

**An Exposition of Man Limiting God by Not Embracing Poverty of the  
Spirit from a Philosophic Theological Christian Perspective**

**By**

**Crista van Zyl**

**A dissertation submitted in fulfilment of the requirements for the  
degree of**

**Philosophy Doctor  
(Theology)**

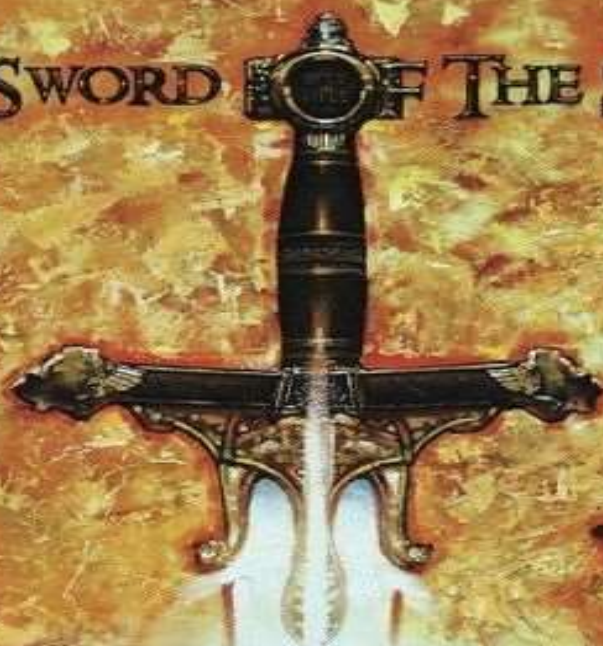
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**August 2023**

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# THE SWORD OF THE SPIRIT



WORD OF GOD

*F. Johnson*

## **Declaration**

I, Crista van Zyl, declare that the work contained in this dissertation: “An Exposition of Man Limiting God by Not Embracing Poverty of the Spirit from A Philosophic Theological Christian Perspective”, is my own original work, gathered and utilised primarily to fulfil the purposes and objectives of this study and has not been previously in its entirety, or in part, been submitted at any university for a degree. I certify that all information contained herein, and all my application materials submitted by me are true, correct, and accurate to the best of my knowledge.

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Crista van Zyl

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Date

## **Dedication**

I dedicate this research to God the Father, who Himself has put knowledge in my heart to believe His revelation of Himself to me because it is confirmed in **Romans 1:19** “Because that which may be known of God is manifest in them; for God hath shewed it unto them.”

Without divine revelation, we would never know anything about this aspect of the Being of God. It is decidedly a doctrine of revelation. Scripture does not ask us to understand God but only to believe His revelation of Himself. We must use our minds to explain the Word of God. Never use the Bible to explain our minds and personal religious philosophy.

## Acknowledgements

My highest appreciation is to Abba Father, who carries me in times I am unaware of. I am grateful to Jesus, who is preparing our eternal home with our Father and I have the assurance because it is written in **John 14:26 “But the Comforter, which is the Holy Ghost, whom the Father will send in my name, he shall teach you all things, and bring all things to your remembrance, whatsoever I have said unto you.”**

I sincerely thank Dr Anke Brand for her mentorship and for steering me in the right direction. You pushed me when I needed it. Anke, you have been a true mentor in every sense with your spiritual influence and support. Again, my sincere appreciation for your excellent supervision and wisdom. I attribute the level of my doctor’s degree to your encouragement and support.

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I wish to express my sincerest thanks and appreciation to my beloved father Ferdie, mother Elsa, brother Ferdie and true friend, Erika Bosma, who prayed and supported me throughout this research project.

Shalom.

## **Abstract**

An Exposition of Man Limiting God by Not Embracing Poverty of the Spirit from A Philosophic Theological Christian Perspective

By  
Crista van Zyl

Philosophy Doctor (Theology)  
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Dr Anke Brand (PhD MTh), Study Leader

This dissertation gives a biblical and hermeneutical explanation of man's position limiting God. It expounds on man's point of the exposition of man who limits God because of his imperfect heart, unbelief, and sin. Biblical examples of Herod, Saul, Ahab, Judas, Demas, and Lot's wife were given to prove this point.

True power and authority are to be found when people submit to God's authority. If people want power in the body of Christ, they must submit to God and obey His Law and commands. Satan does not have a legal ground in the life of believers.

Theologically no one can limit God but through unbelief, people limit God. Goliath must fall in our lives to inherit the Kingdom of God. Giants can come in many ways in a person's life, they can manifest as little things starting as babies and growing with them as they get older. The giant in front of you is never more prominent than God inside of you. A look into the lives of real people today with real limitations can be illustrated as God's Generals.

The covenantal foundation is a crucial aspect of biblical theology that establishes the principles of blessing and curse, as well as seedtime and harvest. This covenantal framework is based on the understanding that God has made a covenant with his people and that this covenant includes promises of blessings for obedience and curses for disobedience.

These blessings and curses are not arbitrary but tied to the principles of seedtime and harvest, which dictate that our actions have consequences. In other words, the blessings, and curses that we experience are a direct result of the seeds that we sow. This covenantal foundation is central to understanding the biblical worldview and provides a framework for understanding the relationship between God and His people, as well as the nature of the world in which we live. For those pursuing doctoral studies in theology or biblical studies, a deep understanding of the covenantal foundation is essential to interpreting and understanding the biblical text.

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## 1. Prolegomena

The working title “An Exposition of Man Limiting God by Not Embracing Poverty of The Spirit from A Philosophic Theological Christian Perspective” already identifies the purpose of this dissertation and explains the background in how it relates to this research.

Man with a human body and brain that are finite or limited was created by an omnipresent, omnipotent, omnibenevolent, and omniscient God who wants to limit an infinite God and His course. God created out of nothingness the beginning of great endings!

**“In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth. And the earth was without form, and void; and darkness was upon the face of the deep. And the Spirit of God moved upon the face of the waters.”**

**Genesis 1:1-2.**

Numerous people have, at some point in their lives, unintentionally or very naively limited God in some way. They had restricted God in various ways, including via fear of failure, fear of persecution, and limited vision. Beyond what we are going through, God has more for individuals. Limits are removed, and what you are asking for will manifest itself abundantly if you let the Word of God to paint a picture inside of you rather than allowing the spirit of restriction to do so. Because the Israelites were guided by their sights rather than their beliefs, they were unable to obtain an authentic image of God.

The sights of the Israelites were not fixed on the miracles in front of them, thus, they limited God’s ability to create His heart and mind in them because they did not remember His power:

**“How oft did they provoke him in the wilderness, and grieve him in the desert! Yea, they turned back and tempted God, and limited the Holy One of Israel.”**

**Psalms 78:40-41.**

As a result, people placed limitations on what they believed He could or would do for them. People must choose between the poverty of being alive, which they must accept, and the poverty of the real world, which they must seek to be free and to love. Always seek the liberation of the heart, the freedom born of our own destitution. It is impossible to understand the backdrop of this study without mentioning the following:

**“Blessed are the poor in spirit: for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.”**

**Matthew 5:3.**

This is an excellent example of an exposition of man not limiting God and will inherit the kingdom of God. When Jesus said these words, He wanted people to be humble in their spirits

and realize their own sins and their spiritual emptiness. People must not be proud in their hearts, thinking they don't need God.

**“But he giveth more grace. Wherefore he saith, God resisteth the proud, but giveth grace unto the humble.”**

**James 4:6.**

James 4:7-10 is the answer to developing a healthy spirit. This dissertation will point out the exposition of man who limits God because of his imperfect heart, unbelief, and sin. Many people who are poor in spirit are blessed because of their need for God, for they will receive the Kingdom of Heaven. People are blessed because they now have a disposition opposite their natural selves. This is indisputable proof that God has begun working in them by His Spirit to create His own image. Poor in the spirit is part of the nature of God, as Jesus affirms:

**“Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in heart: and ye shall find rest unto your souls.”**

**Matthew 11:29.**

There are lists of the acts of the flesh and those who will not enter the Kingdom of God in 1 Corinthians 6:9–10 and Galatians 5:19–21.

Many people mock His blessing when they look at these lists. Even professed Christians have disagreed with the obvious message presented in these methods. By ordaining homosexual ministers, some denominations, for instance, have sanctioned some of these wicked practices. Even if many Christians engage in theft, adultery, and fornication, some pastors nevertheless choose not to condemn these behaviours.

Thankfully, God is merciful and gracious. 1 Corinthians 6:11 opens with a remarkable statement, “And such were some of you:”. People who repent their sins and place their faith in Christ alone will become a new creation<sup>1</sup>. Then some people try to negotiate with God regarding His laws.

People always appear to be trying to find a compromise or a way around God's Word. God is very definite in His Word, and if we obey it, it is clear and without ambiguity. For instance, some people fast for the incorrect purposes and attempt to control or influence God in this way. Fasting should be done alone with God or in a sincere group of believers working toward a shared objective. The aim should be God's glory. Even if people tried to control God, they couldn't, and even if they prayed and fasted for anything to happen, God still had the final say. God gives us the option to choose good or evil.

God gives humans free will when they can make decisions that impact their future. The necessity of acquired freedom is attested to in the Bible. No one is capable of submission and trust unless they are freed from the grip of sin. People are naturally free, but unless they are liberated from the grip of sin, their personal desires serve sin. Because it enables humans to achieve astounding heights of intellectual, entrepreneurial, and social brilliance that would not be conceivable without individual choice, free will is crucial. However, when people are free, they run the risk of experiencing evil. A man has the power to be righteous if that is what he wants to be, and he also has the power to tend toward being evil if that is what he wants to be.

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<sup>1</sup> 2 Corinthians 5:17

Because everything people do is influenced by causes over which they have little control, having free will does not provide them the ability to act against their nature or God's rule. Even if people have free will, it has limitations.

Boundaries are the dividing line or point between two places, whereas limits are limitations or restrictions that one is not allowed to cross. Some people view the Bible as a book of laws, commandments<sup>2</sup>, and prohibitions. Others see a way of thinking and guidelines for the wise. Others perceive mythology, tales describing the essence of human existence, and the human predicament.

The Bible does indeed contain laws, morals, and narratives that describe life on earth. Nevertheless, the Bible is a living book to Christians about the interactions between God and society, society and God, and society and each other. God intended for people to respect limits when he created the world. God respects ours, therefore we should respect His as well.

When people sin, they step out of the fences and boundaries, violate the laws and regulations set by God and break away from the bonds and relationship with God. People must remain in the will of God. Then they will remain within the bounty of His purpose for their lives.

Some people argue that man's free will is a source of evil because, through the exercise of free will, people have broken their relationship with God. In the Old Testament, sin is understood as an opposition to God and something unacceptable or lesser such as the leader of the fallen angels, Satan<sup>3</sup>.

