of salvation for his progeny. Jesus Christ won the strategic victory of the angelic conflict.

The resurrection, ascension, and session of Christ hails the Lord as the victor in the first phase of the strategic victory in the angelic conflict. Those who have believed in Christ in the Church Age are identified with the second stage of the strategic victory by returning with Christ in resurrection body. The ultimate victory is also stated in our verse, "He [Christ] shall bruise you [Satan] on the head," and refers to that time when all fallen angels will be removed from the earth and cast into the lake of fire (Matt. 25:41). There is no way Satan can win.

UNLIMITED ATONEMENT

On the cross, the salvation work of Jesus Christ made atonement for all the sins of human history. The Hebrew word for atonement, *כִּפָּר* (*kaphar*), meant "to cover." In the animal sacrifices of the Old Testament the blood of an animal was sprinkled over the mercy seat of the ark of the covenant as a *covering* for the sins of the people. The mercy seat was the place where propitiation—the satisfaction of the righteousness and justice of God—was portrayed. This animal sacrifice was a foreshadowing of the future, efficacious sacrifice of Christ for all mankind. In the New Testament, the Greek word for "propitiation"

is ἱλαστήριον (*hilasterion*), but it also means “mercy seat” in Romans 3:25 and Hebrews 9:5; cf., 9:11–12. God’s righteousness and justice were satisfied by the “blood of Christ” on the cross.⁹ His salvation work ‘covered’ the sins of all mankind.

Operation Grace extends salvation to all men. No member of the human race is left out! The idea that Christ’s atonement is limited only to those who believe, or the elect, is unfounded. Christ died for those who *would not* believe as well as for those who would.

For the love of Christ controls us, having concluded this,
that one [Jesus Christ] died for all [human race], therefore
all died. (2 Cor. 5:14)

Notice the important phrase, “one died for all.” Christ died for *everyone* because everyone is born under divine condemnation. The greatest demonstration of God’s love for mankind is the condemnation of all mankind by divine righteousness, and the judgment of the impeccable humanity of Christ on the cross. If God the Father had not imputed the sins of the entire human race to Christ and judged them, there would be no chance for salvation or the forgiveness of sins.

And He died for all [the human race], that they who live
[who have believed in Christ] should no longer live for
themselves. (2 Cor. 5:15a)

In 2 Corinthians 5:19 unlimited atonement is further amplified: “Namely, that God was in Christ reconciling the world to Himself.” Christ destroyed the barrier between God and sinful man, replacing enmity with peace (Rom. 5:11–15; 2 Cor. 5:18–19).¹⁰ This reconciliation includes the *whole world*.

9. The blood of Christ is a technical phrase in the Bible for the saving work of Christ. It never refers to the literal blood of Christ. The phrase is figurative language for the spiritual death of Christ who was the substitute for the sins of mankind (Rom. 5:8–9; Eph. 2:12–13; 1 Pet. 1:19; Rev. 1:5b). The blood of the animal sacrifice in Israel represented His future spiritual death. See Thieme, *The Blood of Christ* (2002).

10. The barrier consists of sin (Rom. 3:23), the penalty of sin (Rom. 6:23a), physical birth (Eph. 2:1), relative righteousness (Isa. 64:6a), the perfect righteousness and character of God (Isa. 46:9b), and our position in Adam (1 Cor. 15:22a). See Thieme, *The Barrier* (2003).

And He Himself is the propitiation for our sins [believers]; and not for ours only, but also for *those of* the whole world [also all unbelievers]. (1 John 2:2)

When Jesus Christ died on the cross as our substitute, the righteousness and justice of God were propitiated, or satisfied. The cross was the courtroom scene in which Christ was sentenced to pay the penalty for all of our sins.¹¹ He endured the cross as a “ransom” for our eternal salvation (1 Tim. 2:6). The death of Christ redeemed every human being from the slave market of sin and delivered each one to the freedom of grace (Rom. 8:2; Eph. 1:7).¹² This unlimited atonement does not imply that all men are saved, but that salvation is *provided* for all.

For it is for this we labor and strive, because we have fixed our hope [confidence] on the living God, who is the Savior of *all* men, especially of believers. (1 Tim. 4:10, italics added)

Christ is the Savior of all men in the sense that *He died for all men*. But, it is only the believer in Jesus Christ for whom unlimited atonement is efficacious. The decision to accept or reject salvation is the responsibility of each individual.

How does man become aware of this Good News? How does he recognize his need for salvation? How can he desire a relationship with God of whom he has no knowledge?

