

The Disastrous Effects Of:-

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INTRODUCTION.

The Harmful Life and Influence of Bishop Augustine Of Hippo.

Bishop Augustine of Hippo (A.D. 354 to 430), put forward as divine "truth" his doctrine of "Original Sin;" in which he states that all humanity is "born in sin," and is born spiritually corrupt and depraved, and, sadly, many in the Church hold this doctrine today. The Devil used three things in Augustine's life, to mould and influence him to form the destructive heresy of "Original Sin," and through him to get it accepted by the Church; they are:-

1. His full involvement and association for ten years with the Gnostic cult of Manicheism.

This was from approximately 374 to 384 A.D. Manicheism is based upon cosmogony (an account of how the Universe came into being) and consists of Zoroastrian Dualism, Babylonian folklore, Buddhist ethics, and additions of Christian elements. **Its Christology was purely Docetic.**

2. The immoral life that Augustine had led.

His doctrine of "Original Sin" appears to be an excuse for his former very immoral and profligate life. This made him very open to Satanically inspired doctrines, and the means of introducing them into the Church. This was the very opposite of the godly spiritual basis of the lives of Samuel, John the Baptist, and many other men and

women of God in the Scriptures.

3. Augustine's Allegorical Interpretation of the Scriptures.

(This rejects, refutes and distorts the literal meaning of Scripture). When you interpret the Scriptures by allegorical explanations you can make them mean almost anything that you want to. The false cults of today employ this very same method to deceive their adherents into following their false theology.

When much of the Church embraced Augustine's doctrine of Original Sin, over a thousand years darkness descended upon it. The outstanding Theologian, Dean E H Plumtre, writes in, "The Spirits In Prison," page 152: "And so the dark shadow of Augustine fell on the theology of the Western church, and condemned its thoughts of the love of God to many centuries of disastrous twilight." End of quote.

During a period of over 1000 years, genuine revivals of the Holy Spirit only occurred very rarely in isolated areas, and they were often extinguished by murderous persecution, by the established Church. At the time of The Reformation, in the sixteenth century, Martin Luther, who was an Augustinian monk, brought Augustine's theology, including the doctrine of Original Sin, into the Protestant Church. This doctrine continued to create great darkness in the minds of God's people, and this is still the position today in much of the Body of Christ.

N.B. Augustine's monstrous doctrine that unbaptised babies will go to Hell, for ever..

Many who believe in Augustine's doctrine of "Original Sin" do not realise the disastrous effect that his doctrine has had on the Church. I am sure that most Christians will strongly disagree with Augustine's monstrous doctrine that every child is "born in sin" and spiritually depraved, and will go to Hell forever, like the very worst sinner, if they are not baptised. This contradicts the Scriptures, which state that God creates our souls and spirits.

N.B. Is.57v16. "For I will not contend for ever, neither will I be always wroth: for the spirit should fail before me, and the souls which I have made." How could God create something sinful? In Heb.12v9., God is called "the Father of our spirits." (NIV and Robertson)

N.B. Augustine's theology also does away with free will.

It can be briefly summed up as follows. We read on page 317, of "God's Strategy in Human History," by Paul Marston and Roger Forster. "Augustine taught that when Adam sinned, all his descendants sinned "*in*" him and so shared in and inherited the guilt of the act." End of quote.

Someone else has said: "The only way any are saved is by God intervening and choosing some, whom He calls His elect, to be saved. This choosing is totally arbitrary and independent of those chosen. Those thus chosen cannot ever be lost or fall from grace. To the converse, those not arbitrarily chosen before the foundation of the World to everlasting life, are irrevocably doomed to Hell, having absolutely no hope of salvation, regardless of what they do, or do not do." End of quote.

We read on page 307 of "God's Strategy in Human History by Paul Marston and Roger Forster.

"Augustine also said that; "Faith itself was an irresistible gift given by God to a few people, whom he had selected on some basis known only to Himself. God could have given it to others had He so chosen. Without God's irresistible gift of faith, no man could perform any good, whether in thought, will, affection, or action." End of quote.

In asserting these appalling lies, Augustine denies the overwhelming evidence of the Scriptures, that mankind possesses a freewill, and that everyone is individually responsible for their own individual actions. His theology has the effect of removing personal responsibility for one's actions and sins.

In addition to all these terrible doctrines, Augustine's doctrine of "Original Sin" has concealed from the Church, many essential truths concerning our Lord's life and ministry, and Christ's great sufferings for us. We will now go on to consider some of the serious, indeed, critical doctrinal errors, which have resulted from Augustine's doctrine of "Original Sin."

Chapter 1. Augustine's "Original Sin" has created several serious theological errors.

1. Augustine's doctrine of "Original Sin" directly contradicts the Biblical truth about repentance.

When God tells us to repent, it means that we are responsible, and can be blamed for the wrong that we do. The doctrine of "Original Sin" denies that people have the ability to repent, or that they possess free will. It has made people feel that they are not personally responsible for their sins, and that they cannot help sinning, because they are born sinners. They have been taught that they have inherited a sin nature from Adam, and cannot live right because of that. **However, this is not what God says; God commands us to repent of our sins, and tells us that we can help sinning, and need not have committed any sins.** God does not say that we cannot help sinning, He says that repentance that brings forth the fruit of a holy life, is the way to obtain forgiveness, and acceptance with Him. Those who hide behind the bush of "Original Sin" as an excuse for their sins, are in reality blaming God for making them so. **If we could**

not help sinning because of inherited sin, then we could not be blamed for our sins, or told to repent. However, God does say that we can help sinning, and commands everyone everywhere to repent. Acts.17v30. The theme of repentance is seen in all the Scriptures. See Ezek.18v30. etc.

In Rom.1v18-32., Paul castigates the holding down the truth of the revelation of God through creation.

This has resulted in the most deplorable wickedness and immorality. **In Rom.1v20., Paul states that mankind is "without an excuse," anapologetos," 379, only here and Rom.2v1., "inexcuseable." Mankind has rejected both the revelation of God's eternal power and deity in Creation, and the light of their own conscience. God has manifested Himself "to and in mankind," but mankind's determined wickedness has meant that God has had to give them up to their evil ways. **Mankind does not have any excuse for their sin, and that includes the excuse of the doctrine of "Original Sin."** Rom.1v19,20,24,26,28.**

Paul tells us in Acts.17v30,31., that God commands everyone to repent.

This means that everyone could have lived righteous lives, even with the limited light that they have had. We read, "Truly, these times of ignorance God overlooked, but **now commands all men everywhere to repent**, v31 because He has appointed a day on which He will judge the world in righteousness by the Man whom He has ordained. He has given assurance of this to all by raising Him from the dead." **See Acts.20v21. "Testifying both to the Jews, and also to the Greeks, repentance toward God, and faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ."** See also Acts.26v20.

In John.1v9., we read that Jesus illumines every child that is born. "Illumines," is "photizei" the present active indicative of "photizo" 5461; which means, to shed rays, to light up, to illumine. **Thayer** adds, "to enlighten, spiritually, to imbue with saving knowledge." The present tense shows that this is a continuous present tense action, and not a brief or temporary act. We should accept what Jesus said in **Mt.18v1-10. and 19v14.,** that children are fit for Heaven, and are like the inhabitants of Heaven. **God declares in Isaiah.53v6.,** that mankind is not "born astray," but has "**gone astray.**" **Paul confirms this in Rom.7v9.,** where he states that he was born spiritually alive to God, and that he died spiritually when he personally sinned. Paul again states this fact in **Rom.3v12., "They are all gone out of the way,** they are together become unprofitable; there is none that doeth good, no, not one." Note well. In **Ps.51v5.,** it is David's mother who is the sinner not David. "In sin did **my mother** conceive me."

Repentance was the theme of the preaching of John the Baptist. **Mark.1v4.** "John did baptize in the wilderness, and preach the baptism of repentance for the remission of sins."

Mt.3v8. "Therefore produce fruits worthy of repentance." **Mt.3v11.** "I indeed baptize you with water unto repentance: but he that cometh after me is mightier than I, whose shoes I am not worthy to bear: he shall baptize you with the Holy Ghost, and with fire." **Luke.3v3.** "And he went into all the region around the Jordan, preaching a baptism of repentance for the remission of sins." **Acts.13v24.** "When John had first preached before His coming the baptism of repentance to all the people of Israel."

Repentance was a major theme of the preaching of our Lord Jesus.

It was a vital part of the good news of the Gospel. **Mk1v14,15.** Now after that John was put in prison, Jesus came into Galilee, preaching the gospel of the kingdom of God, **v15** And saying, The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand: **repent ye**, and believe the gospel. See **Lk.13v3,5.** "I tell you, Nay: but, except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish." **Mt.9v13.** "But go and learn what this means: 'I desire mercy and not sacrifice.' For I did not come to call the righteous, but sinners, to repentance." **Luke.5v32.** "I came not to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance." The risen Saviour states that repentance was to be preached to all nations. **Luke.24v46,47.** "And said unto them, Thus it is written, and thus it behoved Christ to suffer, and to rise from the dead the third day: **v47 And that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in his name among all nations, beginning at Jerusalem.**"

The early Church preached repentance from dead works.

The early Church preached that repentance was the essential prerequisite before people could experience forgiveness of sins. **We read in Acts.2v38.,** "Then Peter said unto them, **Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost.**" See **Acts.3v19,20.** "**Repent ye therefore, and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out, when the times of refreshing shall come from the presence of the Lord; v20** And he shall send Jesus Christ, which before was preached unto you."

Both Jews and Gentiles must repent. **Acts.5v31.** "Him hath God exalted with his right hand to be a Prince and a Saviour, for **to give repentance to Israel, and forgiveness of sins.**" "**Repentance unto life**" was also granted to the Gentiles, we read in **Acts.11v18.** "When they heard these things, they held their peace, and glorified God, saying, Then hath **God also to the Gentiles granted repentance unto life.**"

God desires to save all, we read in 2Pet.3v9. "The Lord is not slack concerning his promise, as some men count slackness; but is **longsuffering to us-ward, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance.**"

Paul informs us in Acts.17v30,31., that God “commands all men everywhere to repent.”

v30 “Truly, these times of ignorance God overlooked, **but now commands all men everywhere to repent,** **v31** because He has appointed a day on which He will judge the world in righteousness by the Man whom He has ordained. He has given assurance of this to all by raising Him from the dead.”

See Acts.20v21. “Testifying both to the Jews, and also to the Greeks, **repentance toward God, and faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ.**”

See Acts.26v19,20. “Therefore, King Agrippa, **I was not disobedient to the heavenly vision, v20 but declared** first to those in Damascus and in Jerusalem, and throughout all the region of Judea, and then **to the Gentiles, that they should repent, turn to God, and do works befitting repentance.**”

See Rom.2v4. “Or do you despise the riches of His goodness, forbearance, and longsuffering, **not knowing that the goodness of God leads you to repentance?**”

We read in 2Cor.7v9,10. “Now I rejoice, not that you were made sorry, but that your sorrow led to repentance. For you were made sorry in a godly manner, that you might suffer loss from us in nothing. **v10 For godly sorrow produces repentance** leading to salvation, not to be regretted; but the sorrow of the world produces death.”