**“And it came to pass on the morrow, that the evil spirit from God came upon Saul, and he prophesied in the midst of the house: and David played with his hand, as at other times: and there was a javelin in Saul's hand.”**

**1 Samuel 18:10.**

This cannot possibly mean God is the source of wickedness or sin. Saul was locked in a profound inner conflict and wrestling with the Lord and his own bitterness and resentment toward David. During this crisis, the Spirit stirred him up and drove him to deal with his emotions and his misguided quest for personal significance. Saul's response was unfortunate and instead of yielding to the convicting influence of the Spirit, he snapped under pressure and gave vent to his hatred. That is Satan putting limitations on the life of people<sup>4</sup>. As followers, we have been given authority over demons.

The way demons can get a stronghold on us is to walk in sin deliberately and persistently. Therefore, let God be God. Paul says:

**“Wherefore seeing we also are compassed about with so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which doth so easily beset us, and let us run with patience the race that is set before us,”**

**Hebrews 12:1.**

<sup>2</sup> Cloud, Henry and Townsend, John. (1992) Boundaries. South Africa: Novus Holdings. p.302

<sup>3</sup> The Source of Evil: <https://www.focusonthefamily.com/family-qa/what-the-bible-says-about-the-origin-of-evil/>

<sup>4</sup> Franklin, Jentezen. (2013) Limitless. Florida: Charisma House. p.69

These hinders become sins that slow us down. Giving it to God may seem scary at first, but surrender brings freedom. The struggle for our souls is no less crucial than the battle fought by David. David was poor in spirit. Therefore, he could conquer Goliath, and just as he did conquer Goliath, we must defeat the giants in our lives. An overview of some of the lives of people in the Bible who did and did not limit God will help with guidance to conquer our giants. Enoch and Elijah did not limit God. The only two people in the Bible, Enoch, and Elijah, were said to have been chosen to escape death. Paul explained:

**“By faith Enoch was translated that he should not see death; and was not found, because God had translated him: for before his translation he had this testimony, that he pleased God. But without faith it is impossible to please him: for he that cometh to God must believe that he is, and that he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him.”**

**Hebrews 11:5-6.**

Enoch fearlessly proclaimed God’s message to a hostile world because of his faith in God and thus with no limitations. Against this background, the principle of Mark 4:14-20 on the parable of the sower will be expounded. To the author of this dissertation, this is the most essential parable Jesus ever told. When the principle it teaches is understood and applied, it will affect every part of one’s life- spiritual, physical, mental, and financial.

When one refers to Elijah and Enoch's abovementioned example, the harvest is that they both escaped death because of their seed of faith. God gives seedtime and harvest so that people have food to eat and enjoy, to keep their physical bodies functioning so that they remain biologically alive.

A person who sows to appease his sinful natural life will reap destruction from that natural life, but a person who sows to appease the Spirit will reap eternal life from the Spirit because God cannot be mocked<sup>5</sup>. The same holds true for those who set traps for other people. He will eventually fall victim to it<sup>6</sup>.

The following questions briefly address the statement of the problem - Is it possible to limit an infinite God? Some people would say a definite “no!”. But others would say that man’s actions restrict God’s work and plans in the lives of man. The primary motivation of the research project is to determine why people limit God with their prayers, with their finances, with their health and mostly with their unbelief.

**“Death and life are in the power of the tongue: and they that love it shall eat the fruit thereof.”**

**Proverbs 18:21.**

Too many people are speaking words of death, yet at the same time expecting to see life happen. Terms of death limit God; instead, start speaking words of life, decreeing, and declaring what you want to see.

People also limit God with their actions, as did the Old Testament's Israelites, complaining,

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<sup>5</sup> Galatians 6:7-8

<sup>6</sup> Proverbs 26:27

grumbling, and doubting<sup>7</sup>. Then some people limit God in their relationship with their thoughts and focus on their past. God intends to do a brand-new thing in your life, but He cannot do something new if you are focused on the past<sup>8</sup>. If you had a revelation of who God is, you would understand that He doesn't need to be limited because He is an unlimited God.

It is a subject that is peculiarly seasonable in the present day. Strange doctrines have risen of late upon the whole issue of limiting God. Some appear to confound it to their own limited thinking. Others waste it away to nothing, under the pretence of "God's will be done", therefore not perusing, no pleading in prayer and not pressing forward.

Others set up a wrong standard of God's power before their eyes and failing to attain authority, waste their lives from one lost battle to the next in the vain hope that someday they will overcome the unseen forces of Satan. On a day like this, a biblical exegesis of the subject may be of excellent use to our souls as a great prominent principle of the Gospel. No one should ever limit God, but somehow during life, we start to limit God and question Him. It is hesitation, absence of faith, and doubt that steal us from seeing the miracles He has done for us and the assurances He still plans to fulfil in our lives.

**"But ye, beloved, building up yourselves on your most holy faith, praying in the Holy Ghost."**

**Jude 1:20.**

If individuals are going to do this, then the question is, how do they get to a place where they do not limit God and build themselves up in their belief to have confidence in God and His Word? Signs can be found in Abraham's life as to how to live such a life:

**"Who against hope believed in hope, that he might become the father of many nations, according to that which was spoken, So shall thy seed be. And being not weak in faith, he considered not his own body now dead, when he was about an hundred years old, neither yet the deadness of Sara's womb: He staggered not at the promise of God through unbelief; but was strong in faith, giving glory to God; And being fully persuaded that, what he had promised, he was able also to perform."**

**Romans 4:18-21.**

Faith can be built up by obedience, believing in God no matter what and dealing with doubt quickly. When the absence of faith is overcome, the power of God is manifested. Out of the explanation from the statement of the problem comes the objectives of the research and the subject before humanity is of such deep and vast importance that it demands a barrier, cleaning up and marking out on every side. A needful doctrine for the believer's authority can never be too sharply developed or brought fully into the light.

To clear away the confusion between principles and principles, which is so sadly familiar among Christians and to map out the exact relation between truths and truths in religion is one way to attain accuracy in theology.

This dissertation shall, therefore, not hesitate to lay before the readers a series of connected

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<sup>7</sup> Psalm 78:40-41

<sup>8</sup> Isaiah 43:19

propositions and statements drawn from Scripture, which will be found helpful in defining the exact nature of man limiting God.

This dissertation has two goals in mind. Because it still applies today, the dissertation will first look at what is meant by limiting the Holy One of Israel and how it affects people. People often impose their will on God, sometimes out of mistrust of Him, and other times they take this transgression to its furthest and most severe point by completely losing faith in His compassion and mercy. The second part of the dissertation will investigate how the Bible interprets man's inadequate efforts to restrain God.

A correlation will be drawn between those who are “the poor in spirit:”<sup>9</sup>, those who have realized that their self-sufficiency is not enough to carry on, those who realize that people must be contingent on God to be alive and thrive and the children of God who is not limiting the working power of the Holy Spirit in their lives. If the Apostle Paul had not warned people about quenching the Spirit, who among them would have thought it was possible<sup>10</sup>? To suggest that the supreme Spirit of God could ever be quenched and thus restricted in what he might do otherwise in the lives of people and in the life of the local church is to tread on delicate scriptural slush.

Apostle Paul says in Galatians 5:16-18 that God has given Christians the power either to limit or release what the Spirit does in the lives of His people. The dissertation will show that the Spirit comes to us like a fire, either to be blown into full flame and given the freedom to achieve his will or to be smothered and smothered by the water of human fear, control, and inconsistent theology. The Israelites knew that God wanted to bless His people so they could be a blessing. They knew that God is the One who gives the power to get wealth so that He may “establish his covenant”.<sup>11</sup> This is still true today where the Word teaches:

**“Let him that stole steal no more: but rather let him labour, working with his hands the thing which is good, that he may have to give to him that needeth.”**

**Ephesians 4:28.**

Until this day, God has blessed man abundantly so that he may have enough to “abound to every good work.”<sup>12</sup> This dissertation will show that every person has a part to play if we want to access God’s resources and use what He provides. It is time for the church to learn what true wealth and prosperity really are, to tap into the riches that spring from the Word (to be poor in spirit) instead of the world and enjoy living unlimited to God’s provision for all our needs.

The goals and research objectives of this dissertation are to go back to the Word of God and research what He has to say about getting our thinking and decision making in line with His Word and to know that through Jesus Christ (the anointed One and through His anointing) we have been freed from every curse. Therefore, we can walk in complete blessing, not limiting God in our lives.

The contribution the dissertation will add to this field of knowledge is how to take the limits off God because if you take the limits off God, you will see miracles take place. If you don’t, there will be no more prosperity in your life and Satan will put more limitations on your life. Satan

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<sup>9</sup> Matthew 5:3

<sup>10</sup> 1 Thessalonians 5:19

<sup>11</sup> Deuteronomy 8:18

<sup>12</sup> 2 Corinthians 9:8



will limit you more by reminding you of your past<sup>13</sup>. These are the most significant reasons for this dissertation.

The fundamental ideas of God's Word and God's theology<sup>14</sup> will be the main topics of this dissertation. It derives from the Greek translates as "words about God" or "the study of God." The word is derived from the Greek words "theos," which means "God," and "-ology," which means "word." The word "theology" therefore literally means "words about God" or "the study of God."

The author of this dissertation acknowledges that some people who ignore God most of the time twist the Word of God for personal reasons and instant results, thus thinking that they can manipulate God for a quick solution. This will not be addressed in this research. God is not a genie in a lamp. This research is objective and subjective. Objective because it will describe a true and correct reality from the Bible. Subjective because it is concerned with the research of experiences from the perspective of an individual and emphasizes the importance of personal views and interpretations, this is generally based on data derived from observations of events in the Bible.

The researcher will attribute unique interpretations of the experience phenomena while examining the life histories of individuals in the Bible. The following key research questions arise from the above objectives that will be answered:

- 1.1. Can man impose a limit on God's omnipotence?
- 1.2. If so, how do we limit God?
- 1.3. Asking God for a specific thing limits God to a specific answer?
- 1.4. Does God limit man's life?
- 1.5. Does the digital era limit God?

The significance of the research determines that God is infinite. God is all powerful, all knowing, all capable. People hear these truths preached to them and they read this in the Bible. Another famous saying is: There is no limit to what God can do. Yet despite this, to their harm, His followers tend to minimize God's unlimited power by the wrong thing. This dissertation will present a system of beliefs from Scripture that will dispel biblical thinking and show how one can receive God's unlimited, immeasurable blessing.

**“How oft did they provoke him in the wilderness, and grieve him in the desert! Yea, they turned back and tempted God, and limited the Holy One of Israel. They remembered not his hand, nor the day when he delivered them from the enemy. How he had wrought his signs in Egypt, and his wonders in the field of Zoan:”**

**Psalms 78:40-43.**

In verse 41, one reads: “Yea, they turn back and tempted God, and limited the Holy One of Israel.” The word “limited”, used by the New King James Version, is rendered differently in

<sup>13</sup> Franklin, Jentezen. (2013) Limitless. Florida: Charisma House. pp.69-71

<sup>14</sup> Theology: <https://biblr.org/article/what-theology>

several interpretations. However, the verses encompassing verse 41 certainly make a good case for using “limited” in this framework. Israel diminished their hopes of our unlimited God: “They remember not his hand, ... his signs in Egypt, and his wonders...”<sup>15</sup>.