GOD-CONSCIOUSNESS

God-consciousness, also termed the age of accountability, is the point in time when an individual is capable of recognizing the existence of a Supreme Being (Rom. 1:19–20), is able to understand the Gospel (1 Cor. 15:3–4), and becomes responsible for his own positive or negative volition toward God. God-consciousness is the result of thought and reasoning—the mentality of the individual comprehending facts and drawing conclusions upon which to act. The specific age this

11. Thieme, *A Matter of Life or Death* (1990).

12. Thieme, *Slave Market of Sin* (1994).

occurs varies among individuals and depends on several factors including IQ, geographical location, and education. In some cases the point of God-consciousness might not be reached until the late teens or early twenties.

But what about those people who die before reaching God-consciousness? What about babies, young children, or the mentally handicapped who cannot comprehend facts or draw conclusions to make a decision about Christ? To hold them accountable for their decisions when they lack the mental facilities to reach God-consciousness would be unfair. But, God is always just. Since every member of the human race is condemned at birth, and Jesus Christ died as a substitute for the entire human race, the love of God is free to secure in heaven the eternal future of those who never reach God-consciousness (2 Sam. 12:15, 23). Any member of the human race who dies before reaching accountability is automatically saved.

The Mechanics of God-Consciousness

There are three basic systems of perception by which the human mind acquires information.

1. *Empiricism* determines reality through observation or experience, especially of the senses.
2. *Rationalism* determines reality through reason which is the supreme authority in matters of opinion, belief, or conduct.
3. *Faith* determines reality through confidence in the authority or veracity of another.

Although during your life you rely on all three systems to determine facts and gain knowledge, faith is a fundamental means of comprehension. For example, in learning geography your teacher may have said, "There is a land called England." You had neither been there nor seen the country. Yet, you believed England existed because you trusted the authority and veracity of your teacher. You could have refused to believe her, but you did not. You accepted the fact on faith. Perception by faith is a normal means through which you assimilate information even though you may eventually verify these facts through empiricism or rationalism.

There are a number of rational approaches whereby the human mind can come to the point of God-consciousness. These are theistic arguments which move past the range of human experience and beyond the sphere of material knowledge to consider the infinite.¹³ While these arguments contribute a theoretical basis for the existence of God, they are no substitute for faith in the self-revelation of God in Scripture.

1. *The Religious Argument.* God exists because men universally believe in Him. Among all people and tribes on earth there is a concept of the divine which manifests itself in some form of worship. Man's religious instincts indicate the reality of a Supreme Being.

2. *The Moral or Anthropological Argument.* The soul of man contains both volition and conscience, and has the ability to distinguish right from wrong. The very existence of man's moral nature suggests the need of a Higher Being who has set the standards for right and wrong. Indeed, the structure of human society is based on the recognition of virtue, truth, and morality. A material, ungoverned universe can know nothing of moral values and distinctions apart from the absolute righteousness of a Supreme Being.

3. *The Ontological Argument.* Since the human mind possesses the idea of a perfect and absolute Being, such a Being must exist. Apart from the religious and moral tendencies previously considered, the existence of God is a necessary idea to the human mind. Beyond the relative which man measures, there is the absolute that gives character or value to the relative.

4. *The Teleological Argument.* The observation of the structure of the universe indicates the need for a designer. Both microscopic and telescopic phenomena, from the structure of an atom to the configuration of galaxies, display order, design, arrangement, purpose, and adaptation that demand both a Creator and a Preserver (Col. 1:16-17). The probability that an orderly universe emerged from primordial chaos,

13. Theism, in its broadest philosophical sense, denotes a belief in a Higher Being as some ultimate reference point that gives meaning and unity to everything. In its most meaningful Judeo-Christian sense, theism is the belief in one God who is viewed as the creative source of man, the world, and virtue, and who transcends and yet is immanent in the world. Both represent a form of God-consciousness, and both can be the basis for a further desire to know and ultimately to have a relationship with God through Jesus Christ.

even over a period of billions of years, is about the same as a Shakespearean sonnet appearing in a can of alphabet soup!

5. *The Cosmological Argument.* The intuitive law of cause and effect demands the existence of God as the initial cause. Every new thing or change must have a cause. In no sense can the universe be its own cause. The universe presents an overwhelming demand for belief in the existence of God (Rom. 1:20).