Note well 2Tim.2v25,26. “In meekness instructing those that oppose themselves; **if God peradventure will give them repentance to the acknowledging of the truth; v26** And that they may recover themselves out of the snare of the devil, who are taken captive by him at his will.” **See Heb.6v1-9.**

Mankind often despises and rejects God’s great mercy with fearful consequences. Rom.2v3-6. “And do you think this, O man, you who judge those practicing such things, and doing the same, that you will escape the judgment of God? **v4 Or do you despise the riches of His goodness, forbearance, and longsuffering, not knowing that the goodness of God leads you to repentance? v5** But in accordance with your hardness and your impenitent heart, you are treasuring up for yourself wrath in the day of wrath and revelation of the righteous judgment of God, **v6** who “will render to each one according to his deeds.”

Jesus told most of the churches in Revelation 2 and 3 that they needed to repent.

The Church at Ephesus is told to repent. Rev.2v5. “Remember the height from which you have fallen! Repent and do the things you did at first. If you do not repent, I will come to you and remove your lamp stand from its place.”

The Church at Pergamos is told to repent. Rev.2v16. “Repent; or else I will come unto thee quickly, and will fight against them with the sword of my mouth.”

The Church at Sardis is told to repent. Rev.3v2,3. “Be watchful, and strengthen the things which remain, that are ready to die, for I have not found your works perfect before God. **v3** Remember therefore how you have received and heard; hold fast and repent. Therefore if you will not watch, I will come upon you as a thief, and you will not know what hour I will come upon you.”

The Church at Laodicea is told to repent. Rev.3v19,20. “As many as I love, I rebuke and chasten. Therefore, be zealous and repent. **v20** “Behold, I stand at the door and knock. If anyone hears My voice and opens the door, I will come in to him and dine with him, and he with Me.”

The Church at Thyatira is told to repent. This we will consider in more detail, as it is relevant to our study. Jesus gives the most solemn and serious warnings to the Church at Thyatira about their immorality and idolatry. **We read in Rev.2v18-29,** “And to the angel of the church in Thyatira write, ‘These things says the Son of God, who has eyes like a flame of fire, and His feet like fine brass: **v19** “I know your works, love, service, faith, and your patience; and as for your works, the last are more than the first. **v20** Nevertheless, I have a few things against you, **because you allow that woman Jezebel, who calls herself a prophetess, to teach and seduce My servants to commit sexual immorality and eat things sacrificed to idols. v21** And I gave her time to repent of her sexual immorality, and she did not repent. **v22** Indeed I will cast her into a sickbed, and those who commit adultery with her into great tribulation, unless they repent of their deeds. **v23** I will kill her children with death, and all the churches shall know that I am He who searches the minds and hearts. And I will give to each one of you according to your works.” NKJV

v24 “But I say to you, the rest who are in Thyatira, who do not hold this teaching, who have not known **the deep things of Satan,** as they call them — I place no other burden on you. **v25** Nevertheless what you have, hold fast until I come. **v26** And **he who overcomes, and he who keeps My deeds until the end, to him I will give authority over the nations; v27** and he shall rule them with a rod of iron, as the vessels of the potter are broken to pieces, as I also have received authority from My Father; **v28** and I will give him the morning star. **v29** He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches.” NASB

Adam Clark writes of Rev.2v20. "Instead of, that woman Jezebel, "ten gunaika Iezabel," many excellent MSS., and almost all the ancient versions, read "ten gunaika sou Iezabel," "THY WIFE Jezebel;" which intimates, indeed asserts, that this bad woman was the wife of the Bishop of the church, and his criminality in suffering her was therefore the greater. This reading Griesbach has received into the text." End of quote.

Hodges and Farstad, state that the Majority Text reads "ten gunaika sou," thy wife." The A.V. and T.R. reading of, "that woman," "ten gunaika," is based on Me, Aleph, C, the Critical Texts; the Old Latin; the Vulgate; the Coptic Sahidic and Bohairic; the Armenian and Ethiopic versions, the Church fathers, Tertullian, Ambrosiaster, Tyconius, Epiphanius, Haymo, and the bav commentary of Andrew. **However, most manuscripts add "sou," and read, "ten gunaika sou," "thy wife;"** the evidence for this is found in Hodges and Farstad, many miniscules (Mabcd), B,Q, the Syrian Philoxenian and Harklean; the Church fathers, Cyprian; Primasius; Andrew's a, c, and p commentaries; and Arethas; Codex A adds "sou ten." Jezebel was the wife of Ahab, Israel's king; this suggests that Jezebel was the pastor's wife.

The Jamieson, Fausset, and Brown's Commentary, state, "That woman. So 'Aleph C, Vulgate; but A B, 'THY wife.' The symbolical, Jezebel was to Thyatira what Jezebel, Ahab's 'wife,' was to him."

The Expositor's Greek Testament, states, "The well attested "sou" after "gunaika" (A,Q, miniscules, Syriac, Arethas, Primasius, etc., so Grot., Al., Zahn, and J.Weiss)." End of quote. **Even though most manuscripts add "sou," and read, "ten gunaika sou," "thy wife;"** Expositors says, "it is to be omitted," preferring the evidence I have just stated above for "ten gunaika," "that woman."

Bishop Christopher Wordsworth, includes "ten gunaika sou," in his Greek text, and writes that "thy wife, is found in A, B, (not in Aleph), and many Cursives, and in the Syriac Version, and in Andreas and Arethas, Cyprian and Primasius, and is received by Scholz, Lachman, and Tischendorf." End of quote.

Being the wife of the leader of the Church, this Jezebel, like the wife of Ahab, exercised great influence over her husband. An influence which she consistently exercised for evil in the realm of false teaching and false prophecy, that seduced people into immorality and idolatry, these were the sins of the historical Jezebel. See 2Kings.9v22,30. This Jezebel called herself a prophetess, (the false apostles of Rev.2v2., likewise, were not what they claimed to be). Jezebel's claims that her teaching was from God, was totally false. **Jesus did not say that Jezebel was to be excused because she was "born in sin," and had "Original Sin."** Jesus gave this evil woman space to repent, but warned that without repentance He would execute Jezebel and her followers. Nor did Paul say that the Corinthians who lived bad lives could not help sinning because they had "Original Sin" and were "born in sin." Paul states that many of them were sick and many had died because of their sinfulness; being judged and chastened by Jesus, to save them from being condemned with the world. **1Cor.11v28-32.** Solemn words indeed! Repent or else! However, even in this sinful Church, there is real hope for those who truly want to walk with God. Our dear Lord promises that those who overcome will reign with Him, and rule over the nations of the world in the Millennium.

A.T. Robertson writes on "Rev.2v24. "The deep things of Satan," "ta bathea tou Satana." The Ophites (worshippers of the serpent) and other later Gnostics (Cainires, Carpocratians, Naassenes) boasted of their knowledge of "the deep things," some claiming this very language about Satan (the serpent) as Paul did of God (1Cor.2v10.) Some even claimed that they could indulge in immorality without sinning (1John.1v10. 3v10.). **"As they say,"** "hos legousin." Probably referring to the heretics who ridicule the piety of the other Christians." End of quote.

Like the above Gnostics, Jezebel and her followers abandoned themselves to fleshly sins, and claimed a "divine revelation" for it, and indulged in "the deep things of Satan." The Gnostics boasted of a special knowledge of "the depths" of divine things. They perverted the truths of Paul. See Rom.11v33. 1Cor.2v10. Their arrogant title, "Gnostics," means "full of knowledge." God declares their so-called "depths of knowledge," are really "depths of Satan;" just as in Rev.2v9., God calls 'the synagogue of God,' which opposed and persecuted Christians, "the synagogue of Satan." Beware of the, "Know it Alls," who pervert the correct interpretation of Scripture, like Augustine did, with his doctrine of "Original Sin."

In James.5v14-18. we see that repentance and confession of sin and persistent prolonged prayer may often be necessary to experience Divine healing in the Churches. **v14** Is anyone among you sick? Let him call for the elders of the church, and let them pray over him, anointing him with oil in the name of the Lord. **v15** And the prayer of faith will save the sick, and the Lord will raise him up. And if he has committed sins, he will be forgiven. **v16** Confess your trespasses to one another, and pray for one another, that you may be healed. The effective, fervent prayer of a righteous man avails much. **v17** Elijah was a man with a nature like ours, and he prayed earnestly that it would not rain; and it did not rain on the land for three years and six months. **v18** And he prayed again, and the heaven gave rain, and the earth produced its fruit." Elijah's persistent prolonged prayer is our example.

The second attack of the doctrine of "Original Sin" is even more serious than its twisted and evil view of repentance, for it attacks the glorious character of God, and the person and humanity of

Jesus.

2. Augustine's doctrine of "Original Sin" attacks the character and justice of God.

The teaching of "Original Sin" has turned the theology about God on its head. God is Love, and His first name is Compassion. 1John.4v8. Ex.34v6,7. However, Augustine's doctrine of "Original Sin" has made God to be an unjust evil Despot, who does Satanic-like acts; for Augustine said that God sends innocent babies, who have not been baptised, into Hell forever, to share the same fate as the very worst sinner. This terrible Satanically inspired lie has devastating effects on a Christian's perception of God, and their walk with God. Augustine's doctrine of "Original Sin" is responsible for a great deal of the darkness in the minds of both believers and unbelievers about God, and has greatly hindered the knowledge of the truth about God's wonderful character. When a Christian accepts Augustine's doctrine of "Original Sin" as truth, it destroys their ability to perceive the truth about Jesus being a compassionate, sympathetic and faithful Great High Priest, who is the "Pioneer and Perfecter of our faith." Heb.12v2.

In addition to the above appalling doctrine; the God who Augustine presents, is looked upon as a bundle of contradictions. This conclusion is arrived at in the mind of the believer in the following way: The believer thinks, "How can God ask me to live a righteous life, when I have been "born in sin," and can't help sinning, because I was created badly; and then He condemns me for my sins, which I cannot help doing." This seems, and is, both illogical and unjust. Thank God, this is not true! It is a lie of the Devil.

3. Augustine's "Original Sin" attacks Christ's humanity and brings Docetism into the Church.

Augustine's doctrine of "Original Sin" disastrously affects the doctrine of the person and humanity of Jesus Christ our Lord, and brings Docetic Gnosticism back into Church doctrine. The Docetic Gnostic heresy, which denied Christ's true humanity, is automatically generated in the minds of believers who accept and believe the doctrine of Original Sin, in the following way. Believers conclude that if we have been "born in sin," with sinful natures, which compel us to do evil; and since Jesus was without sin, He obviously did not possess this same sinful nature, so then He MUST have had a different kind of "humanity" to us. So the thought arises in the believer's mind, that the humanity of Jesus was different from theirs. Thus, in a very subtle and cunning disguise, the destructive heresy of Docetic Gnosticism has come into the Church, and has corrupted the theology about the humanity of Jesus.

I have heard preachers say, based on Acts.20v28., that the blood of Jesus was the blood of God and not human blood. This is a total denial of the humanity of Christ, and in a very subtle and cunning disguise, is the destructive heresy of Docetic Gnosticism. This heresy arose in the Church in the later half of the First Century A.D., and Paul, in his letters to the Philippians, Colossians and 1Timothy, and John, in his Gospel, and First and Second Epistles, write very strongly against this heresy. The doctrine of "Original Sin," revives, in a cunning way, the Docetic Gnostic heresy of the early Church. And from Augustine's time, many Christians have not recognised the doctrine of "Original Sin" for what it is, a destructive Satan inspired heresy! John says that those who deny the true humanity of Jesus are, "Not of God."