In effect, this dissertation will show how people put their own limitations on God’s involvement in their lives by neglecting to remember His historically demonstrated power, signs, and wonders. Like Israel of old, people have a “limited God” at times. Not necessarily deliberately, but people still often diminish their expectations of His unlimited power on our behalf.

People consider Him as less than omnipotent. They doubt His constant willingness to bless, “They remember not his hand, ... his signs in Egypt and his wonders...”. People forget, “For I am the LORD, I change not;” flawlessly said in Malachi 3:6. He is forever the same all-powerful God who delights in blessing His people. People limit God by seeing Him not as He really is but as they had been taught that He is, which is being handed down from generation to generation. If you genuinely feel God’s will for your life, you must see yourself as He sees you. Then, as you believe in your heart, so you will be<sup>16</sup>.

People have limited God to the unbelief of their predecessors, and this is why some churches today are not realizing the power of God manifested in signs and wonders and mighty miracles<sup>17</sup>. Elisha boldly asked:

**“..... Where is the LORD God of Elijah? .....”**

## **2 Kings 2:14.**

If we are not seeing miracles in our day, we must acknowledge that God has not changed. People are the ones who have limited what He can do in their lives<sup>18</sup>. Because of this, there is a desperate need to bring it to the attention of all the churches and individuals. It is also the vision of this author, and it will be done through a combination of different approaches to make them understand and accept the message.

The value of the research is to make people realize that they are spiritually poor and have nothing that is of any worth to God. God wants us to be poor in spirit because then we will inherit God’s Kingdom<sup>19</sup>. The contribution to this research is to add value to the academic literature by arguing the practical significance of the research on this subject.

This can make a big difference in the spiritual lives of people because it can make people realize that they must be poor in spirit. Most of the authors and pastors concentrate and express not to limit God, but not much on the poverty of the spirit. The author of this dissertation intends to cover this part in more detail through the research methodology and design by starting with the literature review. The literature is the data of an integrative literature review<sup>20</sup>.

The author of this dissertation examines older literature by reviewing the citations from the articles obtained by searching selected databases. Recently published literature is reviewed using the Social Science Citation Index (SSCI) or the Web of Science<sup>21</sup>. The critique should recognize

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<sup>15</sup> Psalm 78:42-43

<sup>16</sup> Proverbs 23:7

<sup>17</sup> Richards, Dr James B. (1989) Taking the Limits off God. United State of America: True Potential Publishing Inc.

<sup>18</sup> James 1:17

<sup>19</sup> James 2:5

<sup>20</sup> Integrative Literature Review: <https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/pdf/10.1177/1534484305278283>

<sup>21</sup> Social Science Citation Index: <https://clarivate.com/webofsciencelgroup/solutions/webofscience-ssci/>

aspects of a phenomenon that are missing, incomplete, or poorly represented in the literature and inconsistencies among published perspectives on the topic. “An integrative literature review is a form of research that reviews, critiques, and synthesizes representative literature on a topic in an integrated way such that new frameworks and perspectives on the topic are generated”, according to Richard J Torraco, University of Nebraska-Lincoln<sup>22</sup>.

The foundation of all academic research activities, regardless of subject, is this investigation of and comparison with previously known knowledge. “Therefore, to do so accurately should be a priority for all academics”<sup>23</sup>.

However, this task has become increasingly complex. Knowledge production within the field of research is fast-tracking at a remarkable speed while at the same time remaining disintegrated and interdisciplinary. This makes it hard to keep up with the state-of-the-art research, be at the forefront and access the collective evidence in a particular research area.

As a result, the literature review approach to research is more important than ever. A strong basis is established for the advancement of knowledge and the development of facilitation theory by using an efficient and well-conducted review as a research method. It can also assist in giving a general picture of fields where interdisciplinary and diverse research is conducted.

There is an excellent chance that other authors build their research on flawed assumptions because it is not built on the true Word of God. This causes a lack of knowledge of what the collection of research is saying or what it is pointing at.

When researchers are selective of the evidence to build their research, ignoring research that indicates the other way, severe challenges can be faced. In addition, even when the methodology of the review is valid, there are often issues with what constitutes a good contribution. This dissertation is unique in providing a valuable contribution to the true Word of God on this specific subject and will be a catalyst for further research.

The expectation is that this integrative literature review will provide the demand for a review, critique and the possible reconceptualization of the expanding and more diversified knowledge base on this subject of man limiting God and not simply rewriting it; therefore, the data collection is important. The author of this dissertation will mainly use secondary data<sup>24</sup>, also known as desk research, which involves using already existing data. Existing data is summarized and collated to increase the overall effectiveness of research and includes research material published in research reports and similar documents. This makes secondary research much more cost effective than primary research because primary research is where data is collected first hand by organizations or a third party that must be employed to collect data on their behalf. An electronic search of academic databases and the internet will also be used. Accurate records will be kept of the date of each search. The databases searched and the keywords used.

Relevant references to the articles that were retrieved will be read and the process will be repeated until a point of saturation is reached. In addition, other types of secondary sources include textbooks, eBooks, journal articles, histories, criticisms, commentaries, and different Bibles. For this research, the literature review will be quantitative research used in the natural and social

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<sup>22</sup> Torraco, Richard J. (2005) Human Resource Development Review Vol. 4, No 3, September 2005. pp.356-367. USA: SAGE Publications.

<sup>23</sup> Snyder, H. (2019) Journal of Business Research. Literature review as a research methodology: An Overview and Guidelines. Volume 104, November 2019. pp.333-339

<sup>24</sup> Secondary Research: <https://www.questionpro.com/blog/secondary-research/>

sciences such as biology, psychology, and theology. This quantitative<sup>25</sup> research will include literature primarily of studies examining specific and well-known authors on this subject.

The dissertation will use exhaustive coverage. An effort is made to be as complete as possible to ensure that all essential studies, published and unpublished, are contained within the review. Thus, conclusions are based on this all-inclusive knowledge base.

As a result, the idea is neither a well-established theory nor a crazy conjecture. The goal of this dissertation is to demonstrate how, when everything is going wrong, man limits God from a biblical standpoint. Then, it becomes challenging to remain focused on God's promises. Since God's purpose to save the lost was preordained before the creation of the universe, the null hypothesis effectively states that man cannot limit God because:

**“But with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot: Who verily was, foreordained before the foundation of the world, but was manifest in these last times for you.”**

**1 Peter 1:19-20.**

The following will be expanded upon in the research report's outline by the chapters the dissertation intends to include:

## **1.6. Introduction**

### **1.7. Chapter 1: An Exposition of Man Limiting God by not Embracing Poverty of the Spirit**

What does the Bible express about the poverty of the spirit? What are the reasons that a finite man thinks he has the power to limit an infinite God? Is it maybe that man has a false image of God and doesn't know Him? This chapter will point out the exposition of man who limits God because of his imperfect heart, unbelief, and sin. Paul wrote:

**“Take heed, brethren, lest there be in any of you an evil heart of unbelief, in departing from the living God. But exhort one another daily, while it is called To day; lest any of you be hardened through the deceitfulness of sin.”**

**Hebrews 3:12-13.**

The sin God cannot forgive is the sin of refusing to turn to Him. Jesus said:

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<sup>25</sup> Quantitative Research: [https://dovetailapp.com/blog/qualitative-quantitative-research/?utm\\_source=google&utm\\_medium=cpc&utm\\_campaign=q4fy21-industry&utm\\_term=quantitative%20research%20analysis&utm\\_campaign=&utm\\_source=adwords&utm\\_medium=ppc&hsa\\_acc=9378069933&hsa\\_cam=14817660234&hsa\\_grp=131389410601&hsa\\_ad=549134175776&hsa\\_src=g&hsa\\_tgt=kwd-336155927024&hsa\\_kw=quantitative%20research%20analysis&hsa\\_mt=p&hsa\\_net=adwords&hsa\\_ver=3&gclid=Cj0KCQiA2sqOBhCGARIsAPuPK0hEkicPIEy-5HjokRcZbZeb9mPtl-g9xl6klPXW8RK6DzKdmp9BGslaAoH7EALw\\_wcB](https://dovetailapp.com/blog/qualitative-quantitative-research/?utm_source=google&utm_medium=cpc&utm_campaign=q4fy21-industry&utm_term=quantitative%20research%20analysis&utm_campaign=&utm_source=adwords&utm_medium=ppc&hsa_acc=9378069933&hsa_cam=14817660234&hsa_grp=131389410601&hsa_ad=549134175776&hsa_src=g&hsa_tgt=kwd-336155927024&hsa_kw=quantitative%20research%20analysis&hsa_mt=p&hsa_net=adwords&hsa_ver=3&gclid=Cj0KCQiA2sqOBhCGARIsAPuPK0hEkicPIEy-5HjokRcZbZeb9mPtl-g9xl6klPXW8RK6DzKdmp9BGslaAoH7EALw_wcB)

**“But those things which proceed out of the mouth come forth from the heart; and they defile the man. For out of the heart proceed evil thoughts, murders, adulteries, fornications, thefts, false witness, blasphemies.”.**

### **Matthew 15:18-19.**

There are many sins recounted in the Hebrew Bible, but none are ever called unforgivable sins and it is blasphemy against the Spirit<sup>26</sup>. John Piper<sup>27</sup>, the founder and teacher of [desiringGod.org](http://desiringGod.org) and chancellor of Bethlehem College & Seminary, who for 33 years served as a pastor of Bethlehem Baptist Church, Minneapolis, Minnesota, and the author of more than 50 books, explains what he means that all human beings have sufficient knowledge of what is right and wrong on their hearts. But those who are poor in spirit are blessed because of their need for God, for they will inherit the Kingdom of Heaven.

This chapter will also give examples from Scripture of people limiting God and how they did it. Models like Herod, when he heard John the Baptist “was a just man and an holy”<sup>28</sup> while his heart was extremely wrong in the spectacle of God, Jehu, who had no morality and outward respectability of conduct, the young ruler who sought eternal life through works of the law, Demas forsook the company of St. Paul, rejected the Gospel, forsook Christ, forsook heaven, Judas Iscariot was Christ’s disciple and Lot’s wife was a professor of religion; her husband was a “righteous man”<sup>29</sup>.

On the day when Sodom was destroyed, Lot's wife fled Sodom with him, going against God's express instructions, and turning to face the city from behind her husband. The wife of Lot was instantly killed and transformed into a pillar of salt. When He says, "Remember Lot's wife,"<sup>30</sup> the Lord Jesus Christ uses her as a warning to His church.

They were all killed in their misdeeds. They all tell us that a man does not require privileges alone because they all fell down to the pit despite information, warnings, and opportunity. They require the Holy Spirit's grace.