The above list is not exhaustive, and it may take a combination of approaches for the human mind to come to the point of God-consciousness. The objective is to develop the principle that all *normal* members of the human race simply through thought can come to the knowledge that God exists. When anyone reaches the conclusion that "God exists," he believes by faith that God is a reality—not a figment of his imagination.

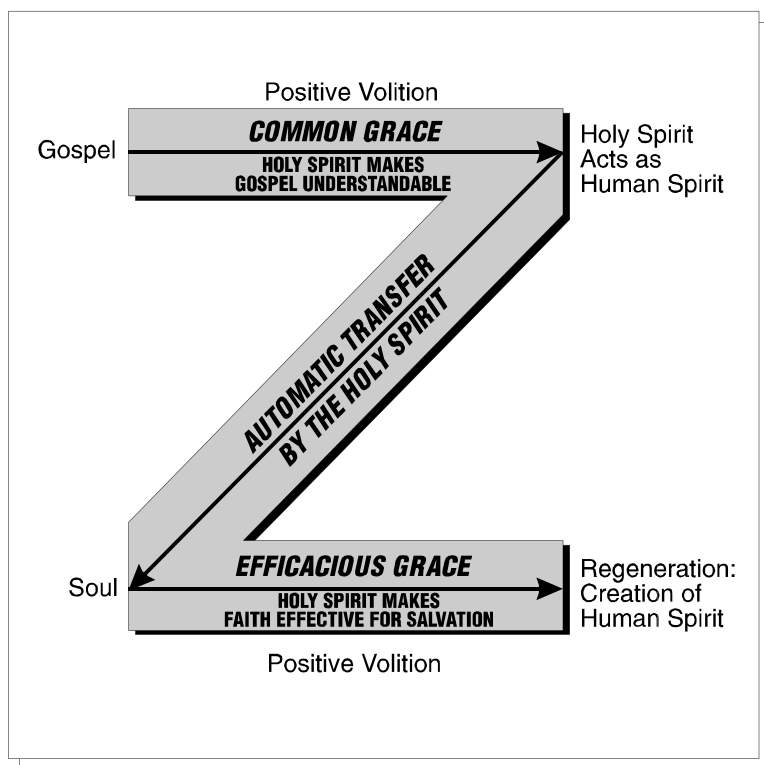
After God-Consciousness, What?

Upon reaching God-consciousness man has a choice: Does he desire further knowledge of God or not? He is responsible for his own decision. If his volition is negative toward knowing God, then God is not obliged to provide Gospel information. If he has positive volition, then this response calls for action from God the Holy Spirit to reveal the Gospel, and the means by which he can be saved.

Positive volition at God-consciousness is only the first step and in itself does not constitute salvation. Remember, spiritually dead mankind does not possess a human spirit and is incapable of understanding spiritual phenomena.¹⁴ Therefore, when the spiritually dead person is willing to listen to the Gospel message, the Holy Spirit in His ministry of *common grace* acts as the missing human spirit so that the spiritual information is comprehensible (John 16:7–11; 2 Cor. 2:14b). If that person responds to the Gospel with faith alone in Christ alone, the Holy

14. At the moment anyone believes in Jesus Christ for eternal salvation, the Holy Spirit creates in that person a human spirit, the home for the imputation of eternal life. The theological term for this spiritual birth, or being "born again" is regeneration, the moment a person passes from spiritual death to spiritual life (John 3:3–7; Titus 3:5; 1 John 5:11–12). See Thieme, *The Barrier*, 8–13; *The Origin of Human Life*, 31–34.

Spirit's ministry of *efficacious grace* acknowledges that faith and makes it effective for salvation (Eph. 2:8).¹⁵



THE MECHANICS OF SALVATION

God is absolutely fair! He desires that all mankind be saved, and He has provided everything necessary for that salvation. Every single member of the human race who *wants* to know Him will receive Gospel information. God gives everyone an equal opportunity to make a decision for or against Jesus Christ.

15. Thieme, *The Trinity*, 33.

These principles were evident in my own life. As a child, I went to church only on rare occasions. The experience was always unpleasant and, if possible, not to be repeated. But as a boy, I heard people talking about God and I came to an awareness of His existence. I can recall instances when I definitely wanted to know more about Him. Though apparently I had an interest in God, I was not yet ready to hear and accept the truth of the Gospel. God provided the information at just the right time. When I heard the Gospel as an adult, I believed.

There are several verses which we should note that link positive volition at God-consciousness with the promise of more revelation.