In 1John.4v2., "That Jesus Christ is come in the flesh," "come," is "elaluthota," 2046, the perfect active participle of "erchomai," 2064, to come; to appear. The perfect tense indicates that Christ's coming in the flesh was a well-known established fact, and that the effects of Christ's incarnation are an abiding reality. Jesus was not a Docetic phantom, He had a human body, and as Paul states in Rom.1v3., "Concerning his Son Jesus Christ our Lord, who was born of the seed of David according to the flesh."

The same words, "en" 1722, "sarki" 4561, "elaluthota" 2064, "is come in the flesh," occur again, in 1Jn.4v3., and the apostle John declares that everyone who states that Jesus has not come in the flesh, "is not of God," "ek tou Theou ouk estin," literally, "is not out of God." The apostle John goes on to state that those who deny the humanity of Jesus have the spirit of Antichrist, and are influenced by super-human evil angelic spirits. (Some reject the reading, "is come in the flesh," here in 1Jn.4v3., because these words are omitted by A, B, and a few cursives, **However they are included** in Aleph, G, K, Phi, and most cursives, and the following versions, the Syriac, the Polyglot Arabic, Aethiopic, Coptic, Armenian, and Vulgate; and are recognised by Polycarp, Tertullian, Origen, Cyprian, Ambrose, Ps-Oecumenius, Theophylact, and Augustine.) The opponents of Christ's incarnation, and his passion, would be delighted to see these words omitted from the Scriptures.

Those who believe in "Original Sin" will find many of the truths contained in two of the most important books of the New Testament, Romans and Hebrews, impossible to comprehend. Understanding Paul's letter to the Hebrews in based upon a correct knowledge of our Lord's true humanity, and that Jesus and the believer share exactly the same kind of humanity. Failure to grasp this, means that the believer cannot comprehend our Lord as their sympathetic Great High Priest. This truth is a part of the doctrine of "repentance from dead works," etc., in Heb.5v12. to 6v12., which is "the doctrine of the first principles of Christ," ASV, "the basic teaching about Christ," Heb.6v1. NRSV, "the first principles of the oracles of God." Heb.5v12. KJV. To get the doctrine about Jesus wrong destroys the Christian's foundation.

A correct knowledge of the truth of our Lord's humanity, and other vital truths about Him, is essential for Christians in the last days of this age, the Age of Grace. We will need to know our Lord as our Great High Priest as well as our Saviour, to enable us to overcome the appalling evil conditions that will come upon the world during the last three and a half years of this age, known as "The Great Tribulation." **We need to know that Jesus was indeed, "tempted in ALL points like as we are, yet without sin" during His hidden years at Nazareth, and during His Ministry, in a humanity exactly like our own.** The knowledge of His tried humanity will strengthen and equip us for the evil last days. This is vital truth. Through His Intercessions and High Priestly ministry, Jesus will keep, guard, protect and strengthen us "in soul," and give us victory and bring us through this terrible time. At the sounding of the last trumpet, we shall rise to meet Him in the air at His Second Advent, immediately after the tribulation of those days.

It is certainly not without reason that Paul, in writing to Timothy in 1Timothy.3v16., states the vital truth that, "God was manifest in the flesh," and then immediately in the next verse, 1Timothy.4v1., goes on to state; "Now the Spirit speaketh expressly, that in the latter times some will depart from the faith, giving heed to seducing spirits and doctrines of devils!" Paul knew that the destructive heresy of Docetic Gnosticism would still be in the Church in the last days and so he warns us against it, by stating that our Lord Jesus did indeed, "come in the flesh," and had a humanity like our own. The doctrine of "Original Sin" attacks the humanity of Christ, and the end result of this attack will be apostasy, Paul says, the effect will be that "some will depart from the faith."

4. Augustine's doctrine of "Original Sin" attacks Christ's High Priestly Ministry.

This Docetic heresy attacks both the earthly ministry of Jesus, and His High Priestly Ministry, for if the humanity of Jesus was not exactly like ours, how can He really be our compassionate, sympathetic and faithful Great High Priest. We cannot know Jesus as our perfect example, because the doctrine of "Original Sin" has created the following mindset in Christians; that if we are "born in sin," then our Lord MUST have had a different humanity from us, because He was sinless. **So Augustine's theology largely veils Christ's sympathetic, compassionate and faithful Great High Priestly ministry.** The doctrine of "Original Sin" has resulted in many of the great truths in the book of Hebrews being "hidden" from the minds of Christians, because of the failure to understand the true humanity of Jesus. It is also essential for Christians to grasp and understand Paul's doctrine of "dead sin in the flesh, which is part of the first foundation truth, "repentance from dead works," which is found in Heb.5v12 to 6v3., "the first principles of the oracles of God, the principles of the doctrine of Christ." See also, Rom.7v8 to 8v3.

N.B. If we fail to know Jesus as our Great High Priest, we remain spiritually immature.

This can affect the whole of our lives. It is **only** by going through temptation, trials and testing with our Lord that godly "character" is produced in us, and through trials God brings our faith to Christian "perfection," or better, Christian maturity. Heb.6v1. However, if we do not know Him as High Priest, He is hindered from taking us through the trials and tests that He desires to take us through, to give us a vital experimental knowledge of His High Priestly Ministry. Always remember, God will not try and tempt us beyond what we can bear. James.1v2-4,12. Rom.5v1-5. 1Cor.10v13. Heb.12v2.

N.B. If our "house" is not built upon truth as revealed in the Scripture, it will fall.

If we do not have the correct, soul-nourishing doctrine about Jesus, when times of temptation, testing and trial come along, our house will "fall." Mt.7v24-27. We will also fail to come through our stormy times of life victoriously, and will fall by the wayside. Luke.8v5-8,11-15. Jesus emphasised that we have to eat His flesh and drink His blood, or we have no life in us, this is again emphasised in Hebrews 2, which emphasises, the need to realise the true humanity of Christ. See John.6v51-58.

N.B. Many of the vital truths in the book of Romans will not be fully understood.

We will badly fail to understand **Romans.7v7 to 8v4 (esp. Romans 7v14-25)** if we interpret it as Paul's POST-conversion experience, instead of his PRE-conversion experience. Paul states that he was "carnal, sold under sin". Rom.7v14. However, Paul has just written in Romans.6v6., where he categorically states, "knowing this, that our old man was crucified with Him, that the body of sin might be done away with, that we should no longer be slaves of sin." **N.B. Rom.8v1-4.**

In Rom.7v7 to 8v4. Paul teaches that he, like his Lord, were both born with, "dead sin in the flesh;" however, unlike his Lord, Paul, like everybody else, had yielded to this temptation from sin in the flesh, (from the sinful desires of the flesh), and Paul, like everyone else, had died spiritually as a result of yielding to this temptation. Whereas his Lord had resisted every temptation and conquered them, and thus had "condemned sin in the flesh." Rom.8v3. This vital truth of the Lord's true humanity is also clearly stated by Paul in **Heb.2v17,18. and 4v14-16.**, where he states that Jesus was "**made like unto His brethren in ALL THINGS,**" and was, as a result, "**tempted in ALL points tempted like we are.**"

Pre-Augustinian Teaching.

N.B. The pre-Augustinian theological tradition is practically of one voice AGAINST Augustine's theology, they assert the freedom of the human will. Three recurrent ideas are in their teaching:

1. They say that freewill is a gift given to man by God – for nothing can be independent of God.

2. They say that the rejection of freewill is the view of heretics.
3. They say that man possesses freewill, because he is made in God's image, and God has freewill.

However Augustine saw fit to introduce the doctrine of the "Irresistible Gift of Faith," (or irresistible gift of grace), this false doctrine of Augustine, conquered and corrupted much of the Church.

5. Augustine's doctrine of "Original Sin" attacks Christ's remarkable Faith and Ministry. Jesus did all His miracles by believing what the Father revealed to Him, and He did them at the Father's direction and with the Father's power. Another terrible consequence of believing the doctrine of "Original Sin" and "Born in Sin" theories, is that many Christians have come to believe that the signs, wonders and miracles, that the Lord Jesus did during His earthly ministry were done by Him turning on His Divine power, and simply doing them at his own desire. However, nothing could be further from the truth.

Our Lord states in John.5v19,20,30., "Most assuredly, I say to you, the Son can do nothing on his own, but only what he sees the Father doing; for whatever the Father does, the Son does likewise. v20 For the Father loves the Son, and shows Him all things that He Himself does; and He will show Him greater works than these, that you may marvel. v30 " I can do nothing on My own initiative. As I hear, I judge; and My judgment is just, because I do not seek My own will, but the will of Him who sent Me." See John.14v10., "Do you not believe that I am in the Father, and the Father in Me? The words that I speak to you I do not speak on My own authority; but the Father who dwells in Me does the works."

Paul tells us in Phil.2v7., that at the Incarnation, Jesus, "made Himself of no reputation." (NKJV). Other translations are as follows: - **Revised Standard Version.** "Emptied himself."

Amplified Bible. "Stripped Himself." **The Living Bible.** "Laid aside His mighty power and glory."

TEV. "He gave up all He had." **Lightfoot.** "He stripped Himself of the insignia of majesty,"

"Made Himself of no reputation" in the Greek is "heauton ekenosen", literally translated means, "emptied Himself" of His Omnipotence, Omniscience, Omnipresence, Transcendence and Immutability, i.e. His Divine abilities. But after the "emptying" He still continued to be God, as v 6 states, "being in the form of God," "huparchon en morphe Theou," "being" is "huparchon", the present active participle of "huparcho," ("existing" is a better translation of the Greek) which denotes that what He was before the Incarnation (i.e. God) He continued to be after it, God, but God "emptied."

So we see that it was impossible for the Lord Jesus to use His Divine abilities to do the miracles, because He "emptied Himself" of all His power and glory at the Incarnation. Paul then continues to tell us in Phil 2v7,8, that after Had "emptied" Himself, He then was: "taking the form of a bondservant, and coming in the likeness of men. And being found in appearance as a man." (NKJV).

A.T. Robinson gives the following helpful comments on Christ's emptying in Phil.2v7,8.:

"The form of a servant", Greek, 'morphen doulou', He took the characteristic attributes ('morphen' as in v6) of a slave. His humanity was as real as His Deity." **End of quote.**

"In the likeness of men", Greek, en homoiomati anthropon", It was a likeness, but a real likeness (Kennedy), no mere phantom humanity as the Docetic Gnostics held. Note the difference in tense between 'huparchon' (eternal existence in the 'morphe' of God) and 'genomenos' (second aorist middle participle of 'ginomai,' becoming, definite entrance in time upon his humanity)." **End of quote.**

"Being found in appearance as a man," Greek, "schemati heuretheis hos anthropos", "in appearance" is in Greek, "schemati", and refers to that which is purely outward and appeals to the senses, "the outward guise" as it appealed to the sense of mankind, His outward guise was altogether human.

In Phil.2v5-11., Paul refutes the Docetic Gnostic theory that Jesus had no human body and the Cerinthian Gnostic teaching that the aeon Christ came upon and used the man Jesus, and that they were two separate beings. In Jn.4v1-6., John states that the denial of the humanity of Jesus by the Gnostics was the spirit of antichrist. Jesus had a real humanity as well as a true deity.