Fasting is another topic covered in this chapter. For all Christians, fasting is a very potent spiritual practice because it allows the Holy Spirit to change your life via prayer and fasting. According to Presbyterian minister Lynn M. Baab, who earned a Ph.D. in communication from the University of Washington in 2007 and spent ten years teaching pastoral theology at the University of Otago, fasting is fundamentally not a discipline of withholding but one of creating space for God<sup>31</sup>. According to Baab and Towns<sup>32</sup>, fasting has become so widely disregarded that few individuals are aware of its benefits.

The kind of fasts that do not please God is to understand those fasts He desires. God’s people in Isaiah 58:3-5 had been fasting but without results. The reason, God says, is that they ignored the way fasting should change their lives, treating it as an empty ritual. Even if people wanted to, they could not manipulate God. Still, some people try to do so. People fast and pray for results, but the results are in God’s hands. Fasting does not earn

<sup>26</sup> Matthew 12:31-32

<sup>27</sup> John Piper: <https://www.desiringgod.org/interviews/how-is-the-law-written-on-every-heart>

<sup>28</sup> Mark 6:20

<sup>29</sup> 2 Peter 2:8

<sup>30</sup> Luke 17:32

<sup>31</sup> Baab, Lynne M. (2006) *Fasting: Spiritual Freedom Beyond our Appetites*. Downers Grove, United States of America: Intervarsity Press. p.27

<sup>32</sup> Towns, Elmer L. (2014) *Fasting for Spiritual Break Through*. Minnesota: Bethany House Publishers.

forgiveness of sin or merit with God. Some people believe while fasting achieves something from Him. This is not twisting God's Arm so that the solution can be that people feel best solves their problem. This is a tremendously dangerous territory to enter.

Research question 3 will be answered in this chapter.

### **1.8. Chapter 2: Scriptural Exegesis on Divine Authority: Free Will and Sin**

This chapter mainly focuses on God, who gives us free will for good or evil, but this does not give people the power to act outside their nature or God's law without any consequences. Although people have free will, it is within boundaries. Besides God's, there are other wills than that of people in the universe. In Matthew 25:41 and Revelation 12:9, it is written that Satan and his angels also have choices.

The author of this dissertation acknowledges that animals, in one sense, have wills too because they 'choose' a path of action. Still, they do not contemplate the wise or virtuous way of action with reason and moral concern or spiritual perception. Therefore, the will of the animals will not form part of this research because this is what David was getting in Psalm 32:9 when he said: "Be ye not the horse, or as the mule, which have no understanding: whose mouth must be held in with bit and bridle, lest they come near unto thee."

In pondering the extent and nature of God's providence, Piper discusses the way demonic, and human will relate to the will of God<sup>33</sup>. Given the quantity of evil and pain Satan causes in the world, people inevitably still ask, 'Why does God permit Satan to do this?'. The biggest hindrances in our lives are to limit God with our wrong beliefs, bloodline and generation curses, pride, unbelieve, strongholds, declarations, and statements, thinking and fear.

People can create fear and must be careful who lays hands on them or prophesy over them because "Death and life are in the power of the tongue: and they that love it shall eat the fruit thereof."<sup>34</sup> The tongue is a significant source of restriction in people's lives, whether they use it freely or not. The most important person in the history of Christianity, Martin Luther was a German theologian and religious reformer who served as the impetus for the Protestant Reformation in the 16th century.

According to Luther, 'Man naturally knows, he says, that there is a God, but what His will is or what is not His will, they do not know'<sup>35</sup>. There is a difference between a will and free will, this will, will be deliberate in this chapter to bring the understanding that God will not give man the desires of his heart if it is not within the boundaries of God's law.

People acting outside God's law sin and bring evil into their lives. According to Jeremiah 2:13, Israel has committed two sins: "For my people have committed two evils; they have forsaken me the fountain of living waters, and hewed them out cisterns, broken cisterns, that can hold no water."

What are the consequences of sin, many people still believe that hell does not exist and say,

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<sup>33</sup> Piper, John. (2020) Providence. Illinois: Crossway. pp.255-276, 385-410

<sup>34</sup> Proverbs 18:21

<sup>35</sup> Watson, Philips. (1947) Let God be God: An Interpretation of the Theology of Martin Luther. Oregon: Wipf and Stock Publishers. p.75

‘A good God could not send people to hell.’ Evil cannot go unpunished. Many people also ask if God is divine and why He let bad things still happen to good people. This is because of the seven deadliest sins<sup>36</sup> and free will identified by Pope Gregory 1 in the late sixth century.

Further, this chapter will also discuss the four characteristics of God, which are omnipresent (everywhere), omnipotent (all power), omnibenevolent (all good) and omniscient (all knowing). No living being has only one of these characteristics. Thus, God is supreme<sup>37</sup> and the Scripture testifies to this:

**“I am the Alpha and the Omega, the beginning and the ending, saith the Lord, which is to come, the Almighty.”**

**Revelation 1:8.**

Therefore, God has no limitations because He is the Creator of the heavens and the earth<sup>38</sup> out of nothing. This belief derives from both the Book of Genesis and the Book of Job. Genesis because it records God creating the universe and all living creatures. Job because God is pictured as laying the foundations of the earth.

**“What is man, that thou art mindful of him? and the son of man, thou visitest him? For thou hast made him a little lower than the angels, and hast crowned him with glory and honour. Thou madest him to have dominion over the works of thy hands; thou hast put all things under his feet.”**

**Psalms 8:4-6.**

This passage echoes the statement in Genesis 1:26-27 that human beings are made in the image of God. This means that human beings with souls are superior to and placed above the rest of the world's living creatures.

Thus, there is a hierarchy of creatures and human beings are at the top. This specifies that human beings are not equal to God, although God created humankind in His own image<sup>39</sup>. True power and authority are to be found when people submit to God's authority. If people want power in the body of Christ, they must submit to God and obey His Law and commands. Titles and accolades don't give power. Only obedience to God does.

God allows being filled with true, life-giving power if people will bow their knee to Him in submission and obedience because:

**“Let every soul be subject unto the higher powers. For there is no power but of God: the powers that be are ordained of God. Whosoever therefore resisteth the power resisteth the ordinance of God: and they that resist shall receive to themselves damnation.”**

**Romans 13:1-2.**

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<sup>36</sup> Seven Deadliest Sins: <https://www.britannica.com/topic/seven-deadly-sins>

<sup>37</sup> 1 Corinthians 8:4-6

<sup>38</sup> Genesis 1:1

<sup>39</sup> Genesis 1:27

Jesus gathered his twelve followers and gave them instructions to go heal the sick, revive the dead, cleanse lepers, and cast out demons<sup>40</sup>. Jesus delivered the command to step on snakes and scorpions and to subdue all the power of the foe in Luke 10:19. This order is still in effect today. Genesis 2 clearly addresses the position of humans in the cosmos. Adam and Eve are punished after giving in to the snake's temptation in the Garden of Eden. There is no question that God oversees the Garden.

Adam and Eve could not go back into the garden even if they wanted to because the garden was now guarded by higher beings. God provides a paradise for people if they follow His Will. This chapter will explore man's general knowledge of God. If a man knows God, then why do some people talk back to God, "Nay but, O man, who art thou that repliest against God? Shall the thing formed say to him that formed it, Why hast thou made me thus."<sup>41</sup> Luther illustrates that people possess general and natural knowledge, then it is to know some man 'by sight' and is unaware of his 'affection' toward them<sup>42</sup>.

Then, as Paul says in Romans 1, people are tricked and become foolish in their thoughts, not knowing what pleased God, and they worship their own desires and fantasies. everything is not necessary to deduce God from His creation in order to find Him; rather, God must be perceived in and through everything. Knowing God and allowing God to be God are therefore crucial.

In this chapter, the research questions 1, 2, and 4 will be addressed.

### **1.9. Chapter 3: Real People, Real Limitations: Losing the Battle Against Their Giants**

The biggest hindrances in our lives are to limit God. This topic will identify the people who limited God. Many of the Israelites could not enter the Promised Land because they saw themselves as grasshoppers:

**"And there we saw the giants, the sons of Anak, which come of the giants: and we were in our own sight as grasshoppers, and so we were in their sight."**

**Numbers 13:33.**

What they said had a heavy influence. God created Lucifer. From the beginning, Lucifer also wanted to limit God because he became so overwhelmed with his own beauty, intelligence, power<sup>43</sup> and position that he began to yearn for himself the honour and glory that belong to God alone.

His pride signifies the actual beginning of sin in the universe, preceding the fall of Adam. Lucifer, who became Satan, with his pride, tried to limit by testing Jesus first in the desert after He fasted for forty days and was hungry:

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<sup>40</sup> Matthew 10:8

<sup>41</sup> Romans 9:20

<sup>42</sup> Watson, Philips. (1947) Let God be God: An Interpretation of the Theology of Martin Luther. Oregon: Wipf and Stock Publishers. pp.74-75

<sup>43</sup> Ezekiel 28:11-17



**“And the devil said unto him, If thou be the Son of God, command this stone that it be made bread.”**

**Luke 4:3.**

Then Satan led Jesus up to a high place and showed Him all the kingdoms on the earth and said to Him:

**“And the devil said unto him, All this power will I give thee, and the glory of them: for that is delivered unto me; and to whomsoever I will I give it. If thou therefore wilt worship me, all shall be thine.”**

**Luke 4:6-7.**

Finally, Satan took Jesus to Jerusalem on top of the temple and said to Him:

**“And he brought him to Jerusalem, and set him on a pinnacle of the temple and said unto him, If thou be the Son of God, cast thyself down from hence: For it is written, He shall give his angels charge over thee, to keep thee: And in their hands they shall bear thee up, lest at any time thou dash thy foot against a stone.”**

**Luke 4:9-11.**

After all this, Jesus stood firm and answered him, don't try to test the Lord your God<sup>44</sup>. In the Old Testament, Samson, Saul, and Jonah also limited God. In the New Testament, at first, Saul limited God before he became Paul. In the hierarchy of God's creations, even Satan has boundaries because he also had to ask for permission for power over Job's life<sup>45</sup>. Theology-wise, God cannot be contained. Goliath must be slain in our lifetime for us to enter God's Kingdom. Dr Mark Rutland<sup>46</sup> is the National Institute of Christian Leadership's founder and executive director. Rutland presided over two well-known Christian universities from 1999 to 2013.

Rutland wrote in his book *David the Great: Deconstructing the Man after God's Own Heart*, “Those God has placed over you – your boss, pastor, and teacher – even if they try pinning you to the wall with a javelin, they are not your enemy. Flee if you must as David did, but do not trade punches. God put them in their position; let God take them down. Don't you think He's capable of doing so? When the Scriptures tell us to submit to governing authorities (Romans 13:1-2), no added caveat says, ‘Submit to governing authorities unless they oppose your views – then just let them have it’. We are to submit to the authorities God has placed over us, period. Sometimes this will include people we have been too quick to label as our enemies<sup>47</sup>.”