“If any man is willing to do His will, he shall know of the teaching.” (John 7:17a)

“His will” connotes purpose and design—the plan of God for salvation (1 John 3:23). “The teaching” refers to Gospel information—the principles of Christ’s person and saving work. Pursuit of a relationship with God after reaching God-consciousness is also expressed in the Old Testament.

“And you will seek Me and find *Me*, when you search for Me with all your heart [mind].” (Jer. 29:13)

In Acts 17, Paul presents an example of men who are God-conscious and ready to hear more. When Paul addressed the Athenian intellectuals “in the midst of the Areopagus” (v. 22), he had already noted their altar inscription, “TO AN UNKNOWN GOD” (v. 23), and he realized they were religious searchers who were ignorant of the truth. So, Paul revealed to them the God of the universe.

“What therefore you worship in ignorance, this I proclaim to you. ‘The God who made the world and all things in it, since He is Lord of heaven and earth, does not dwell in temples made with hands.’” (Acts 17:23b–24)

Then, Paul states that men of all nations should seek the Lord.

“And He made from one, every nation of mankind to live on all the face of the earth, having determined *their* appointed times, and the boundaries of their habitation, that they should seek God, if perhaps they might grope for

Him and find Him, though He is not far from each one of us.” (Acts 17:26–27)

To “seek God” refers to positive volition at the point of God-consciousness. The phrase, “might grope for him,” means to grope for Him in the dark. Aware of God’s existence, but ignorant of His nature and plan, the positive unbeliever seeks enlightenment. Some of these Athenians heard the Gospel and immediately “joined him [Paul] and believed” (Acts 17:34).

Like Paul in Athens, modern missionaries arrive in remote areas seeking those who are positive. Once they overcome the hindrances of cultural and linguistic barriers and establish communications, some people immediately respond to the Gospel. These new believers later exclaim, “Where have you been? We have been waiting for this all our lives!” This expression of their positive volition demonstrates that wherever positive volition exists, God provides the Gospel.

God also has other methods of reaching people. Sometimes He directs Gospel information toward a person with negative volition so that those in his periphery with positive volition will have the opportunity to hear and believe. Such was the case with the Pharaoh of Moses’ time. Moses told Pharaoh not only how to receive personal salvation, but also how to deliver Egypt from divine discipline. However, Pharaoh’s volition had been negative at the point of God-consciousness. When Pharaoh heard the Word of the Lord, he rejected the truth and hardened his own heart. Moses repeatedly warned Pharaoh of the consequences of his unbelief and disobedience, and Pharaoh repeatedly ignored the warnings further hardening his heart. Not only did the divine judgments against Egypt—the ten plagues—demonstrate God’s power, but the news of Moses’ words to Pharaoh was also widely circulated (Ex. 11:9). Before Pharaoh relented and released the Jews from slavery, there was a great revival throughout the empire. When the Jews finally departed Egypt in the Exodus, they were accompanied by a large number of saved Gentiles.

HISTORICAL EVANGELISM

The Gospel is not something new; it is something extremely old. The Gospel dates back to the Garden of Eden making it the heritage of

the entire human race (Gen. 3:15). But, in our ignorance of history, and especially the history of evangelism, we assume that the world has never been completely evangelized. Well-meaning missionaries have been heard to say, "There are certain parts of the world that have never been touched!" But is this true? No! Wherever and whenever positive volition exists God always responds by sending the Gospel. The character of God reassures us that His message has been taken "to the remotest part of the earth" (Acts 1:8b).

The Gospel spreads as populations expand and peoples mix. It is disseminated through preaching, personal witnessing, and through the translation of the Scriptures into various languages.¹⁶ Yet the specifics of how, where, or when it is dispersed throughout the world is not always clear. Many of the migrations, conquests, and accompanying missionary movements of the past were not extensively recorded or have yet to be discovered. For example, Genghis Khan and the Mongol Horde in the twelfth century A.D. conquered lands that stretched from China to Eastern Europe. History records that Christianity was present in the midst of his empire,¹⁷ but the exact details of its spread into Eastern Asia are ambiguous.

Even the most comprehensive written history must be revised as new discoveries are made. For years scholars questioned the biblical references in the Old Testament concerning the Hittites because they did not jibe with traditional history. But, archeology continued to uncover new information. Scholars were forced to conclude that the Hittites were indeed a great empire, and that most likely they had extended their influence as far as Palestine (2 Kings 7:6).¹⁸ Under these circumstances they would undoubtedly have had direct contact with the truth about the God of Israel who is Jesus Christ.