The Lord Jesus came into the world like any other child; He spent 40 weeks in the womb of Mary, and then was born in Bethlehem. The Lord Jesus having "emptied Himself" of His wisdom and knowledge at the time of the Incarnation, had to then learn it all again, and this He did as Luke tells us in Luke.2v40,52. "And the Child grew and became strong in spirit (Majority Text), filled with wisdom; and the grace of God was upon Him.... And Jesus increased in wisdom and stature, and in favour with God and men." (NKJV)

Jesus had to learn, develop and become spiritually strong just like any other child. The phrase "became strong

in spirit" is the exact phrase that is used of the spiritual development of John Baptist. Lk.1v80.

In John.2v1-11., we see an interesting insight into Christ's hidden years at Nazareth.

In v3, it states: "And when they ran out of wine, the mother of Jesus said to Him, "They have no wine." (NKJV). ("They have no wine," in Greek is, "Oionon ouk echousin.") The reaction of Jesus shows that this was not just a statement of fact, and that Mary was in reality making a request for a miracle. Mary's statement speaks volumes, it reveals that she had not only treasured in her heart the wondrous events connected with the birth and childhood of Jesus, but that she had also personally witnessed miracles of provision for her family, (which had been hidden from the rest of the family). Lk.2v40,52. Mary remembered how miracles of provision had met their needs on many occasions, when they had no money to buy food or wine for the family. This poverty was not because Jesus neglected His work to pray, it was because people did not pay their bills, because of circumstances, or because Satan had inspired and provoked dishonest people not to pay their bills for work that Jesus had done.

Jesus was tempted in all points like us. Heb.4v15. He knew what it was to be under severe financial deprivation and constraint, when he had to feed the large family of Mary (at least seven children besides Himself, Mk.6v3.) after Joseph had died. Mary had come a long way in God from the time when Jesus, at twelve, said in **Lk.2v42,49,50.**, to Mary and Joseph in the Temple, **v49** "Why did you seek Me? Did you not know that I must be about My Father's business?" **v50** But they did not understand the statement which He spoke to them." NKJV. What had produced this change, and real and deep faith? Mary knew and believed, from a rich personal experience of acts of Divine provision by miracles through the prayers of Jesus in her home, that Jesus could do a miracle to meet the need for wine.

God did not leave Mary to fight the battle alone over the dishonour and criticism that came upon her over the birth of Jesus, God stood by her and gave her many infallible proofs of His caring love, through many acts of miraculous provision at Nazareth, through the developing prophetic ministry of Jesus. These demonstrated that Jesus was indeed the Christ, the Holy One of God. Mary's command to the servants in **Jn.2v5.**, "Do whatever He tells you," shows the living and deep faith of Mary in Jesus, and her faith in His ability to perform a miracle. It was not a first act of blind faith; Mary had proved that "whatever" Jesus told her to do, in the realm of miraculous provision, came to pass. Mary had a list in her mind of numerous "whatevers" that had come to pass and produced miracles of provision for her family, and probably others also. This, and this alone, can explain Mary's confident, "Do whatever he tells you."

Where do we find the source of the development of Christ's tremendous prophetic ministry?

We read the following in Psalm 69v8-12,19,20,21: "I have become a stranger to my brothers, and an alien to my mother's children; **v9.** Because zeal for Your house has eaten me up, and the reproaches of those who reproach You have fallen on me. **v10.** When I wept and chastened my soul with fasting, that became my reproach. **v11.** I also made sackcloth my garment; I became a byword to them. **v12.** Those who sit in the gate speak against me, and I am the song of the drunkards.----- **v19.** You know my reproach, my shame, and my dishonour; my adversaries are all before You. **v20.** Reproach has broken my heart, and I am full of heaviness, (the Hebrew adds, "and distressingly sick") I looked for someone to take pity, but there was none; and for comforters, but I found none. **v21.** They also gave me gall for my food, and for my thirst they gave me vinegar to drink."

This Scripture reveals both the source and reason for the violent opposition against Jesus, it was the remarkable prayer life of Jesus at Nazareth, which brought rejection and ostracism from His brothers and sisters and the people of Nazareth. Satan saw to it that Christ's life of prayer and fasting, stirred up opposition against Jesus, and He was mocked and sent to Coventry because of it.

If we say that Jesus prayed during His life at Nazareth, and the above prophetic facts in Ps.69v8-11., about His life of prayer and fasting, prove that He did, then we must acknowledge that He must have had power gifts to bring an answer to His prayers. Jesus lived in continuous communion with the Father, He, like Enoch, walked with God His Father. The love-dominated nature of Jesus desired and loved to walk in the Spirit, it was His very nature to dwell in the Father and the Father in Him, and prayer was as natural to Him as breathing. Jn.14v10,11. 1Jn.2v24. **Paul states in 1Cor.12v31., that spiritual gifts are automatically manifested if we walk and pray in the "more excellent way," ("kath huperbolen hodon") of "agape" love.** Jesus certainly prayed, lived, and walked in love at Nazareth, so God His Father gave Him the revelation and power gifts on their highest levels of manifestation. It is impossible to believe that the child Samuel had more and greater revelations from God the Father than God's pure and holy child Jesus, His only begotten Son. Jesus revealed Himself to Moses in the burning bush in the wilderness of Sinai, to prepare Moses for his ministry, the bush burned daily for Jesus at Nazareth as the Father prepared Jesus for His ministry.

Our Lord was truly a prophet like unto Moses. Acts 3v22,23. And just as Moses was prepared for his ministry through daily living, so God prepared Jesus for His ministry through His daily life at Nazareth. This not only involved revelation about truth, the Father also gave Jesus information about people's needs, and trained Him in the operation of the gifts of power and revelation. Christ's Divine love, mercy, and compassion drove, and irresistibly constrained Him to pray for people in need; He could not help Himself. His secret prayers and intercessory "sighs too deep for words, and inexpressible yearnings" ("stenagmois alaletos," Rom.8v26.),

breathed out on the behalf of people's needs, could not help but operate spiritual gifts in delivering power, for Jesus lived and prayed perfectly on "the more excellent way" of perfect love. The operation of these gifts was mightily effective, but totally hidden from people, and no one knew of the source of their divine help. Is.49v1,2. 50v3-7. The vision ministry and prayer life of Jesus was totally directed by God the Father, and the power and influence of His prayer life, has never been equalled, and cannot be overstated.

By the time the Lord Jesus was 30 years old He was "full of grace and truth", and had become the perfect Servant. As there had never been any sin in Him, the Father gave His Son, the Holy Spirit without measure at His baptism, at the River Jordan, to fulfil His Messianic Mission, of preaching the Gospel to the poor, healing the broken-hearted, the recovery of sight to the blind, to send forth the crushed in liberty, and to proclaim the acceptable year of the Lord. Jn.1v14, 3v34, Lk.4v18,19, Isa.35v5,6.

By saying that the Lord Jesus did His miracles by simply turning on His Divine power, we rob Him completely of His true glory. His unique glory was the beautiful sinless loving life that He had lived at Nazareth, during which time the Father had prepared Him for His ministry, which He accomplished by total reliance upon the Father, so that He could say: "As the living Father sent Me, and I live because of the Father, so he who feeds on Me will live because of me." John 6v57 (NKJV). **Christ said that He lived by faith in the Father and by the life of the Father, and He said that we are to depend on Him as He depended on the Father. Christ Jesus has given us the perfect example to follow in all things.**

Chapter 2. The ancient origin and dreadful effect of the doctrine of "Original Sin."

N.B. The mindset behind "Original Sin" has been around since the days of Adam and Eve.

People have usually tried to deny their guilt, or "excuse" their actions, by blaming someone else for their own wilful individual personal sin, when they have been confronted with their sin! Eve blamed the Serpent; Adam blamed Eve, and suggested that it was even God's fault for giving him Eve. **Gen.3v12,13.**

In the account of Cain's murder of his brother Abel, **God said in Gen.4v7.**, "If you do well, will you not be accepted? **And if you do not do well, sin lies at the door. And its desire is for you, but you should rule over it.**" God told Cain to follow his brother Abel's example of "faith" and godly living, and then, by God's grace, Cain would be able to resist and "overcome" the temptation to wilfully sin. **Heb.11v4.** It is quite clear that God did NOT consider either Cain or Abel as being "born in sin," and incapable of living right, (as most Theologians incorrectly state!), for **God very clearly tells Cain that he "should rule over sin."** The word for "rule" is "mashal" 4910, which means, to master, to have dominion, to reign, to rule.

However, we know that Cain rejected God's instruction on this issue and murdered his brother Abel. When God asked Cain where his brother was, Cain replied, "Am I my brother's keeper?" **Gen.4v9.** This was a vain attempt to deny his guilt. No doubt, like many today, Cain tried to excuse his evil actions to himself, with the excuse that he could not be blamed for his sin, for how could he be expected to lead a righteous life, when his father and mother had set him such a bad example, and sinned so grievously. **So we see that in the first family the foundation for the mindset of the "born in sin" doctrine was clearly laid down, they all desired to evade personal responsibility for their sin, and this was the bush to hide behind.**

The Exodus Of Israel From Egypt.

By the time of The Exodus of Israel, in the 15th Century BC, from Egypt, Israel had been in Egypt for 400 plus years, during which time many had forgotten "the way of the Lord," and had worshipped the idols of Egypt. We read in **Ezek.20v7,8.** v7 "Then I said to them, 'Each of you, throw away the abominations which are before his eyes, and do not defile yourselves with the idols of Egypt. I am the LORD your God.' v8 "But they rebelled against Me and would not obey Me. They did not all cast away the abominations, which were before their eyes, nor did they forsake the idols of Egypt. Then I said, 'I will pour out My fury on them and fulfil My anger against them in the midst of the land of Egypt.'" (NKJ)

We read in **Exodus.20v5.** "Thou shalt not bow down thyself to them, nor serve them: for I the LORD thy God am a jealous God, visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children unto the third and fourth generation of them that hate me." The Lord was informing the Israelites that if the children followed and continued in the sins of their father's, then, **and ONLY then,** would they share in their punishment. God refuted their belief that they were compelled to sin, because their father's had sinned, and that they would share in their father's punishment. The Lord was clearly stating that each person would die for their own sin, and NOT for their father's or Adam's sin. This statement of a person's own personal responsibility for their own individual sin is also clearly stated again to the second generation by Moses in **Deut.24v16.**, where it states: "The fathers shall not be put to death for the children, neither shall the children be put to death for the fathers: every man shall be put to death for his own sin."

The second generation were still harbouring thoughts that they sinned because their fathers had sinned, and so would share in the father's punishment, but the Lord tells them that, **"the soul that sinneth it shall die."** God emphasises that each person is responsible for their own individual sin, and will be individually punished for it; clearly teaching the personal responsibility for one's own actions! A thought strongly reiterated by God again in **Ezek.18v20.**, which we will now consider in more detail.

N.B. In Ezekiel 18., God strongly teaches against, and rejects, the doctrine of Original sin.

The doctrine of "Original Sin," that is, "Born in Sin" theories, had been around for many centuries before Our Lord's first Advent, indeed, it was still held by the Jews at the time of the Babylonian Captivity. We read (in about the year 590/589B.C.), in **Ezekiel.18v1,2.**, that, "the word of the Lord" came to Ezekiel, "saying, What mean ye, that ye use this proverb concerning the land of Israel, saying, the fathers have eaten sour grapes, and the children's teeth are set on edge?" God strongly refutes Israel's wrong perception of the cause of their sin, which they believed was because they had been "born in sin," for we read in **Ezek.18v4.**, "the soul that sinneth, it shall die." God states that their sin was THEIR own individual responsibility, NOT the result of their father's, or Adam's sin. The Jews, by claiming that they had been "born in sin," endeavoured to remove their OWN personal responsibility for their own sin to somebody other than themselves, that is their fathers.