It is time for the people to answer their call to maturity as sons and daughters, arising out of the limitations of earthly genealogy to engage in a heavenly genealogy in Christ who is as described:

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<sup>44</sup> Luke 4:12

<sup>45</sup> Job 1:9-12

<sup>46</sup> Dr. Mark Rutland: <https://thenicl.com/about-dr-rutland/>

<sup>47</sup> Rutland, Mark. (2018) *David the Great: Deconstructing the Man after God's Own Heart*. p.35

**“Without father, without mother, without descent, having neither beginning of days, nor end of life; but made like unto the Son of God; abideth a priest continually.”**

**Hebrews 7:3.**

Being the hand and voice of YHVH, walking in the power of the Holy Spirit as an answer, speaking God's Word, and building resurrection life in God for the restoration of humanity as it is in Heaven is our purpose as kings and priests.

This chapter will provide an answer to research question 5.

#### **1.10. Chapter 4: The Covenantal Foundation that Governs the Principles of Blessing and Curse and Seedtime and Harvest**

Seedtime and harvest are God's system; the law of Genesis is one of God's fixed laws. If a person gets a good understanding of this, it will bring an understanding of God's ways. The principle of seedtime and harvest is God's system:

**“And God said, Let the earth bring forth grass, the herb yielding seed, and the fruit tree yielding fruit after his kind, whose seed is in itself, upon the earth: and it was so. And the earth brought forth grass, and herb yielding seed after his kind, and the tree yielding fruit, whose seed was in itself, after his kind: and God saw that it was good.”**

**Genesis 1:11-12.**

Everything generates after its kind and the seed is in itself. It works that way in everything. Scripture clearly states:

**“Be not deceived; God is not mocked: for whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap.”**

**Galatians 6:7.**

The law of seedtime and harvest is also the covenant of seed and harvest. Examples are Genesis 6:18, where God entered into a covenant with Noah and He has sustained that covenant till this day; in Genesis 22:17-18, God established a covenant with Abraham that in blessings God will bless Him and of his seed shall all the family of the earth be blessed, also still existing today and lastly David, God established an everlasting covenant that the seed of David should not cease to be rulers in the land of Israel. God kept his promises despite the unimaginable things the seeds of David have done.

If people give love, they will reap love. Everything produces after its kind from the beginning of the creation<sup>48</sup>. God's Word is an incorruptible seed. His promises are seeds for harvest. People must learn to speak God's promises out of their mouth as a seed so that it can produce a harvest of blessing, as Jesus told the parables of growing seed in Mark 4:26-29 and in Mark 4:30-34.

The symbolic meaning of harvest in Scripture encompasses two main areas:

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<sup>48</sup> Genesis 8:22

1.10.1. God's provision for us; and

1.10.2. God's blessings for others.

While people celebrate a harvest season just once a year, they experience the spirit of harvest all the time<sup>49</sup>. People must be careful in thinking that they can mock God or limit Him by digging a pit for someone because “Whoso diggeth a pit shall fall therein; and he that rolleth a stone, it will return upon him.”<sup>50</sup>

People must also not think they can steal from someone to make their lives rich because what “man reaps what he sows”, Ecclesiastes 11:1 echoes this also “Cast thy bread upon the waters: for thou shalt find it after many days.” To fully comprehend the effects of the blessings from God, this chapter will also focus on Abraham and David, who were the only two people that had a personal encounter with Melchizedek, who appears as a person only in an interpolated image because he has no birth or death for there is no record of his lineage.

Abraham gave Melchizedek food and drink and then a tenth of the spoils of war, showing that Melchizedek should have a person. Jonathan Shuttlesworth<sup>51</sup>, an evangelist and the founder of Revival Today, claims that sickness, disease, and self-doubt<sup>52</sup> are among of Satan's preferred ways to damage people. The mission of Revival Today is to reach out to the suffering and lost with the Good News of Jesus Christ.

People limit God with this disease, illness, and self-doubt. All ailments and diseases have already been given to Jesus Christ. People are aware of God's power to heal. They continue to doubt Him.

The leper said:

**“And, behold, there came a leper and worshipped him, saying, Lord, if thou wilt, thou canst make me clean. And Jesus put forth his hand, and touched him, saying I will; be thou clean. And immediately his leprosy was cleansed.”**

**Matthew 8:2-3.**

But before Jesus healed the leper, He corrected him. Jesus does not have favourites. This is written in:

**“Then Peter opened his mouth, and said, Of a truth I perceive that God is no respecter of persons.”**

**Acts 10:34.**

God had covenanted with Abraham, Noah, and David because they served Him. God's covenant with people includes supernatural strength, even in old age<sup>53</sup>. This is the

<sup>49</sup> 1 Corinthians 9:10-11, Galatians 6:7-9

<sup>50</sup> Proverbs 26:27

<sup>51</sup> Shuttlesworth, Jonathan. (2019) Dominion Over Sickness & Disease. United States of America: Rise UP Publishers

<sup>52</sup> Job 2:7, Luke 13:14-15

<sup>53</sup> Deuteronomy 34:7

inheritance of all who served God. According to Shuttlesworth, people today have an even better covenant based on better promises than what the people had in Old Testament<sup>54</sup>. What made the covenant with Abraham so unique was that it was before the Law, the Ten Commandments written on Mount Sinai and given to Moses. Abraham's harvest because of the covenant with God was that God made him a great nation, blessed those who blessed him and cursed those who cursed him.

Most important is that all people on the earth would be blessed through Abraham and circumcision is to be the everlasting sign of this eternal covenant. Abraham was the first to pay tithes and it was to Melchizedek<sup>55</sup>, who was the priest of the highest God, as is written in Genesis 14:18. Abraham also understands that God will be faithful to His promises if he listens and obeys God even when his faith is weak.

Jesus's reward for being obedient to death on the cross was that God raised Him to new heights in Heaven and gave Him a name above every name, such that at the very mention of Jesus's name, everything that's over the earth, on the earth and under the earth must bow at the mention of His name. His name carries the power to subdue all other power, no matter where it resides.

The Harvard referencing method will be used in the Bibliography and footnotes will be used at the end of each page where applicable.

All Scriptures from the Bible are taken from Dake's Annotated Reference Bible 1999, except when stated otherwise.

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<sup>54</sup> Shuttlesworth, Jonathan. (2019) Dominion Over Sickness & Disease. United States of America: Rise UP Publishers. pp.40-42

<sup>55</sup> Genesis 14:20



## **2. Chapter 1: An Exposition of Man Limiting God by Not Embracing Poverty of The Spirit**

### **2.1. Introduction**

What does the Bible express about the poverty of the spirit? What are the reasons that a finite man thinks he has the power to limit an infinite God? Is it maybe that man has a false image of God and doesn't know Him?

The human mind is one of God's most incredible gifts to humanity. What makes us human is the ability to learn, think, choose, and reason, but it goes deeper. Our thoughts reflect who we really are as a person because who we are on the inside and what we say on the outside don't always array. For example, the Pharisees were very good at presenting themselves as very religious and yet Jesus called them hypocrites<sup>56</sup>.

It is not always imaginable to determine who a person really is by what they say. Jesus said you would recognize a tree by its fruit:

**“Take heed that ye do not your alms before men, to be seen of them: otherwise ye have no reward of your Father which is in heaven.”**

**Matthew 6:1.**

If you are doing things to be seen, then what you have thought is in your heart. When serving, let it flow out of your relationship with Jesus because there is no number of topics you could ever do that will cause God to acknowledge you or love you more.

As the most enlightened man who ever lived, King Solomon advises us not to desire the lives of those who have accumulated wealth through avarice and not to gain their favour by grovelling to them. To truly experience heart freedom, people must learn to embrace their own poverty.

### **2.2. Exegetical Understanding and The Use of Biblical Language of Poverty and The Poor**

#### **2.2.1. What the Bible Express About Poverty of the Spirit**

Poor in its literal meaning refers to beggars or those who do not have enough income, but to be poor in spirit means people who recognize their own spiritual insufficiency, their need for God, and those who mourn over their sin.

They realize they have no righteousness of their own and thus can depend upon God and His grace towards them. The opposite of being poor in the spirit is to be

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<sup>56</sup> Matthew 23:13-14

self-righteous.

God wants us to be poor in spirit because then we will inherit God's Kingdom as found in:

**“Hearken, my beloved brethren, Hath not God chosen the poor of this world rich in faith, and heirs of the kingdom which he hath promised to them that love him? But ye have despised the poor. Do not rich men oppress you, and draw you before the judgment seats?”**

**James 2:5-6.**

Jesus says:

**“Blessed are the poor in spirit: for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.”**

**Matthew 5:3.**

When He said these words, He wanted people to be humble in their spirits and realize their own sins and their spiritual emptiness. Many people will not inherit the Kingdom of God because they reject the teaching about the works of the flesh outlined in 1 Corinthians 6:9-10 and Galatians 5:19-21.

These are listed as unrighteousness, fornicating, idolizing infidelity, abusers of themselves with humanity, thieves, jealousy, drunkards, extortioners, impurity, lust, witchcraft, hatred, wrath, strife, seditions, heresies, envying, murders, and rejoicing. As many people look at these lists, they still derive the blessings and fruit of the Holy Spirit that is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, and temperance<sup>57</sup>. Paul says:

**“And they that are Christ's have crucified the flesh with the affections and lusts.”**

**Galatians 5:24.**

Which states that it is unbiblical to separate the conquering of sin and God's command to kill it. Peter confirms this:

**“Who his own self bare our sins in his own body on the tree, that we, being dead to sins, should live unto righteousness: by whose stripes ye were healed.”**

**1 Peter 2:24.**

Jesus Christ died to forgive sin and that sin must die in us. Certain denominations have approved some of these sinful ways by ordaining homosexual ministers. Other Christians are guilty of some of these works of the flesh and still, some pastors refuse to speak out against these practices. During an interview with John Piper on June 1, 2020<sup>58</sup>, a young woman from Sweden asked why pastors don't preach against sin. The pastor she asked answered that they were not preaching

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<sup>57</sup> Galatians 5:22-23

<sup>58</sup> Interview with John Piper: <https://www.desiringgod.org/interviews/my-pastors-dont-preach-against-sin-is-that-okay>

contradictory to the Bible, but they decided not to talk directly about sin. The pastor instead wants to focus on the love of Jesus and His acceptance of sinners. By doing this, it attracts lots of people to the church.

### 2.2.2. The Bible and Prosperity

The church must teach what true wealth and prosperity really are by tapping into the treasures that spring from the Word and being poor in spirit instead of the world and enjoying living unlimited to God's provision for all our needs. Being not poor in spirit limits God from blessing people abundantly<sup>59</sup>.

Too often, people look around at others and compare, but God is saying you do not need what they have; if you needed it, I would have given it to you. People must rather look inside and see that they already have the confidence, creativity, or talent to make a success of their lives if they trust God. Individuals must see themselves as a no-lack person.