The Bible records numerous instances of the wide dissemination of the Gospel in the first century A.D. The word οἰκουμένη (*oikoumene*), which is translated "world" in 1 Timothy 3:16, Colossians 1:6, and

16. Thieme, *Witnessing* (1992).

17. Phillip Schaff, ed., *History of the Christian Church*, 8 vols., (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1959), vol. 5: *The Middle Ages*, 437-42.

18. Harry A. Hoffner Jr., "Hittites," in *Peoples of the Old Testament World*, ed., Alfred J. Hoerth, Gerald L. Mattingly, Edwin M. Yamauchi (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House Co., 1994), 152-53; see also Keith N. Schoville, *Biblical Archaeology In Focus* (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House Co., 1978), 219-21.

Acts 17:6, is actually a term meaning “the inhabited earth.” In other words, people all over the world who were positive at God-consciousness were evangelized during this period. In Jerusalem on the day of Pentecost, people from many countries of the far-flung Roman Empire heard the Good News (Acts 2:9–11).¹⁹ Many responded and returned to their own countries with the message of salvation. The Apostle Peter started in Judea (Acts 2:14), Philip in Samaria (Acts 8:5), Barnabas in Cyprus (Acts 15:39), Nicolas in Antioch (Acts 6:5), and the eunuch returned to Ethiopia with the Gospel (Acts 8:27, 39) where a large population of believers developed. As Paul traveled the Roman world there was tremendous evangelization wherever he went—Asia Minor, Macedonia, Greece, Dalmatia, Italy, Spain.

By the end of the first century the Gospel had been carried from Jerusalem to the four corners of the earth. Such was the result of seventy years’ work in the face of constant opposition. No amount of persecution could arrest its advance. Toward the East, Christianity had reached Mesopotamia and Parthia. In the West it had spread to Gaul and beyond. The Church was growing in the great cities of Rome, Alexandria, and Carthage. It was very strong in Antioch and Ephesus, as well as in Corinth. Christian groups could be found throughout Syria, Arabia, Illyricum (modern Yugoslavia and Albania), and North Africa. Furthermore, prophecy in the Book of Revelation, chapters 7 and 14, teaches that the world will continue to be evangelized in the future.

From recorded history we are provided with glimpses that reveal the world has been evangelized many times. In his correspondence with the Emperor Trajan, Pliny the Younger, who was the governor of Bithynia (northern Turkey today) from A.D. 109–111, furnished valuable information as to the spread and affect of Christianity. Pliny stated that the temples of the gods in Asia Minor were almost forsaken, and animals of sacrifice found hardly any purchasers.²⁰

Quotations and records from the Ante-Nicene fathers emphasize the impact of the Gospel throughout the world. One of the earliest apologists of Christianity, Justin Martyr (A.D. 100–165), was converted in Palestine as a result of his observation of Christians, of the personal

19. Thieme, *Tongues* (2000), 21–28.

20. Phillip Schaff, ed., *History of the Christian Church*, vol. 2, *Ante-Nicene Christianity*, 23, 46.

witness of missionaries, and through the study of Scripture. Later, as a declarer and defender of the faith, he made an interesting observation on the extent of evangelization among the heathen.

There is no people, Greek or barbarian, or of any other race, by whatsoever appellation or manners they may be distinguished, however ignorant of arts or agriculture whether they dwell in tents or wander about in covered wagons [an allusion to the Scythians]—among whom prayers and thanksgivings are not offered in the name of the crucified Jesus to the Father.²¹

This reference to the Scythians indicates that evangelism and missionary activity ranged from the southern plains of Russia to the fringes of Mongolia.

Irenaeus (A.D. 120–202) speaks of preaching the Gospel among the Germans and other barbarians who, “without paper and ink, have salvation written in their hearts by the Holy Spirit.”²² Pantaenus of Alexandria traveled to India in A.D. 190 and as a result, churches were found there in the fourth century.²³ Tertullian of Carthage (A.D. 150–225) addressed the heathen of the Roman world when he said, “We are but of yesterday, and yet we already fill your cities, islands, camps, your palace, senate and forum; we have left to you only your temples.”²⁴ He also spoke of Britain being evangelized toward the end of the second century. In a thirty-year ministry which began in A.D. 244, Gregory Thaumaturgus evangelized nearly the entire city of Neocaesarea, Pontus (east of Bithynia). His great missionary zeal became famous through stories which told of his finding only seventeen Christians in the city when he arrived, and only seventeen unbelievers by the time he died.²⁵

Eusebius of Caesarea (A.D. 265–340), the distinguished historian of the third century, said with regard to evangelism in the second and third centuries:

21. *Ibid.*, 22.