In Ezek.18v4,20., God censures and rejects the belief of the Jews, that they were "born in sin."

To emphasise this point in Ezek.18v4,20., God TWICE repeats, "the soul that sinneth, it shall die," to really bring home to the Jews their OWN personal responsibility for their OWN sins! God also gives several telling examples of how a father's sin is NOT imputed to the son, nor a son's sin imputed to the father. This statement by Almighty God destroyed their excuse that a family ancestor was responsible, and really to blame, for their own personal sin. God clearly states the truth of a person's own personal responsibility a person's own individual actions and sins.

This same mindset was not only in the Jews who had been carried off into captivity to Babylon, it had also gripped and darkened the minds of the Jews still in Israel. It is written in **Jer.31v29,30.**, "In those days they shall say no more, The fathers have eaten a sour grape, and the children's teeth are set on edge. **v30** But every one shall die for his own iniquity: every man that eateth the sour grape, his teeth shall be set on edge." Here again, in a very clear and unequivocal way, **God affirms the truth that "every one shall die for his own iniquity,"** or as it is stated in **Ezek.18v4,20.**, "the soul that sinneth, it shall die." **God again makes it very clear that each individual is responsible for their own sin; He rejects the excuse that their fathers, or Adam, were not responsible for their own personal sin.**

This truth is also stated in **Jer.18v1-11.**, when the Lord sent Jeremiah down to the potter's house to give this same important truth to the Jews in Israel, that He would deal with them according to their own individual sinful actions, NOT according to their father's sinful actions. God implores them in **Jer.18v11.**, "return you now every one from his evil way, and make your ways and your doings good".

The tragic consequences of the rejection of the Divine warnings.

It is quite clear that the Jews did not listen to God's warnings through Jeremiah or Ezekiel, regarding the terrible consequences of their wilful sin, which were produced by their false "born in sin" theories. **For we read in 2Chron.36v15-17., v15.** "And the LORD God of their fathers sent warnings to them by His messengers, rising up early and sending them, because He had compassion on His people and on His dwelling place. **v16** But they mocked the messengers of God, despised His words, and scoffed at His prophets, until the wrath of the LORD arose against His people, **till there was no remedy. v17** Therefore He brought against them the king of the Chaldeans, who killed their young men with the sword in the house of their sanctuary, and had no compassion on young man or virgin, on the aged or the weak; He gave them all into his hand." (NKJ) **God held them personally responsible for their sins, and brought them to account for them; He did not blame Adam for them.**

The great darkness that this destructive mindset brought upon the minds of ALL the people can be seen from their incredible wilful stubbornness, even after Nebuchadnezzar had come up against Jerusalem for a second time, and had set Zedekiah upon the throne of Judah (he reigned from 599BC-588BC). **We read in 2Chron.36v12-14.** "He (Zedekiah) did that which was evil in the sight of the LORD his God, and humbled not himself before Jeremiah the prophet speaking from the mouth of the LORD. And he also rebelled against king Nebuchadnezzar, who had made him swear by God: but he stiffened his neck, and hardened his heart from turning unto the LORD God of Israel. **Moreover all the chief of the priests, and the people, transgressed very much after all the abominations of the heathen; and polluted the house of the LORD which he had hallowed in Jerusalem."**

In Acts.7v51., Stephen castigates the Jewish religious leaders of his day: "Ye stiff-necked and uncircumcised in heart and ears, ye do always resist the Holy Ghost: as your fathers did, so do ye." This shows that the wilful "stubbornness and rebellion" of the Jewish nation was a well-established fact going back many generations!

It is not surprising to find that this destructive heresy of "Original Sin" was also still around and taught by the religious leaders of Israel at the time of Christ's first Advent. In **John 9v34.**, Israel's religious leaders interrogated and excommunicated the man who had been born blind, whose sight had been restored by Jesus: "They answered and said to him, **"You were completely born in sins, and are you teaching us?" And they cast him out.**" (NKJ) Just before this incident, even the Apostles asked Jesus in **John.9v2,3.**, "Master, who did sin, this man, or his parents, that he was born blind? **v3** Jesus answered, Neither hath this man sinned, nor his parents: but that the works of God should be made manifest in him."

Chapter 3. Jesus and Paul taught that children are born spiritually alive to God.

N.B. Jesus states that children are alive to God, and are NOT "born in sin," and spiritually dead.

Jesus states that the truth is the very opposite to the doctrine of Original sin, and that a child is born spiritually alive to God, and in receipt of God's grace, having a pure soul and spirit. Mt.18v1-10. 19v14.

Jesus states in Matt.18v1-4,10. "At that time the disciples came to Jesus, saying, "Who then is greatest in the kingdom of heaven?" **v2** Then Jesus called a little child to Him, set him in the midst of them, **v3** and said, "Assuredly, I say to you, unless you are converted and become as little children, you will by no means enter the kingdom of heaven. **v4** "Therefore whoever humbles himself as this little child is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven. **v10** "Take heed that you do not despise one of these little ones, for I say to you that in heaven their angels always see the face of My Father who is in heaven." (NKJ)

Note well. Jesus said that little children are looked upon as the officially authorized inhabitants of the kingdom of heaven, and we have to become like them, or we will not enter heaven. Jesus totally refutes Augustine's doctrine that children are born depraved and polluted by sin, and if they are not baptised, will go to Hell like the very worst sinner. Jesus said that the angels of a little child have unrestricted access to God. God commands and forbids Satan to hinder the ministries of God's angels to little children.

Matt.19v13-15. also states. "Then little children were brought to Him that He might put His hands on them and pray, but the disciples rebuked them. **v14** But Jesus said, "Let the little children come to Me, and do not forbid them; **for of such is the kingdom of heaven.**" **v15** And He laid His hands on them and departed from there."(NKJ)

Note well. Jesus said of little children, "**for of such is the kingdom of heaven.**" **Jesus declares that children have the spiritual purity of the inhabitants of the kingdom of heaven;** this again totally refutes Augustine's doctrine that children are "born in sin," and are depraved and polluted by sin.

N.B. Paul tells us that children are born spiritually alive to God.

Paul informs us in Romans.7v9-12. v9 "I was once alive ("ezon pote") without the law, but when the commandment came, sin revived and I died; v10 the very commandment which promised life proved to be death to me. v11 For sin, finding opportunity in the commandment, deceived me and by it killed me. v12 So the law is holy, and the commandment is holy and just and good."

In Romans.7v9., "I was alive," is the imperfect active, "ezon" 2198. Paul is speaking of the time, when as an infant, he did not know the difference between right and wrong; this was before his conscience awoke and he became morally responsible for his actions. ("Without," is "choris" 5565, an adverb meaning without, apart, separate). Paul says he was alive to God in his period of childlike innocence, until God's Law revealed right and wrong to him, and he did the wrong, and died spiritually.

N.B. Rom.5v13-14. v13 "For until the law sin was in the world: **but sin is not imputed when there is no law.** v14 Nevertheless death reigned from Adam to Moses, even over **them that had not sinned after the similitude of Adam's transgression,** who is the figure of him that was to come." See **Rom.4v15.** "For the law brings wrath, **but where there is no law there is no transgression.**"

When "the commandment came," and was applied to Paul's heart and conscience, and Paul knew right from wrong, "sin revived, ("he" 3588, "hamartia" 266, "anezesen" 326). Sin came to life; the period of innocence was over, and because Paul had broken the Law, he died spiritually. The word "anazao" 326, means to live again, it is usually applied to a renewal of life, Rom.14v19; Luke.15v24,32., but here it means sin, which was before dormant, was now quickened into life. The Jews thought that the Law would sanctify and give comfort to the soul, but both Jesus and Paul say that the broken law produced guilt, woe, and a bad conscience. "And I died," Paul had become conscious of his sin through his violation of The Law, and realised that it brought about his spiritual death.

Paul here talks about his own consciousness of sin. As a child, he did not really understand the Law, or God's purpose in giving the Law. The failure to understand the demands of the Law is not confined to children. The young adult, the rich young ruler, mistakenly asserted, "I have observed all these things from my youth." **Mk.10v20. Mt.19v20. Lk.18v21.** There came a day in Paul's life when God's command, "Thou shalt not covet," condemned him, and revealed that he was not living according to that command. Through the commandment, Paul realised that sin had first deceived him, and then had brought about his spiritual death. Satan had been behind this, and his objective was the eternal ruin of all humanity.

Paul states in Rom.3v10-24., The tragic truth of man's fall into sin from the innocence of God's creation.

"v10 As it is written, None is righteous, just and truthful and upright and conscientious, no, not one. [Ps.14v3.] **v11** No one understands [no one intelligently discerns or comprehends]; no one seeks out God.

[Ps.14v2.] **v12 All have turned aside; together they have gone wrong and have become unprofitable and worthless; no one does right, not even one!** **v13** Their throat is a yawning grave; they use their tongues to deceive (to mislead and to deal treacherously). The venom of asps is beneath their lips. **[Ps.5v9. 140v3.] v14** Their mouth is full of cursing and bitterness. **[Ps.10v7.] v15** Their feet are swift to shed blood. **v16** Destruction and misery mark their ways. **v17** And they have no experience of the way of peace [they know nothing about peace, for a peaceful way they do not even recognize]. **[Isa.59v7,8.] v18** There is no [reverential] fear of God before their eyes. **[Ps.36v1.] v19** Now we know that whatever the Law says, it speaks to those who are under the Law, so that [the murmurs and excuses of] every mouth may be hushed and all the world may be held accountable to God. **v20** For no person will be justified (made righteous, acquitted, and judged acceptable) in His sight by observing the works prescribed by the Law. For [the real function of] the Law is to make men recognize and be conscious of sin **v21** But now the righteousness of God has been revealed independently and altogether apart from the Law, although actually it is attested by the Law and the Prophets, **v22** Namely, the righteousness of God which comes by believing with personal trust and confident reliance on Jesus Christ (the Messiah). [And it is meant] for all who believe. For there is no distinction, **v23** Since all have sinned and are falling short of the honor and glory, which God bestows and receives. **v24** [All] are justified and made upright and in right standing with God, freely and gratuitously by His grace (His unmerited favour and mercy), through the redemption, which is [provided] in Christ Jesus. AMP

In these Old Testament quotations in Rom.3v10-24., Paul teaches and brings out the truth that "each individual person sins because they WANT to, NOT because they HAVE to." Their own wilful individual personal sin being the result of their own freewill choice, as Isaiah.53v6., states, "All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned every one to his own way." Augustine interpreted Romans.7v14-25., as being Paul's POST-conversion Christian experience, which is certainly not true.

N.B. Paul's Teaching on "Sin in the flesh." Rom.7v8 to 8v4. N.B. 3.

Paul received his doctrine of "sin in the flesh" directly and personally from the Lord Jesus. Gal.1v11,12. Paul teaches that it was not corruption in the soul from Adam that led him astray, but rather the temptations that come from the body, from the flesh, **in Rom.8v3., Paul calls this, "sin in the flesh."**

In Rom.7v18 to 8v4., Paul graphically describes his bondage to the flesh in his pre-Christian days, and then in Rom.8v2., describes how "the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus has made him free from the law of sin and death." Paul informs us in Rom.8v3,4., "For what the law could not do in that it was weak through the flesh, God did by sending His own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, on account of sin: He condemned sin in the flesh, v4 that the righteous requirement of the law might be fulfilled in us who do not walk according to the flesh but according to the Spirit." (NKJV) **The glorious victory of Jesus over "sin in the flesh," and His awesome enabling presence and power, gives us victory over sin.**

In Rom.8v12-16., Paul tells of the contrasting ends of those who walk in the flesh and Spirit.