God wants His people to prosper. Unfortunately, not all people will experience prosperity as expected, although they love Jesus with all their hearts. This is because there are lies Christians believe about prosperity:

2.2.2.1. If you want something, all you must do is "name it and claim it". Jesus promises His followers:

**"If ye abide in me, and my words abide in you, ye shall ask what ye will, and it shall be done unto you."**

**John 15:7.**

Based on these words, Christians should not be fearful but boldly name and claim whatever they wish, and it will be granted to those who ask in faith. The condition is: do Jesus's words "abide" in you? Those who build their whole approach to prayer and life around that promise, as if any failure to get what they wish is owing to a loss, is of obedience on their part. Jesus says that the means to live a perfect life is to walk close to Him, like a branch connected to the vine.

2.2.2.2. Wealth will increase your joy. Many celebrities would not turn to things like alcoholism, drugs, and suicide if this were true. They can have millions in their bank accounts, still, their life's absences meaning without Jesus.

2.2.2.3. Poverty is a failure of faith. Your bank account cannot measure faith. To be poor is not a failure of faith but an opportunity to grow faith. It can increase reliance on God as the provider, confidence in His faithfulness to provide, and a reason for what it means to be in need<sup>60</sup>. God is aware of everything that happens, even to sparrows and people are far more valuable to Him than the sparrows are.

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<sup>59</sup> 2 Corinthians 9:8 and Matthew 6:33

<sup>60</sup> Matthew 10:29-31

Because God places such value on people, people need never fear personal fears or difficult trials. This does not mean that God will take away all your troubles. Despite their problems, those who stand up for Christ genuinely have lasting value and will receive great rewards in heaven<sup>61</sup>:

- 2.2.2.4. If you do the correct things, you will always be blessed. Paul reminded the church that:

**“And not only so, but we glory in tribulations also: knowing that tribulation worketh patience: and patience, experience; and experience, hope: And hope maketh not ashamed; because the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost which is given unto us.”**

#### **Romans 5:3-5.**

To grow in endurance, hope and character are a blessing more valuable than a life of luxury or comfort.

- 2.2.2.5. If life is not going the planned path, you must be doing something wrong. Job never planned for his home to burn, his family to die, or his land to be destroyed. Yet Job is described in the Bible as a blameless man with complete integrity. Thus, God’s will for people’s lives has nothing to do with how people planned or did not plan.
- 2.2.2.6. If you have not been healed, you do not believe hard enough. If God has not healed someone yet, it is because He is not done writing that part of their story. Not because He’s waiting for man’s faith to be big enough. A good example can be found in John 11. Jesus’s friend Lazarus died not because he did not have enough faith but so Jesus could show His power.
- 2.2.2.7. Christians are not supposed to suffer. Job was more righteous than most people could ever hope to be, but he suffered more in a short time duration than many suffer in a lifetime. If Christians were not supposed to suffer, then Job’s blameless life would have been blessed with riches and health. Despite losing every material possession and family member, Job maintained his worship and faithfulness.

Some people have gotten the wrong impression from these lies of being prosperous and prosperity. It is not all about money and wealth, although there is nothing wrong with being wealthy. In fact, God promises His children wealth and prosperity. Amid the book of Jeremiah, a passage is found:

**“For I know the thoughts that I think toward you, saith the LORD, thoughts of peace and not of evil, to give you an expected end.”**

#### **Jeremiah 29:11.**

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<sup>61</sup> Matthew 5:12



People must recognize that God is the source because everything belongs to Him and He is the provider of all things<sup>62</sup>. It is what people do with riches and wealth and how they allow it to affect the lives of others as to whether there is a problem with it or not:

**“But they that will be rich fall into temptation and a snare and into many foolish and hurtful lusts, which drown men in destruction and perdition.”**

**1 Timothy 6:9-10.**

Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, and Joseph were wealthy men because God caused them to prosper. When our souls are healthy, then we prosper<sup>63</sup>. As we pray and let the Holy Spirit to reveal our wounded hearts and bring them to Him for healing, we become healthy and whole. When we stop believing the enemy's lies that have brought us into bondage, restoration, deliverance, and healing occur. God's original plan from the beginning was to prosper an increase:

**“And God blessed them, and God said unto them Be fruitful, and multiply, and replenish the earth, and subdue it: and have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over every living thing that moveth upon the earth.”**

**Genesis 1:28.**

To be blessed means to prosper and increase because of God's favour upon humanity's life. There are reasons why God wants people to prosper according to Scripture:

- 2.2.2.8. Because it is His nature – Genesis 17:1-2;
- 2.2.2.9. So He can establish His covenant on the earth – Deuteronomy 8:18;
- 2.2.2.10. So that people can provide for His church – Malachi 3:10;
- 2.2.2.11. To keep finances out of Satan's control – Malachi 3:11;
- 2.2.2.12. To help the poor – Proverbs 19:17;
- 2.2.2.13. To honour and glorify Him - Proverbs 3:9-10;
- 2.2.2.14. To leave behind an inheritance for your family members – Proverbs 13:22;
- 2.2.2.15. So that people can prove the sincerity of your love - 2 Corinthians 8:8-9;
- 2.2.2.16. So that people can lead and influence society - Deuteronomy 28:11-13; and

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<sup>62</sup> Genesis 1:1-2

<sup>63</sup> 3 John 1:2-4

2.2.2.17. Because He is a good God and wants to bless all His children – Psalms 35:27.

People like Moses, Jacob, David, Solomon, Job, Isaiah, John the Baptist, the Centurion, Peter, Paul, and the Canaanite women were poor in spirit. Neither considered themselves to be somebody, but they leaned entirely on God for:

2.2.2.18. A sense of powerlessness in themselves;

2.2.2.19. A sense of helplessness before God;

2.2.2.20. A sense of moral uncleanness before God;

2.2.2.21. A sense of personal unworthiness before God; and

2.2.2.22. A sense that if there is to be any life or joy or worth, it must be all of God and all of grace.

### 2.2.3. Spirit of Poverty: An Attitude or Demonic Spirit

Being impoverished in spirit is not the same as having a low spirit. There is a change that is apparent, which could be perplexing. To put it simply, "poor" should be changed to "humble." The Southern Baptist Convention ordained Billy Graham<sup>64</sup>, a well-known American preacher whose real name is William Franklin Graham Jr. He is considered as one of the most important Christians of the 20th century and has earned numerous honors, including an honorary Doctor of Divinity degree. Graham said,<sup>65</sup> "In other words, when we come to God, we must realize our own sin and our spiritual emptiness and poverty. We must not be self-satisfied or proud in our hearts, thinking we don't really need God. If we are, God cannot bless us". Scripture is clear about this:

**"But he giveth more grace. Wherefore he saith, God resisteth the proud, but giveth grace unto the humble."**

**James 4:6.**

The spirit of poverty is a spirit of Satan that steal, kill, and destroy<sup>66</sup> and this spirit is also rebellious. Poor in spirit means people recognize their own spiritual poverty and their need for God.

A person with the spirit of poverty is:

2.2.3.1. Not content and not satisfied with what they have because people with this spirit will always want more. If they have a car, they will want a better new one.

<sup>64</sup> Billy Graham: <https://www.britannica.com/biography/Billy-Graham>

<sup>65</sup> About poor in the spirit: <https://billygraham.org/answer/what-does-it-mean-to-be-poor-in-spirit-as-jesus-said-we-ought-to-be/>

<sup>66</sup> John 10:10

**“Let your conversation be without covetousness, and be content with such things as ye have: for he hath said, I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee.”**

**Hebrews 13:5.**

When they purchase a phone, they will immediately start looking for another. Thus, they will always be running after worldly riches.

- 2.2.3.2. Love accumulating. People accumulate cars, lands, money in the banks, houses, clothes and even things they do not need today. If people are gathering and storing, they are a sinner –

**“For God giveth to a man that is good in his sight wisdom, and knowledge, and joy: but to the sinner he giveth travail, to gather and to heap up, that he may give to him that is good before God. This also is vanity and vexation of spirit.”**

**Ecclesiastes 2:26.**

- 2.2.3.3. Is stingy and cannot minister to Jesus Christ. These people are those whose self has not died but claim to be in Jesus Christ. They want the whole world to know when they help those in need a little.
- 2.2.3.4. Always worry about tomorrow of their material things if it will be enough and their happiness and joy depend on their worldly materials. Worry steals peace. Thus, a person cannot meditate on the Word of God.

**“Take therefore no thought for the morrow: for the morrow shall take thought for the things of itself. Sufficient unto the day is the evil thereof.”**

**Matthew 6:34.**

- 2.2.3.5. Love begging and borrowing. The bride of Christ is not a beggar nor a borrower because a borrower is a slave to the lender<sup>67</sup>.
- 2.2.3.6. Love bragging and showing off. The bride of Christ is humble with no pride.

Not all very economically poor people struggle with being poor in spirit<sup>68</sup>. Likewise, there are very wealthy people with worldly riches who are labouring under the bondage of this affliction. The spirit of poverty is an emotion or attitude that can grip and control a person regardless of their economic status.

It is, in essence, a consuming fear, defining it as “the fear of losing what we have.” Thus, what we fear most will usually come upon us and a person who lives in fear of something will encounter it everywhere.

On the other side of the coinage, even if it is not the goal, you can end up hurting

<sup>67</sup> Proverbs 7:22

<sup>68</sup> Walborn, Ronald C. (1998) Breaking the Spirit of Poverty: Perspectives on Wealth and Poverty from the Prophet Haggai. United States of America: UMI Company. pp.1-2

someone else fiscally. In the dissertation of Walborn, Ronald, C, when playing sports, his coach advises him that he must play without the fear of getting hurt because if he plays with a fear of getting hurt, he would be most likely to be injured<sup>69</sup>.

But of his careless manner when playing rough, it left someone else on the ground in suffering. Just as a compulsive fear of injury in sports makes people far more vulnerable to getting hurt, “so a spirit of poverty, or a fear of losing what we have, increases the certainty of loss in our lives.”

The author of this dissertation agrees with Walborn that the spirit of poverty is an attitude and a demonic spirit. Jesus never directly addresses a demonic spirit of poverty, nor is one mentioned explicitly in the Scriptures. Still, there is sufficient reason to believe Satan uses this fear of losing.

Ephesians 4:27 warns, “Neither give place to the devil.” An analysis of the attitudes of the spirit of poverty indicates a comprehensive range of human behaviour toward possessions<sup>70</sup>. Adopting an attitude of being poor in spirit is an obsessive need to imitate Christ. A wilful and intentional adoption of life’s conditions with a submission to God’s will, shall change attitudes. There are three components of an attitude<sup>71</sup>.

An affective component (feeling), a behavioural component (the effect of the attitude on behaviour) and a cognitive component (belief and knowledge). However, how you think, and feel can be positive or negative about someone or something.

From Scripture, it is expounded that poor in spirit describes a fundamental trait found in every son of God who earnestly seeks Him. Jesus says in Matthew 11:29, “Take my yoke upon you, and learn from me; for I am meek and lowly in heart and ye shall find rest unto your souls.” This is how to cultivate this God honouring attitude. Opposing this attitude is doubt in the Divine Providence, jealousy, envy, bitterness, blaming others, lack of gratitude, gluttony and greed, and unkindness. This attitude opens the door to a spirit of poverty. Those who possess poverty of spirit are pronounced: “blessed.”<sup>72</sup> In contrast, the spirit of poverty or absence is a demonic oppression and a curse<sup>73</sup>.