22. *Ibid.*, 30.

23. *Ibid.*, 23.

24. *Ibid.*, 22.

25. *Ibid.*, 797.

And there were many others besides these who were known in those days, and who occupied the first place among the successors of the apostles. And they also, being illustrious disciples of such great men, built up the foundations of the churches which had been laid by the apostles in every place, and preached the Gospel more and more widely and scattered the saving seeds of the kingdom of heaven far and near throughout the whole world. For indeed most of the disciples of that time, animated by the divine word . . . starting out upon long journeys they performed the office of evangelists, being filled with the desire to preach Christ to those who had not yet heard the word of faith, and to deliver to them the divine Gospels. And when they had only laid the foundations of the faith in foreign places, they appointed others as pastors, and entrusted them with the nurture [spiritual growth] of those that had recently been brought in, while they themselves went on again to other countries and nations, with the grace and the co-operation of God.²⁶

The Gospel spread, and with it, the whole realm of Bible doctrine.

In ignorance people also assume that very little of the Gospel reached distant kingdoms like China. Yet it is clear from ancient Chinese chronicles that Christian evangelists made great inroads into that land. In the sixth century, long before Hudson Taylor and the China Inland Mission, the Nestorians arrived in China. The Sian Fu tablets, discovered in Ch'ing-Tsing province in 1625, record something of the Nestorians' great work of evangelism. These tablets preserve the decree issued in A.D. 638 of T'ai-tsung (a famous prince) who was in favor of the new doctrine.²⁷ The Nestorians also reached Arabia, Mesopotamia, India, and Persia.

So the question, "What about those who have never heard?" is a false issue. There is no village too small or too isolated that eludes omniscient and gracious God. His offer of salvation is made available to every human being from the arctic wastes to the teeming tropics.

26. Phillip Schaff and Henry Wace, ed., *Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers of the Christian Church*, 14 vols., second series (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1986), vol. 1, *The Church History of Eusebius*, III. 37.

27. Charles F. Horne, ed., *The Sacred Books and Early Literature of the East* (New York: Parke, Austin, & Lipscomb, 1917), vol. XII, *Medieval China*, 381-92.

From the moment of a person's birth to his dying breath, the love of God extends an equal opportunity to believe in His Son.

God has done all the work; He has provided everything. Jesus Christ chose of His own free will to go to the cross. He elected to be judged for every sin of the entire human race. His substitutionary sacrifice forces a decision: Man can choose the saving work of Christ through faith alone, or he can elect to stand on his own works. If he is negative at God-consciousness or at Gospel-hearing and chooses his own plan, he is a heathen. When he dies, he will spend eternity in the lake of fire alongside Satan and the fallen angels.

SO, WHO ARE THE HEATHEN?

Are heathen only those who live in primitive cultures or remote locales? No! Heathen are *any* persons who refuse to believe in Jesus Christ as Savior. These unbelievers will suffer the consequences of their rejection—"the wrath of God." Romans 1:18-32 outlines the course of their heathenism.

For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who suppress [κατέχω, *katecho*] the truth in unrighteousness. (Rom. 1:18)

While "ungodliness" is the *state* of unbelief, the rejection of Christ and the Gospel, "unrighteousness" indicates the *result* of rejection and becomes the first technical word for heathenism. Those who "hold back" or "suppress [*katecho*] the truth [of the Gospel] in unrighteousness" have hardened themselves in negative volition toward God and His Word. All unbelievers are heathen! When the wrath of God is revealed against such negative volition at God-consciousness and Gospel-hearing, it is both just and fair.

Because that which is known about God is evident within them; for God made it evident to them. (Rom. 1:19)

This is the ontological approach to God-consciousness. The reality of God "is known" to the unbeliever, but he rejects the evidence. Aware of God, yet still negative toward Him, the unbeliever is personally responsible for his decisions.

For since the creation of the world His invisible attributes, His eternal power and divine nature, have been clearly seen, being understood through what has been made, so that they are without excuse. (Rom. 1:20)

This verse emphasizes the teleological and cosmological approaches to awareness of God. Creation demonstrates His existence—His awesome “power and divine nature.” His wondrous works are visible to the heathen. Therefore, they have no excuse for a negative attitude because they have been provided with the clear opportunity to reach God-consciousness. If they desire to know more about God, hear the Gospel, and then reject Jesus Christ as Savior, “they are without excuse.” God is totally just in condemning unbelievers to the lake of fire at the Last Judgment (Rev. 20:12–15).