"Therefore, brethren, we are debtors; not to the flesh, to live according to the flesh. **13** For if you live according to the flesh you will die; but if by the Spirit you put to death the deeds of the body, you will live. **14** For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, these are sons of God. **15** For you did not receive the spirit of bondage again to fear, but you received the Spirit of adoption by whom we cry out, "Abba, Father." **16** The Spirit Himself bears witness with our spirit that we are children of God, **17** and if children, then heirs, heirs of God and joint heirs with Christ, if indeed we suffer with Him, that we may also be glorified together."

The Christian will experience conflict with the flesh and its biological machinery and desires.

We read in Gal.5v16-17. "**v16** And I say: In the Spirit walk ye, and the desire of the flesh ye may not complete; **v17** for the flesh doth desire contrary to the Spirit, and the Spirit contrary to the flesh, and these are opposed one to another, that the things that ye may will — these ye may not do." YLT.

"Are opposed the one to the other," is "allelois" 240, "antikeitai" 480, and it means that they are lined up in face-to-face conflict [anti], a spiritual duel with the flesh and the Devil. ("Antikeitai," is the present indicative of the verb "antikeimai." The verb means, "to lie opposite to;" hence, "to oppose, withstand." **Vine** says that the present participle of the verb with the article, is equivalent to a noun, and signifies, "an adversary," e.g., Lk.13v17. 21v15. 1Cor.16v9. Phil.1v28. 1Tim.5v14. In 2Thes.2v4., this same construction is used to describe the Man of Sin, and is translated "He that opposeth." It is used in 1Tim.1v10., of anything, or anyone, that is opposed to the truth in Jesus. Here in Gal.5v17., it describes the conflict between the believer's spirit and flesh. In Sept. see Zech.3v1. Is.66v6., and Job.13v24.

Barnes writes, of Gal.5v17. "And these are contrary. They are opposite in their nature. They never can harmonize; **see Rom.8v6v7.; compare Gal 5:19-23.** The contrariety Paul has illustrated by showing what each produces; and they are as opposite as adultery, wrath, strife, murders, drunkenness, etc., are to love, joy, goodness, gentleness, and temperance." **End of quote.**

Walking in the Spirit, and crucifying the flesh, are absolute necessities for the Christian. We read in **Gal.5v16,24-26.,** "I say then: walk in the Spirit, and you shall not fulfil the lust of the flesh. v24 And those who are Christ's have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires. v25 If we live in the Spirit, let us also walk in the Spirit. v26 Let us not become conceited, provoking one another, envying one another."

Paul warns us in Gal.6v7-9. v7 "Do not be deceived, God is not mocked; for whatever a man sows, that he will also reap. v8 For he who sows to his flesh will of the flesh reap corruption, but he who sows to the Spirit will of the Spirit reap everlasting life. v 9 And let us not grow weary while doing good, for in due season we shall reap if we do not lose heart." NKJV

We have a demanding and exhausting spiritual warfare against powerful evil angels.

Paul warns us in Eph.6v10-20., that we have great evil spiritual forces opposing us. They attack our thoughts, and try to inflame the desires of the flesh, and corrupt us through worldly things. They try to take away our anointing with their energy lines. The fiery darts of Satan and the powers of darkness are a reality, but through Jesus' Name, God's power and armoury, we can quench them all, and cause Satan and his evil allies to flee. They were totally defeated by Jesus at the Cross. Col.2v14,15. Heb.2v14.

However, if we want to make Satan flee from us, the breastplate of righteousness (a holy life) is vital part of the Christian's armour. **James makes this clear in James.4v4-10.**, v4 "Adulterers and adulteresses! Do you not know that friendship with the world is enmity with God? Whoever therefore wants to be a friend of the world makes himself an enemy of God. v5 Or do you think that the Scripture says in vain, "The Spirit who dwells in us yearns jealously"? v6 **But He gives more grace. Therefore He says: "God resists the proud, But gives grace to the humble."** v7 **Therefore submit to God. Resist ("antistete") the devil and he will flee ("feuxetai, future of feugo") from you.** v8 **Draw near to God and He will draw near to you. Cleanse your hands, you sinners; and purify your hearts, you double-minded.** v9 Lament and mourn and weep! Let your laughter be turned to mourning and your joy to gloom. v10 **Humble yourselves in the sight of the Lord, and He will lift you up."** In 1Peter.5v9. "Whom withstand," is also "antistete," the imperative aorist active of "anthistemi," "take a stand against." the same form and instruction as James.4v7.

In Prov.7v2-27., we read that God's Word and a holy life will keep us from being defeated, and led into sin by the strong desires of the flesh. "v2 Keep my commands and live, And my law as the apple of your eye. v3 Bind them on your fingers; Write them on the tablet of your heart. v4 Say to wisdom, "You are my sister," And call understanding your nearest kin, v5 That they may keep you from the immoral woman, From the seductress who flatters with her words." NKJV

David, in Ps.17v8,9., asked God to; v8 "Keep me as the apple of Your eye; Hide me under the shadow of Your wings, v9 From the wicked who oppress me, From my deadly enemies who surround me." NKJV.

Particularly note, Zech.2v8. "The Lord of Glory has sent me against the nations that oppressed you, **for he who harms you sticks his finger in Jehovah's eye!**" TLB. We read in **Deut.32v10.**, that God kept Israel "as the apple of his eye." Those who attack godly Jews and godly Christians are in serious trouble. It is very dangerous to poke God in the eye! Judgement and eternal judgement awaits those who do it.

When our Lord Jesus had His conflicts with the Devil and his evil angels; He became so physically weak that had to be strengthened by angels. We too will find that it will take God's aid and presence, and His spiritual gifts, to defeat the Wicked One. **We read in 2Cor.10v3-5.**, "For though we walk in the flesh, we do not war after the flesh: v4 For the weapons of our warfare are not carnal, but mighty through God to the pulling down of strong holds; v5 Casting down imaginations, and every high thing that exalts itself against the knowledge of God, and bringing every thought into captivity to the obedience of Christ."

"Bringing every thought into captivity." is "aichmalotizontes pan noema." "Aichmalotizontes," is the present active participle of "aichmalotizo" 163, from "aichmalotos" 164, a captive taken at spear point in war. **See Luke.4v18.** Jesus came to release Satan's prisoners of war. We can defeat all Satan's lies and bring them at spear point to Jesus. "To the obedience of Christ," is the objective genitive, "to the obedience unto Christ." Paul states that laying all our thoughts at the feet of Jesus brings true liberty, and freedom. **Contrast Luke.21v24.** This describes Jerusalem being sacked and devastated by Satan, at the spear point of Rome, and Antichrist, because of their refusal to listen to Jesus.

Peter writes in 2Peter.2v1,2. "But there were false prophets also among the people, even as there shall be false teachers among you, who secretly shall bring in damnable heresies, even denying the Lord that bought them, and bring upon themselves swift destruction. v2 And **many** shall follow their pernicious ways; by reason of whom the way of truth shall be evil spoken of." The word "secretly," is the Greek, "pareisaxousin", the future active of "pareisago" 3919, which means, to introduce surreptitiously, to bring in secretly or craftily. This is exactly what Augustine did when he introduced the destructive heresy of Docetic Gnosticism through his abominable doctrine of "Original Sin."

Chapter 4. The Glorious Victory of Jesus over the world, the flesh, and the Devil.

N.B. All through His life Jesus had conflict with His flesh, and with the Devil, just as we do.

We read in **Heb.4v15.** "For we do not have a High Priest who cannot sympathize with our weaknesses, **but was in all points tempted as we are, yet without sin.**" (NKJ) Jesus had a nature like ours, with all the propensities and passions of a man. Jesus was subjected to all the kinds of temptation and trial that come against us; He is, therefore, able to sympathize with us and to aid us.

"Being tempted, or tried." in Heb.4v15., is "pepeirasmenon," the perfect passive participle of "peirazo," 3985, as in Heb.2v17. It means, to tempt, to test, and to try the nature or character. The perfect tense emphasises the completed state and permanent nature of the tests that Jesus went through, and the compassion and sympathy graced to us by Jesus through the trials and temptations He suffered on our behalf. Jesus is our brother, and He "is not ashamed to call us brethren."

"Yet without sin." See 1Pet.2v22., "Who did no sin;" and Isa.53v9., "He had done no violence, neither was there any deceit in his mouth." See Heb.7v26., "Who is holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners." Our Great High Priest was "without sin," and is able to assist sinners who put their trust in Him.

We read in Heb.2v18., that Jesus having been tempted, ("peirastheis" the first aorist passive participle of "peirazo" 3985), is able to succour those who are now being tempted, ("peirazomenois" the present passive of "peirazo" 3985). As He was tempted and tried in all points, He is able to succour ("run to the cry of," ("boethesai," the first aorist active infinitive of the compound verb "boetheo" 997, to run at a cry or call for help). In Mt.15v25., the Syrophenician uses this very same word.

The Expositor's Greek Testament gives light on Rom.8v3., "In the likeness of sinful flesh."

It states: **"But the emphasis in "homoionoma" is on Christ's likeness to us, not His unlikeness; "flesh of sin" is one idea to the Apostle, and what he means by it is that God sent His Son in that nature which in us is identified with sin. This was the "form" (and "form" rather than "likeness" is what "homoionoma" signifies) in which Christ appeared amongst men. It does not prejudice Christ's sinlessness, which is a fixed point with the Apostle 'ab initio'; and if anyone says it involves a contradiction to maintain that Christ was sinless, and that He came in a nature which with us is identified with sin, it may be pointed out that this identification does not belong to the essence of our nature, but to its corruption, and that the uniform teaching of the New Testament is that Christ is one with us-short of sin. The likeness and the limitation of it (though the former is the point here urged) are equally essential in the Redeemer."** End of quote.

Vincent writes on Rom.8v3. "In the likeness of sinful flesh." "Literally, "of the flesh of sin." The choice of words is especially noteworthy. Paul does not say simply, "He came in flesh" (1John.4v2; 1Tim.3v16.), for this would not have expressed the bond between Christ's manhood and sin. Not "in the flesh of sin," which would have represented Him as partaking of sin. Not "in the likeness of flesh," since He was really and entirely human; but, "in the likeness of the flesh of sin:" **really human, conformed in appearance to the flesh whose characteristic is sin, yet sinless."** End of quote.

Alford writes on Rom.8v3.: "'in the likeness of the flesh of sin' (the flesh 'whose attribute and character was sin). The genitive is not 'hamartolou,' but implies far more-[not merely the contamination by, but] the belonging to and being possessed by."---**He had a nature 'like sinful human nature'- but had not Himself 'a sinful nature,'** Compare Heb.4v15. --- **He was able to be tempted, i.e. subjected to sensuous incitements, e.g. of pain, which in other men break out into sin, but in Him did not."** End of quote.