The limitations mentioned above may have a different intensity and manifests itself differently in each person, depending on temperament and personality qualities. They are not necessarily related to the spirit of poverty as the reason for their existence but can arise as a reaction to experiencing poverty and deprivation. These attitudes are a voluntary choice and refer to the ability of self-control not to get trapped in dependence on things which, if treated as something significant,

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<sup>69</sup> Walborn, Ronald C. (1998) *Breaking the Spirit of Poverty: Perspectives on Wealth and Poverty from the Prophet Haggai*. United States of America: UMI Company. pp.2-3

<sup>70</sup> Derdziuk, Andrzej. (2015) *The person and the Challenges: Attitudes towards Poverty*. Volume 5, No 1. The John Paul II Catholic University of Lublin, Poland. pp.155-175

<sup>71</sup> An Attitude:

[https://www.google.com/search?q=define+attitude&rlz=1C1GIGM\\_enZA698ZA699&oq=define+attitude&aqs=chrome.69i57j35i39j46i39j0i67l7.6992j0j7&sourceid=chrome&ie=UTF-8](https://www.google.com/search?q=define+attitude&rlz=1C1GIGM_enZA698ZA699&oq=define+attitude&aqs=chrome.69i57j35i39j46i39j0i67l7.6992j0j7&sourceid=chrome&ie=UTF-8)

<sup>72</sup> Matthew 5:3

<sup>73</sup> Deuteronomy 28:15

may lead to desiring them to end up enslaved.

One of the explanations why believers are not defeating the spirits of poverty is that they do not take dominion over the spirits of poverty very well. Struggling with things like failure, your value and humiliation causes lives to be filled with fear, insecurity, anger, and anxiety and leads to bondage or limitations.

In her book, *Threefold Cord Manual for Healing and Deliverance*<sup>74</sup>, Karen E. Connell expresses, “Demons are like flies that feed on garbage – which produce spread their germs (defilement). The fact remains – if you remove the garbage the flies and the defilement can be dealt with. Again, the garbage that demons feed on is the accusations-doubts-lies that we have (knowingly or unknowingly) embraced. This creates our fearful ungodly expectations and binding inner vows.”

The spirit of poverty can be defined as a demonic spirit permitted by immorality and sin in the fields of giving and receiving<sup>75</sup>. It activates generationally through wickedness; therefore, it is a familiar (or family line) spirit.

As described in Psalm 18:4 and 2 Corinthians 6:15, this spirit is related to Belial, the destroyer. To conclude, a spirit of poverty is a condition in a person, people and or land. According to Drs Jerry & Carol Robeson in their book *Strongman’s His Name...What’s His Game? An Authoritative Biblical Approach to Spiritual Warfare*<sup>76</sup>, there are seventeen Biblically named demonic spirits or as mentioned above, so called “flies” that are attracted by the garbage:

- 2.2.3.7. Seducing Spirits (Deuteronomy 13:6-8, 2 Timothy 3:13);
- 2.2.3.8. Familiar Spirit (Leviticus 19:31);
- 2.2.3.9. Spirit of Divination (Acts 16:16-18, Isaiah 2:6);
- 2.2.3.10. Spirit of Anti-Christ (1 John 2:18-19, Revelation 13:7);
- 2.2.3.11. Spirit of Error (Proverbs 14:22, Titus 3:10);
- 2.2.3.12. Spirit of Fear (Proverbs 29:25, Revelation 21:8);
- 2.2.3.13. Spirit of Bondage (Proverbs 5:2, John 8:34)
- 2.2.3.14. Spirit of Death (Psalm 23:4);
- 2.2.3.15. Death and Dumb Spirit (Mark 9:25);
- 2.2.3.16. Spirit of Whoredoms (Ezekiel 15:8, Philippians 3:19);
- 2.2.3.17. Spirit of Infirmary (Luke 13:11, John 5:5);

<sup>74</sup> Connell, Karen E. (2020) *Threefold Cord Manual for Healing and Deliverance*. Independently Published. pp. 40-41

<sup>75</sup> Spirits: [https://web.oru.edu/current\\_students/class\\_pages/grtheo/mmankins/DrJBar/767PrchEvF7/16%20Spirits.pdf](https://web.oru.edu/current_students/class_pages/grtheo/mmankins/DrJBar/767PrchEvF7/16%20Spirits.pdf)

<sup>76</sup> Robeson, Drs. Jerry & Carol. (2000) *Strongman’s His Name...What’s His Game? An Authoritative Biblical Approach to Spiritual Warfare*. United State of America: Whitaker House.

- 2.2.3.18. Spirit of Jealousy (Galatians 5:19, Numbers 5:14, 30);
- 2.2.3.19. Perverse Spirit (Proverbs 1:22, Romans 1:18-32);
- 2.2.3.20. Lying Spirit (Psalms 34:18, Revelation 12:10);
- 2.2.3.21. Spirit of Haughtiness (Daniel 5:20, Luke 18:11-12);
- 2.2.3.22. Spirit of Heaviness (Isaiah 61:3, 2 Corinthians 1:8-9); and
- 2.2.3.23. Spirit of Poverty (Proverbs 6:11, 1 Timothy 3:3).

The manifestations are laziness (Proverbs 6:10), greed (Ecclesiastes 5:10), looting and stealing (Ephesians 4:28), concealing sin (Proverbs 28:13) and lack of generosity (Proverbs 11:26, 28:22). Solomon warns against giving in to the temptations of laziness, sleeping and folding of the hands instead of working:

**“Yet a little sleep, a little slumber, a little folding of the hands to sleep: So shall poverty come as one that travelleth, and thy want as an armed man.”**

#### **Proverbs 6:10-11.**

Poverty will come with irresistible fury, and you will not be prepared to cope with it. This does not indicate that people should never rest. The Sabbath, a weekly day of rest and restoration, is given by God to rest and for restoration. Laziness can turn people from their responsibilities and the spirit of poverty may soon keep people from the valid rest they should enjoy.

It is a poverty mentality to care and pray for yourself and not for your city, country, and leaders also. God calls and gives direct instruction to us to pray for our country and leaders in 1 Timothy 2:1-2 that we may live peaceful and quiet lives in all godliness and holiness. Man depends on God for security and peace through the government and righteous leaders so that he might secure the blessings offered by Him. God promised that He would heal the land:

**“If my people, which are called by my name, shall humble themselves, and pray, and seek my face, and turn from their wicked way; then will I hear from heaven, and will forgive their sin, and will heal their land.”**

#### **2 Chronicles 7:14.**

A person with the spirit of poverty does not trust God to provide. It is not the will of God for evil men to rule over the righteous. Jesus says in Matthew 6:24-30 that breaking a poverty mentality in people has its rewards.

#### **2.2.4. Breaking a Poverty Mentality by Defeating this Demon**

Walborn describes those evil spirits are like rats<sup>77</sup> because rats look for garbage

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<sup>77</sup> Walborn, Ronald C. (1998) Breaking the Spirit of Poverty: Perspectives on Wealth and Poverty from the Prophet Haggai. United States of America: UMI Company. p.4

upon which to feed. Therefore, demonic spirits are most excellent defeated by taking away the garbage. Jesus answered:

**“For whosoever will save his life shall lose it: and whosoever will lose his life for my sake shall find it.”**

**Matthew 16:25.**

First, Jesus addresses the danger of living one’s life out of this fear of losing – if you try to keep it, it will be lost. The second key in this verse is to break free from this fear. The foundational truth of this verse to break the spirit of poverty is by living out the opposite spirit, namely generosity.

Giving generously of themselves for the cause of Christ will break people free from “the fear of losing what they have.” Jesus also said:

**“Lay not up for yourselves treasures upon earth, where moth and rust doth corrupt, and where thieves break through and steal: But lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust doth corrupt, and where thieves do not break through nor steal:”**

**Matthew 6:19-20.**

Therefore, Jesus did not want people to be overwhelmed with the fear of loss and destruction, He wanted people to give what they have generously away so that more than they ever dreamed to have would be kept in a place where loss is not even a possibility.

The ultimate act of generosity and breaking the spirit of poverty is the life of Christ when He gives Himself on our behalf on the cross. Jesus was free of the fear of losing what He had. Because Jesus was free from the spirit of poverty, He could become poor for us so that people, through His poverty, might become rich<sup>78</sup>.

Another prime example is Apostle Paul. He told Timothy: “For I am now ready to be offered, and the time of my departure is at hand.”<sup>79</sup> Paul realized that this act of generosity would bring him a great reward because a few verses later, he refers to the reward:

**“Henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, shall give me at that day: and not to me only, but unto all them also that love his appearing.”**

**2 Timothy 4:8.**

Once freed from this devastating fear, people will be in a more vital place spiritually and emotionally than ever before. They will finally be able to experience God’s provision in their lives. This spirit of poverty limits people’s

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<sup>78</sup> Walborn, Ronald C. (1998) Breaking the Spirit of Poverty: Perspectives on Wealth and Poverty from the Prophet Haggai. United States of America: UMI Company. p.8

<sup>79</sup> 2 Timothy 4:6

ability to receive. Walborn<sup>80</sup> used the example of the monkey reaching into the jar of candy.

The fear of losing what one holds in one's hands may prohibit us from ever getting our hands out of the jar thinking we possess something when literally stopping us from receiving what God really wants to give us. King Solomon also understood this principle when he declared:

**“He that hasteth to be rich hath an evil eye, and considereth not that poverty shall come upon him.”**

**Proverbs 28:22.**

God thinks from the mindset of abundance. Most ordinarily, people think from the perspective of absence. Hence the reason why most ordinary people struggle with giving and this is a poverty mentality that can be read in Matthew 5:40-41, 46. People with a mindset of abundance will experience the abundance of blessings set out in Genesis 12:2-3. God wants people to prosper in abundance.

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

**Malachi 3:10.**

God never gets rid of something unless He's getting rid of something worse. The Israelites had to rely on God's supernatural manna provision for daily sustenance during their forty years in the wilderness. But they were unaware that the manna was merely a transient circumstance. Even though they had food, they were happy, but God was not.

God was taking them into a land poured with milk and honey and with all kinds of fruits, vegetables, and other resources. When they ate their first harvest from the Promised Land, the manna ceased. When something stops in your life – a friend walks away or a job ends - it is not time to get discouraged.

The law of poverty is “In all labour there is profit: but the talk of the lips tendeth only to penury.”<sup>81</sup> which means labour profits, but all talk and no work brings poverty. A man of words is not always a man of deeds. Break the thought and attitude of the spirit of poverty.

Stop things small and allow the Word of God to transform your mind. Paul admonished, let your mind be renewed by the washing of the water of the Word of God<sup>82</sup>. Stop saying the following words and see God as your sole provider:

2.2.4.1. “I will never have money to spend like that.”