For even though they knew God [at Gospel-hearing], they did not honor Him as God [negative volition toward Jesus Christ], or [feel obligated to] give thanks [for His sacrifice]; but they became futile [an empty soul] in their speculations [worthless ideas], and their foolish heart was darkened. (Rom. 1:21)

When the unbeliever rejects Jesus Christ, the only Savior, a vacuum develops in his mind—he “became futile in their speculations”—and the darkness of satanic evil fills the void in his soul. God is replaced with the false gods of polytheism, pantheism, or animism. The unbeliever endeavors to explain life through evolution, humanism, deism, or materialism. He accepts human deliberations and rationalizations as wisdom, yet they amount to utter foolishness.

Professing to be wise, they became fools, and exchanged the glory of the incorruptible God for an image [idol] in the form of corruptible man and of birds and four-footed animals and crawling creatures. (Rom. 1:22–23)

The Pattern of Heathenism

Therefore God gave them over in the lusts of their hearts to impurity, that their bodies might be dishonored among them. For they exchanged the truth of God for a lie, and

worshipped and served the creature rather than the Creator, who is blessed forever. Amen. (Rom. 1:24–25)

In delivering unbelievers over to their own rebellious lust pattern, God is giving them over to the consequences of their negative volition. With no divine truth in the mentality of their souls their objective in life is self-gratification and personal stimulation. A soul full of “impurity” leads to the misuse of the body and distortion of God’s design for sex, which includes the practice of homosexuality and lesbianism—a corruption of the divine institution of marriage (Rom. 1:26–27).²⁸ The heathen revel in dishonor. They deliberately choose against God’s grace and His principles of divine establishment.²⁹ When this happens, the heathen enslave themselves to the satanic policies of human good and evil.³⁰ This is the pattern of heathenism: the rejection of truth at God-consciousness and Gospel-hearing, and the acceptance of Satan’s lies (John 8:44).

After the fall of Adam, Satan became the ruler of the world. To gain and maintain control of his realm, he uses counterfeit philosophies of life and religion to deceive and confuse both unbelievers and believers (2 Cor. 11:14–15). All his strategies have similar characteristics: personal arrogance or preoccupation with self, and antagonism, hatred, or hostility toward grace and truth. The New Testament gathers all satanic stratagems under the Greek designation κόσμος (*kosmos*) from which is derived the English word “cosmic.” *Kosmos* is usually translated “world.” It describes an orderly, cohesive system and organization with a purpose, policy, and structure of authority designed

28. Divine institutions are the four founding principles for all mankind ordained by God and governed by the laws of divine establishment for the perpetuation, stability, protection, and freedom of the human race: 1. the individual (the exercise of free will); 2. marriage (the stabilizer of the human race); 3. family (the basis for orderly society); 4. national entity (the basis for protection of rights, privacy, and freedom). Each institution is regulated by a corresponding authority: 1. volition; 2. husband; 3. parents; 4. government. See Thieme, *Freedom Through Military Victory* (2003), 5–20.

29. Laws of divine establishment are principles set up by God for the protection, orderly function, survival, blessing, and perpetuation of the human race during the angelic conflict. Ibid.

30. Human good is any benevolent deed produced by an unbeliever or a believer under the control of the sin nature and in Satan’s cosmic system. Human good and evil are characteristics of spiritual death or carnality. Human good is Satan’s *modus operandi*; evil, his *modus vivendi*. See Thieme, *Reversionism*, 14–19.

to subvert the thinking of mankind. By deceiving the human race Satan believes that he can obstruct the plan of God and prove his case in the appeal trial of the angelic conflict.

The *cosmos* is a vast order or system that Satan has promoted, which conforms to his ideals, aims, and methods. It is civilization now functioning apart from God—a civilization in which none of its promoters really expect God to share, who assign to God no consideration in respect to their projects; nor do they ascribe any causativity to Him. This system embraces its godless governments, conflicts, armaments, jealousies, its education, culture, religions of morality, and pride. It is that sphere in which [heathen] man lives. It is what he sees, what he employs. To the uncounted multitude it is all they ever know so long as they live on this earth. It is properly styled *the satanic system*, which phrase is in many instances a justified interpretation of the so-meaningful word, *cosmos*. It is literally a *cosmos diabolicus*.³¹

Satan is trying with all his devious ingenuity to duplicate the perfect environment that only God can establish.³² In delusion and misconception heathen humanity surrenders to his crafty schemes, and attempts to establish an ideal world apart from God. The machinations are reflected in the human viewpoint mechanics of both religious and political liberalism. Whether through the social gospel, utopian socialism, Marxism, or some other form of philosophical materialism, Satan's 'new world order' always represents the same pattern of human good and evil. Such falsehoods are the quintessence of heathenism.