We read in Rom.8v3., that Jesus totally conquered the temptations from His flesh, and so condemned sin in the flesh, "katekrinen" 2632, "ten" 3588, "hamartian" 266, "en" 1722, "te" 3588, "sarki" 4561." **"Katekrinen,"** is the aorist active indicative of "katakrino" 2632, **to judge against, to condemn.** Jesus condemned men's sins by His victory over the desires of the flesh, **"the condemnation took place in the flesh of Jesus."** **"Likeness,"** in "the likeness of sinful flesh," is "homoiomati" 3667, "sarkos" 4561, "hamartias" 266." It means that Jesus was a real man, and not a phantom as the Docetic Gnostics held. For "likeness," see Phil.2v7., "In the likeness of men, "en homoiomati anthropon." Jesus conquered the flesh that had corrupted and led all mankind into sin. **In Rom.8v1-4.,** Paul informs us that Christ's victory over sin, not only condemned sin in the flesh, but also enables us to live in victory over sin, through the law of the spirit and life in Christ. Jesus partook of human flesh, but did not partake of the sins of the flesh; His holy life condemned sin in the flesh and showed that it was possible to live in victory over it.

In Heb.2v16-18., we read that Jesus took on Him the seed of Abraham, and that it was a moral duty and obligation, "opheilen," the imperfect active indicative of "opheilo," to be obligated, a debt to be paid. Before the foundation of the world, Jesus had obligated Himself to be made in all points like unto His brethren, and experience the same temptations, so that He could be our sympathetic High Priest. The Trinity bound themselves by this selfless obligation, gigantic commitment, and solemn promise, for Jesus to come in flesh and die for us. Titus1v2. Rev.13v8. To be tempted in all points as we are, He had to be made in all points as we are. Heb.2v17. with 4v15. From the level of our humanity, Jesus conquered the world, the flesh, and the Devil. Blessed be His Name!

We read in Heb.2v17., "Because" he has suffered being tempted, he is able to sympathize with sufferers. Jesus knows all about our temptations and trials, not only as God, but also as man, through experiencing them Himself. Heb.5v2,8. **Jesus has suffered more, infinitely more, than we can ever know, and in all our trials, temptations and sorrows, we shall never reach the ghastly depths of temptation and trial that He endured.** There is no trial that we experience, which He has not experienced far worse than we have.

Jesus has won the most wonderful deliverance for us. Blessed be His Name!

We read in Eph.2v1-10.: "v1 And you He made alive, who were dead in trespasses and sins, v2 in which you once walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit who now works in the sons of disobedience, v3 among whom also we all once conducted ourselves in the lusts of our flesh, fulfilling the desires of the flesh and of the mind, and were by nature children of wrath, just as the others. v4 **But God, who is rich in mercy, because of His great love with which He loved us, v5** even when we were dead in trespasses, made us alive together with Christ (by grace you have been saved), v6 and raised us up together, and made us sit together in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus, v7 that in the ages to come He might show the exceeding riches of His grace in His kindness toward us in Christ Jesus. v8 For by grace you have been saved through faith, and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God, v9 not of works, lest anyone should boast. v10 For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand that we should walk in them." NKJV

See Col.2v11., "In whom also ye are circumcised with the circumcision made without hands, **in putting off the body of the sins of the flesh** by the circumcision of Christ." See 1Pet.4v1-4. 1Jn.2v16. "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." In the last days, there will be a great eruption of sexual sin. Judev7,8.

James learned his doctrine of "sin in the flesh" from Jesus, by living with Him for about 30 years.
He writes in James.1v13-16. v13 "Let no one say when he is tempted, I am tempted from God; for God is incapable of being tempted by [what is] evil and He Himself tempts no one. v14 **But every person is tempted when he is drawn away, enticed and baited by his own evil desire (lust, passions).** v15 **Then the evil desire, when it has conceived, gives birth to sin, and sin, when it is fully matured, brings forth death.** v16 Do not be misled, my beloved brethren." **Amplified Version.**

It is the matured and determined attitude to sin that brings about the spiritual death of the soul. When does this occur in a child? Paul says that it is when they fully comprehend right from wrong, and this may vary in children. Children certainly differ a great deal, you have the godly child Samuel, and in contrast, you have wicked Pharaoh, who was opposed to God for most of his life.

We also see this mature and determined attitude to sin demonstrated in the incredible stubbornness of the people that Jesus preached to during His ministry, for only a small percentage repented at His preaching, even though it was confirmed by mighty signs, wonders, and miracles; the like of which had never been seen before. Jesus was broken hearted over this terrible rejection of God's love and forgiveness; we see Him weeping uncontrollably over Jerusalem and an apostate nation, for He saw in prophetic vision, what was going to happen to them in the not too distant future.

We read in Luke.19v41-44. "v41 Now as He drew near, He saw the city and wept, v42 saying, "If you had known, even you, especially in this your day, the things that make for your peace! But now, they are hidden from your eyes. v43 "For days will come upon you when your enemies will build an embankment around you, surround you and close you in on every side, v44 "and level you, and your children within you, to the ground; and they will not leave in you one stone upon another, because you did not know the time of your visitation."(NKJ)

The words "but now they are hid from thine eyes" speak volumes! We see that the end result of the spiritual blindness generated by their unrepentant attitudes, is apostasy, death and destruction. In A.D. 66, the Jews in their blind pride and arrogance rose up in rebellion against the Romans in an attempt to throw off their yoke. The result was that in A.D. 70, Jerusalem was absolutely destroyed, even as the Lord had seen in vision, and 1,100,000 Jews were killed, with many being crucified, or impaled upon stakes, upon the hills surrounding the city, as witnessed and written about by Flavius Josephus.

In Lk.19v41., "wept," is "eklausen," the aorist active indicative of "klaio" 2799, to sob, i.e. wail aloud, which Mary did in Jn.11v33. In Jn.11v35., "Jesus wept," "wept," is "edakrusen," the aorist active indicative of "dakruo," from "dakru," a tear. The verb "dakruo" 1145, only occurs here in Jn.11v 35. in the New Testament, it never means to wail as "klaio" 2799 does, but rather to shed tears, it can mean to cry silently. Jesus was deeply moved with the grief of Mary and Martha and burst into tears. It was a grief too deep for words. Jesus understood, and still understands our grief. This shortest verse in the Bible, tells us that Jesus really feels for us, and suffers with us in our times of deepest need and inner pain. See Heb.4v15. God really understands and cares. Those who mourn can always come to God for His amazing comfort. Mt.5v4. Mk.16v10. Lk.6v21. 2Cor.1v3-10. (In Acts.20v19., we read that Paul prayed with moving compassion and tears for the Christians at Ephesus, "with tears," is "dakruon.")

Our Lord's great inner conflict and pain in Gethsemane is seen in Heb.5v7., where we read that Jesus prayed, "with strong crying and tears," "meta krauges kai dakruon," as He fought to win our salvation. It was a selfless, and most agonising and painful battle, and He won it for us. Blessed be His Name!

How did Jesus overcome temptation from the world, the flesh and the Devil?

We read in the Scriptures that Jesus was in all things made like us, Heb.2v17., and "was in all points tempted as we are," Heb.4v15., in order to be our sympathetic, merciful and faithful great High Priest.

We read in Rom.8v3., that Jesus was made "in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin, condemned sin in the flesh." "Likeness," is "homoiomati" 3667," **exactly as in Phil.2v7., Jesus had, "a real and exact likeness of our humanity, Jesus was not a Docetic phantom."** Jesus condemned the sin of men by overcoming the temptations from the flesh, which had corrupted the rest of mankind. Jesus had the flesh, which led all the rest of mankind into sin, but His glory is that He overcame it, and was sinless. Paul affirms that Jesus possessed a human nature like that of all mankind; but that He remained sinless, because he never yielded to the impulses of His fleshly nature.

Jesus was certainly tempted for we read in Heb.2v18. "For in that He Himself has **suffered, being tempted**, He is able to succour ("boethesai," the aorist active infinitive of "boethao," to run at a cry or call for help, to those who are tempted. See Matt 15:25.) Again, we read in **Heb.4v15,16.**, "Seeing then that we have a great High Priest who has passed through the heavens, Jesus the Son of God, let us hold fast our confession. **v15** For we do not have a High Priest who cannot sympathize with our weaknesses, but **was in all points tempted as we are, yet without sin. v16** Let us therefore come boldly to the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy and find grace to help in time of need."

How did Jesus overcome sin? If we say that He turned on His deity, then He was not tempted in all points as we are. We find the secret in Ps.69v8-12. v8 "I am become a stranger unto my brethren, and an alien unto my mother's children. **v9** For **the zeal of thine house hath eaten me up**; and the reproaches of them that reproached thee are fallen upon me. **v10** **When I wept, and chastened my soul with fasting**, that was to my reproach. **v11** I made sackcloth also my garment; and I became a proverb to them. **v12** They that sit in the gate speak against me; and I was the song of the drunkards."

This Scripture states that Jesus disciplined His flesh with fasting and prayer, and He was consumed with zeal to save us and do His Father's will. This brought horrific opposition and terrible inner pain, but communion with His Father brought Him through. If we want to win the battle with the flesh, we have to follow our Lord's example. Paul certainly did, he writes in **1Cor.9v26,27.**, "Therefore, I do not run aimlessly, I do not box as one beating the air; **v27** but I pommel and discipline my body and subdue it and make it my slave, lest after I have preached to others, I myself should be disqualified." Let us follow the example of our Lord and Paul, and exercise self-discipline through communion with God.

In Rom.7v7 to 8v4., Paul teaches that he, like his Lord, was born with, "dead sin in the flesh," however, unlike his Lord, Paul, like everybody else, yielded to this temptation from the sinful desires of the flesh. As a result, Paul, like everyone else, died spiritually as a result of yielding to this temptation. Whereas the Lord Jesus resisted every temptation and conquered them, and thus He "condemned sin in the flesh." **Rom.8v3.** This vital truth of our Lord's true humanity is also clearly stated by Paul in Heb.2v17,18. and 4v14-16., where he states that Jesus was not only "**made like unto His brethren in ALL THINGS,**" but that **Jesus was also "in ALL points tempted like as we are."** **Positive proof of His humanity.**

Chapter 4. The Great Tribulation.

Satan is allowed to run riot at the end of this age: "the mystery of lawlessness." **2Thes.2v7.**

At the end of this Age, the Age of Grace, immediately before our Lord's Second Coming, there will be a time of great trouble of three and a half years duration, the like of which has never been seen since the beginning of the world, this period of time is called, "The Great Tribulation." We are told in Rev.12v7-12., that this tribulation occurs, because Satan and his evil angels, now in the heavenly places, are cast out of them into the earth, and Satan begins his plan, called, "the Mystery of Iniquity" ("Iniquity," is "anomias," 458, lawlessness). God has up to this time restrained Satan's plans, however, during The Great Tribulation God allows Satan to put his plans into operation, to expose Satan's great wickedness. See **2Thes.2v3-12., N.B. v7** "For the mystery of lawlessness is already at work; only He who **now restrains** will do so until He is taken out of the way. **v8** And then the Lawless One will be revealed, whom the Lord will consume with the breath of His mouth and destroy with the brightness of His coming." NKJV. "Kai katargesei te epiphaneia tes parousias autou," The commanding word and outshining, splendour and glory of Jesus at His second coming destroys his enemies. Rev.19v15,19-21. Zech.14v12.