Romans 1:26–32 names the perversions and abuses which result from the rejection of Jesus Christ, and the subsequent allegiance to *cosmos diabolicus*. The breakdown that occurs at both personal and societal levels includes: radical activism, revolution, every form of sexual perversion, rampant criminality, drug addiction, the breakdown of marriage and family, the loss of national esprit de corps, subverting

31. Lewis Sperry Chafer, *Systematic Theology* (Dallas: Dallas Seminary Press, 1947), 2:77–78.

32. God will establish perfect environment and worldwide peace in the Millennium, a literal one thousand years beginning after the Second Advent of Jesus Christ. See Thieme, *The Divine Outline of History: Dispensations and the Church* (1999), 74–78.

the principle of freedom through military victory, ridiculing biblical Christianity.

All these signs should give us pause. Do they sound familiar? These things are happening in the United States of America today! Is the USA a heathen nation? Heathenism knows no boundaries; it is found in every area of the world and in all strata of society where people have rejected God and are negative to His Word. How can the insidious advance of heathenism be countered? Paul states the answer in this same chapter of Romans.

THE ANSWER TO HEATHENISM

I am under obligation both to Greeks and to barbarians,
both to the wise and to the foolish. (Rom. 1:14)

Paul, along with every believer, has an obligation to the heathen—namely, to communicate the Gospel to them.

Thus, for my part, I am eager to preach the gospel to you also who are in Rome. For I am not ashamed of the gospel, for it is the power of God for salvation to everyone who believes, to the Jew first and also to the Greek [Gentile]. (Rom. 1:15–16)

The answer to heathenism is the Gospel of Jesus Christ. Every believer should be ready to make a presentation of the Good News. The task appears so straightforward and glorious. What could be more exciting and satisfying than to spread the Gospel to the unsaved? But to challenge Satan's dominion armed only with emotion and zeal will end in quick defeat. Facing unbelievers who react to the message with hostility, ridicule, or persecution requires more than human dedication. You must possess a soul established in Bible doctrine. Whenever the Lord opens the door to witness, you must be fortified with accurate and clear information from a thorough knowledge of the doctrines of salvation. Therefore, it is the responsibility of the pastor-teacher to teach Bible doctrine so that you can overcome the satanic onslaughts.

Each of us who have trusted in Christ have a tremendous responsibility—we represent our Lord in the devil's world. Satan is as intent

on obscuring the Gospel as God is on revealing it (2 Cor. 4:3–4; 1 Pet. 5:8). Satan knows the Gospel breaks through the darkness of unbelief (2 Cor. 4:5–7). Therefore, it is more than our rightful obligation, it is our privilege to tell others of the Savior. There is a bona fide need for accurate, aggressive evangelism, both in this nation and throughout the world. Only as the Gospel of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ is disseminated and Bible doctrine communicated can the tide of heathenism in this nation, or in any other, be halted.

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15:3-4	14
15:22	13

2 CORINTHIANS	
2:14	17

4:3-4	30
4:5-7	30
5:14	13
5:15	13
5:18-19	13
5:19	13
11:14-15	27

EPHESIANS

1:7	14
2:1	13
2:4-5	4
2:8	18
2:8-9	6
2:12-13	13
4:22	10

COLOSSIANS

1:6	21
1:16	9
1:16-17	16

2 THESSALONIANS

1:7	2
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1 TIMOTHY

2:4	4
2:6	14
2:13-14	11
3:16	21
4:10	14
5:21	2

2 TIMOTHY

3:16-17	3
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TITUS

1:2	6
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3:5	17
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HEBREWS

2:7	3
6:17-19	5
6:18	6
9:5	13
9:11-12	13
13:8	5

JAMES

1:17	5
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1 PETER

1:19	13
5:8	30

2 PETER

3:9	5
-----------	---

1 JOHN

2:2	14
3:23	19
4:16	3
5:11-12	17

JUDE

6	2
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REVELATION

1:5	13
7	22
12:4	2
12:7-9	2
14	22
20	2
20:12-15	26