"Restrains" in Greek is, "katechon" 2722, to hold fast or down, to restrain. There will be a sudden deluge of evil into the world, which will produce conditions like those experienced by Noah before the Flood, and Lot, when he fled from Sodom. During this time because "iniquity shall abound (literally, has come to the full) the "agape" love of many (Christians) will wax cold," these believers will be overwhelmed by the evil in the world, because they have failed to prepare themselves for this terrible time. Rev.7v14. 12v9,12,14. Matt.24v12,21. Eph.6v12. 2Thess.2v1-12. N.B. v7, Luke.17v26-37. 18v1-8. Dan.8v23.

John writes in 1John.4v1-6. **v1** "Beloved, do not believe every spirit, but test the spirits, whether they are of God; because many false prophets have gone out into the world. **v2** By this you know the Spirit of God:

Every spirit that confesses that Jesus Christ has come in the flesh is of God, **v3** and every spirit that does not confess that Jesus Christ has come in the flesh is not of God. And this is the spirit of the Antichrist, which you have heard was coming, and is now already in the world. **v4** You are of God, little children, and have overcome them, because He who is in you is greater than he who is in the world. **v5** They are of the world. Therefore they speak as of the world, and the world hears them. **v6** We are of God. He who knows God hears us; he who is not of God does not hear us. By this we know the spirit of truth and the spirit of error."

The danger of a renewed upsurge of Docetic Gnosticism in the last days.

he apostle John states very strongly that the person who "confesseth not that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh **is not of God: and this is that spirit of antichrist.**" He is referring here to the destructive heresy of Docetic Gnosticism, which many Christians today hold and believe, because of their acceptance of the doctrine of "Original Sin." When John stated that the person who does not believe that Jesus Christ has come in the flesh is "not of God," and has "the spirit of antichrist," he clearly had in mind also, not just his own time, but also the time of The Great Tribulation. During which the final and most evil Antichrist sets up his image in the Temple in Jerusalem, from where he reigns. **John states that we can only overcome Antichrist,** the false prophets and teachers, of the evil days of The Great Tribulation, **if** we believe "that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh", that is if we recognise that Jesus had a real humanity exactly like our own, and NOT as the false prophets and teachers teach, that He was Docetic phantom. 2Thess 2v4.

The believer will only overcome in these dark evil days if their mind is filled with truth, as John writes in 1John.5v4., "For whatsoever is born of God overcometh the world: and this is the victory that overcometh the world, even our faith."

The truth that we believe in these evil dark days that are coming is vital for our eternal salvation, because, as our Lord stated in Matt.24v12,13., "And because iniquity shall abound, the "agape" love of many shall wax cold. But he that shall endure unto the end, the same shall be saved." It is quite clear that it is those who have their minds filled with the Truth, and have prayed and not fainted, who will be saved, the others will have backslidden and gone into apostasy, so it is vital for us as believers to "love" the truth. **Luke.18v1. See 2Thess.2v10.** "And with all deceivableness of unrighteousness in them that perish; because they received not the love of the truth, that they might be saved."

Paul, in writing to Timothy in 1Timothy.3v16, states the vital truth that, "God was manifest in the flesh" and then immediately in the next verse, **1Timothy 4v1.**, goes on to state; "Now the Spirit speaketh expressly, that in the latter times some will depart from the faith, giving heed to seducing spirits, and doctrines of devils!" Paul, like John, knew that the destructive heresy of Docetic Gnosticism would still be in the Church in the last days, and so he warns us against believing it, by stating that our Lord did, indeed, come in the flesh, and had a humanity like our own. Paul states that the denial of the humanity of Christ in the days of The Great Tribulation will mean that "some will depart from the faith."

Peter writes to the Christians of the five Roman provinces of Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia, and Bithynia, in Asia Minor, to warn them about and against the development of the Docetic and Cerinthian Gnostic heresies, which also greatly disturbed Paul, and he wrote against it in Colossians, Ephesians, and Pastoral Epistles, and John also attacks this mindset in his Gospel, Epistles, and the Apocalypse.

Peter states in 2Peter.1v16 to 2v3. v16 "For we did not follow cunningly devised fables when we made known to you the power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, but were eyewitnesses of His majesty. **v17** For He received from God the Father honor and glory when such a voice came to Him from the Excellent Glory: "This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased." **v18** And we heard this voice, which came from heaven when we were with Him on the holy mountain. **v19** And so we have the prophetic word confirmed, which you do well to heed as a light that shines in a dark place, until the day dawns and the morning star rises in your hearts; **v20** knowing this first, that no prophecy of Scripture is of any private interpretation, **v21** for prophecy never came by the will of man, but holy men of God spoke as they were moved by the Holy Spirit."

2Pet.2v1-3. "But there were also false prophets among the people, even as there will be false teachers among you, who will secretly bring in destructive heresies, even denying the Lord who bought them, and bring on themselves swift destruction. **v2** And many will follow their destructive ways, because of whom the way of truth will be blasphemed. **v3** By covetousness they will exploit you with deceptive words; for a long time their judgment has not been idle, and their destruction does not slumber." NKJV)

Peter saw the terrible effects of the evil doctrine of Docetic Gnosticism in the Church in the last days of this Age, especially in the last three and a half years of this Age (The Great Tribulation) and the end of the false teachers, and those who believe them. These apostates will deny the Lord who bought them, and bring upon themselves swift destruction, and go into eternal punishment. The doctrine of "Original Sin," craftily and secretly brings this very doctrine of Docetic Gnosticism into the Church, and in The Great Tribulation it will produce spiritual confusion, bewilderment, havoc and apostasy in the Church.

In 2Pet.1v16., Peter uses the phrase, "cunningly devised fables", "sesophismenois" 4679, "muthois" 3454. "Sesophismenois," is the perfect passive participle of "sophizo," to invent cleverly (as used here) or to play the

sophist. "Muthois," is an old term for word, narrative, story, fiction, fable, and falsehood. Peter states that the false doctrine of the Docetic Gnostics is "cleverly invented fiction, fables and falsehoods."

Peter states that the false teachers and those who accept and believe the evil doctrine of Docetism from them, will lead a "pernicious" life. "Pernicious ways" is the Greek "aselgeiais" 766, the associative instrumental case of "aselgeia," which means, unbridled lust, excess, licentiousness, lasciviousness, wantonness, shamelessness, and insolence. **In 2Peter.2v3-22.**, he goes on to give Old Testament examples of the character of these evil people and their final end.

In Mt.24v45 to 25v13. Jesus gives two examples of those who come through The Great Tribulation victoriously, in the "faithful and wise servant" and the "five wise virgins," and two examples of those who do not, in the "evil servant" and the "five foolish virgins,"

N.B. "The Contrast Between Adam and Christ in Their Effect Upon Humanity. Rom.5v12-21.

Some interpret these verses in Romans to mean that men are forced into sin, and they cannot help sinning, because of the sin of Adam. Those who insist that these verses teach that all humanity is forced into evil by Adam's sin, must accept that this would make these verses teach ultimate reconciliation for all mankind. The key verses are verses 17,18, and 19; Adam's sin did not force men to be sinners, no more than Christ's atonement forces men to be justified; in both cases, the free will of man is the determining factor. Rom.5v12,17. The result of following Adam is spiritual death; whereas the result of following Christ is justification and spiritual life. Is.53v6. Paul compares the severity of God in condemning Adam after one sin, with God's mercy to the Christian after a multitude of sins. Rom.5v16. James.5v19,20. Adam's first sin, the first step away from God, was the beginning of many steps away from God. God dealt immediately with Adam's sin, both for Adam's and the Creation's sake, lest he continued to live forever by partaking continually of the tree of life. Notice the kind and gentle attempts to make Adam and Eve confess their sin, and the thoughtful provision of God, even after their rebellion. The physical death which fell upon the human race after Adam's sin, is not the result of any person's sin, for children still die who have not sinned, Rom.5v14., physical death is the result of the withdrawal of the tree of life. Had not this been done, Adam would have lived in sin forever. Gen.3v22-24.

N.B. The secret of Paul's prayer life and spiritual victory. Rom.8v26.

Paul states that the Holy Spirit always makes His unlimited abilities available to us when we pray.

Paul writes in Rom.8v26., "Likewise the Spirit also helps in our weaknesses. For we do not know what we should pray for as we ought, but the Spirit Himself makes intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered." (NKJ) In, "For we know not what we should pray for as we ought," "as we ought," is "katho dei," "as it is necessary." Rom.8v26. After about 25 years of Christian experience, Paul states that it was only the Holy Spirit's help and gifts that prevented him from making mistakes over what to pray for, and enabled him to intercede effectively for God's saints. N.B. Jn.14v16,17,26. 15v26,27. 16v6,16,17.

In the light of this intercession by the Holy Spirit, we can well understand why Paul thanked God in **1Cor.14v18.**, that he spoke in tongues more than any of the verbose tongue speaking Corinthians. Praying in tongues releases the Holy Spirit's power gifts, and prayer for the saints according to the will and desires of God. **We do not know how to pray "as we ought," "katho dei," "as it is necessary," but the Holy Spirit, "maketh intercession for us;"** "huperentungchanei," 5241, which only occurs here in the New Testament. It is derived from the verb "entungchano," 1793," which means "to light upon or fall in with; to go to meet," and signifies to intercede or negotiate for another. **A. T. Robertson** says "It is a picturesque word of rescue by one who "happens on," "entungchanei" 1793, one who is in trouble and "in his behalf," "huper," 5228, pleads "with unuttered groanings" (instrumental case) or with "sighs that baffle words" (Denney)." **End of quote.** Compare Acts.25v24. Rom.8v34. 11v2. Heb.7v25.

Paul tells us in Rom.8v26,27., that the Holy Spirit is always available to us, to take hold with us against our infirmities, weakness, and limitations. "Helps," poorly expresses the thought in "sunantilambanetai," the present indicative of "sunantilambanomai," 4878, "to lend a hand together with, at the same time with one." It is a compound of "sun," 4862," "with," or "together;" and "anti," 473, "against;" and "lambanomai," 2983, "to take and get hold of," and so, "to actively support and help." The Holy Spirit comes to enable us to pray, and mightily supplement our weakness and limitations with His infinite abilities, grace and love. The Holy Spirit comes to make the promise real to us that, "by Christ's bruise we are healed," and to reveal to us the ghastly bruising of our Lord's emotions, body, soul, and spirit, during his life, ministry and atonement, that have bought healing for our body soul and spirit. By His bruise, we are healed!

Final Conclusion.

The heart-felt warnings of the New Testament Apostles and Holy Spirit inspired writers could not be any clearer, they warn us of the dire consequences of accepting the damnable heresy of Docetic Gnosticism. Christians do not realise that this can definitely come about as a result of holding and believing Augustine's false doctrine of "Original Sin," and his "born in sin" theories. **God states in Hosea.4v6., "My people are destroyed (perish) for lack of the knowledge (of ME)." They lack of the correct knowledge about Jesus and the Father.** It is vitally important to have a correct interpretation of the Scriptures about the true humanity of Jesus, or we fail to have the true and deep relationship with Jesus and the Father that they, and

we, desire. If we fail to understand our Lord's humanity, we will not realise the extent of the sufferings of Jesus for us. A correct knowledge about Christ's humanity sets us spiritually free.

John.17v17. "Sanctify them through ("en" 1722, in, by, with, through) Your truth. Your word is truth."

John.8v31,32. "Then Jesus said to those Jews who believed Him, "If you abide in My word, you are My disciples indeed. v32 And you shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free." (NKJ)

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