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<sup>80</sup> Walborn, Ronald C. (1998) Breaking the Spirit of Poverty: Perspectives on Wealth and Poverty from the Prophet Haggai. United States of America: UMI Company. p.9

<sup>81</sup> Proverbs 14:23

<sup>82</sup> Ephesians 5:26



#### 2.2.4.2. “Life is hard.”

In Genesis 17:1, God appeared to Abraham and said, “I am the Almighty God.” The Hebrew word for Almighty God is El Shaddai<sup>83</sup>. God revealed Himself to Abraham as the “Supplier of the needs of His people.” If people see God as their sole provider, they will never look to any man for anything.

The most vital object to keep in mind is never just giving something and wanting something in return. According to Shuttlesworth<sup>84</sup>, God has decreed people the ability to rise to the top and people must plan because there is power in wise planning.

**“For the Lord thy God blesseth thee, as he promised thee: and thou shalt lend unto many nations, but thou shalt not borrow; and thou shalt reign over many nations, but they shall not reign over thee.”**

#### Deuteronomy 15:6.

No one needs to live in debt, debt is not a sin, but it is a weight. People will end up paying more than what something is worth because they either do not have faith in the money ahead of time or are buying what they cannot afford.

When people go into debt, they limit God by not trusting Him to provide enough. To conclude, the spirit of poverty is a trap into thinking there are limits on what you get to have. According to Kris Vallotton<sup>85</sup>, there are eight<sup>86</sup> simple but profound steps to break free:

- 2.2.4.3. Discover who God says you are – Romans 5:8, 1 Peter 2:9;
- 2.2.4.4. Ask Jesus to show you your sins or disappointments from His viewpoint;
- 2.2.4.5. Envision yourself as God sees you – Proverbs 23:7;
- 2.2.4.6. Recount your past sins and disappointments that still trouble you and ask Jesus to forgive you – 1 John 1:8-9;
- 2.2.4.7. Make a list of the five most insightful things that Jesus says about you and memorize them – Romans 12:2;
- 2.2.4.8. Ask yourself how someone has the attributes that God is: omnipotent (Luke 1:37), omniscient in knowledge (Psalms 139:4) and omnipresent (Psalms 139:8);
- 2.2.4.9. Develop a screening system for what you allow yourself to listen to and

<sup>83</sup> Dake’s Annotated Reference Bible. (1999) p.22

<sup>84</sup> Shuttlesworth, Jonathan D. (2017) Financial Overflow. Oakdale: Revival Today Publishing. pp.11-14

<sup>85</sup> Kris Vallotton: He is a bestselling author, international speaker, culture leader and a spiritual father to this generation. Kris has helped thousands of believers over the twenty years to realize their identity as sons and daughters of God.

<sup>86</sup> Eight Steps: <https://www.krisvallotton.com/about#ABOUTKRIS>

think about – Mark 4:24, Proverbs 4:23; and

- 2.2.4.10. Ask Jesus if there are conflicts you need to take to clean up your troubles or bring closure to your life; then act - Matthew 3:8, Acts 26:20.

These steps above will be easy when one looks to the trustworthy source that is God<sup>87</sup> and obey by giving tithes<sup>88</sup>, giving to the poor<sup>89</sup>, working hard<sup>90</sup> and being generous<sup>91</sup> and obedient to the Word of God<sup>92</sup>.

Still, people limit God by seeing Him not as He really is but as they had been taught that He is, and this is being handed down from generation to generation.

### 2.3. The Exposition of Man Limiting God Because Of His Imperfect Heart, Unbelief and Sin

Can it be because of man's imperfect heart, unbelief, and sin? As a man is in his heart, so is he<sup>93</sup>. Many people have limited God in their lives at some point in one way or another unconsciously or else very naively because of the fear of success, persecution, and imagination. People should always seek freedom of the heart, the freedom that has its roots in their poverty. Paul warns:

**“Take heed, brethren lest there be in any of you an evil heart of unbelief, in departing from the living God. But exhort one another daily, while it is called To day; lest any of you be hardened through the deceitfulness of sin.”**

**Hebrews 3:12-13.**

The Israelites were brought out of Egypt with the fullest assurance of eternal rest, prosperity, and blessing. Still, because of their unbelief and sin, they came short of the promised blessings, fell into the wilderness, and were cut off from God. The same thing can happen with Christians today; they can also return to an evil heart of unbelief and be cut off by God.

#### 2.3.1. A Biblical Perspective About an Imperfect Heart of Unbelief and Sin

There are millions of articles on the physical heart, complete with photos and diagrams and how it works. But people have a different heart from the physical organ pumping blood.

The Word of God defines the human heart across many verses that focus on the importance of the heart in a relationship with God. God created people with spirit, soul, and body. The Scriptures show that the heart is composed of all three components of our soul – our mind, will and emotion, plus the essential part of our spirit, our conscience.

<sup>87</sup> Deuteronomy 8:17-18, Proverbs 22:4, Psalm 23:1, 34:9

<sup>88</sup> Proverbs 3:9, Malachi 3:8-10. Matthew 6:31-33, 1 Corinthians 16:2, Romans 11:35

<sup>89</sup> Proverbs 19:17, 28:27

<sup>90</sup> Proverbs 21:5, 27:23-27, 28:19

<sup>91</sup> Psalm 112:5, Mark 12:44, 1 Timothy 6:18

<sup>92</sup> 1 Kings 2:3, Joshua 1:8, Proverbs 3:2.

<sup>93</sup> Proverbs 23:7-8

Thinking is an activity of the mind. Jesus asks:

**“And Jesus knowing their thoughts said, Wherefore think ye evil in your hearts?”**

**Matthew 9:4.**

These illustrations indicate that our mind is part of our heart. An exercise of our will is to decide to do something.

**“Who, when he came, and had seen the grace of God, was glad and exhorted them all, that with purpose of heart they would cleave unto the Lord.”**

**Acts 11:23.**

Rejoicing is related to our emotions; our heart can also rejoice, which shows that our emotion is also part of our heart in:

**“And ye now therefore have sorrow: but I will see you again, and your heart shall rejoice, and your joy no man taketh from you.”**

**John 16:22.**

Man's hearts can blame or condemn themselves when not in right standing with God or when sin is present.

**“For if our heart condemns us, God is greater than our heart, and knoweth all things.”**

**1 John 3:20.**

The heart is the centre of the relationship with God because He created people with a heart so they could have a loving relationship with Him<sup>94</sup> and love Him with “all thy heart.” The heart is also an entrance or doorway. The author Witness Lee<sup>95</sup> in his book *The Economy of God*, he explains this:

Our relationship with the Lord is always begun and maintained by the heart. Of course, to contact the Lord is a matter of the spirit, but this must be initiated and maintained by the heart, for our heart is the gateway of our whole being.

In other words, the heart becomes both the entrance and the exit of our being. Whatever enters into us must enter through the heart. Whatever comes out from us must proceed through the heart.

If unbelievers harden and close their hearts to the gospel, nobody can minister anything to them because their entrance is closed. The heart can be open with the love of God. The most effective way to unlock the heart's door is to preach the love of God. Once the heart is open, it is easy for the Holy Spirit to touch the spirit of man. To have a proper relationship with God, people must first deal with their hearts. The Scripture says in Matthew 5:8, “Blessed are the pure in heart: for they

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<sup>94</sup> Mark 12:30

<sup>95</sup> Lee, Witness. (1968) *The Economy of God*. United State of America: Living Stream Ministry. pp.75-78

shall see God.”

Many think they have nothing wrong with their hearts because they are clean and without condemnation. But they are not pure. This can be because they are aiming at God and at the same time at several other things. Purifying the heart first. Therefore, the heart must be purified from so many goals. A good example is that a preacher wanted to be the most prominent preacher in his denomination. The preacher’s heart was clean, but he was not pure. God and His Kingdom must be the only goal.

**“Flee also youthful lust: but follow righteousness, faith, charity, peace, with them that call on the Lord out of a pure heart.”**

**2 Timothy 2:22.**

Ian Clayton<sup>96</sup>, the author of his book *The Order of Melchizedek*, wrote that you get a pure heart by what your heart meditates on and thinks about because out of the issues of your heart, the mouth speaks and out of the abundance of the heart, your life flows<sup>97</sup>. To quote Clayton:

The heart is about the four rivers of YHWH that are supposed to flow out of your belly (John 7:38), watering the earth that is around us, bringing life into all the earth. YHWH wants to bring life and it is all about your heart<sup>98</sup>.

Many scholars explored the heart in all its Biblical conditions, but what is the crux of knowing? People must guard their hearts and King Solomon states it the best.

**“Keep thy heart with all diligence; for out of it are the issues of life.”**

**Proverbs 4:23.**

Guard your heart not to have a hardened heart, a heart of stone and not to be double hearted. A heart that is not after God is dangerous. Such a heart grows to be stubborn, hardened and filled with unbelief<sup>99</sup>. The Pharisees and the Sadducees had so much unbelief. The Pharisees would witness Jesus perform miracles by raising people from the dead and they still had their doubts about Him and continued planning to kill Him.

The Sadducees did not believe in the resurrection of Jesus Christ, whereas the Pharisees did. With all their knowledge, the Pharisees were not open to the teachings of Jesus. Their hearts were so hardened out of stubbornness that their false belief about Jesus did not change even when they saw Jesus perform miracles before their eyes. Some people choose to harden their hearts. This is a personal decision, action, choice and will.

This decision, action, choice and will to sin were repeated repeatedly, testing God while maintaining their imperfect heart of unbelief. They were unwilling to

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<sup>96</sup> Clayton, Ian. (2017) *The Order of Melchizedek*. United Kingdom: Son of Thunder Publications Ltd.

<sup>97</sup> Luke 6:45

<sup>98</sup> Clayton, Ian. (2017) *The Order of Melchizedek*. United Kingdom: Son of Thunder Publications Ltd.

<sup>99</sup> Hebrews 3:12

commit themselves to God<sup>100</sup>.

#### 2.3.1.1. The Harden Heart, The Heart of Stone and the Double Hearted

Anyone's heart can be hardened, even faithful Christians. The disciples of Jesus also had this illness<sup>101</sup> once. They were concerned with the insufficient bread supply with the second feeding, this time of four thousand people in the region of Gerasene in the area around the Decapolis. They had forgotten how Jesus had just fed five thousand with only five loaves of bread and two fishes the first time.

By questioning the disciples about the hardness of their hearts, Christ teaches man the characteristics of this spiritual heart condition as an inability to understand, see, hear, and remember. Too often, men forget how God has blessed them. People need to remember not the many times God has graciously provided for them in their hour of need but also what He said:

**“I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee.”**

**Hebrews 13:5.**

Pride will also cause hearts to harden. People must not be proud in their hearts, thinking they do not need God.

**“Wherefore he saith, God resisteth the proud, but giveth grace unto the humble.”**

**James 4:6.**

James 4:7-10 sets out the instructions on how to develop a healthy spirit. God is always willing to help see your heart's condition when people ask Him<sup>102</sup>. He can heal any heart once people recognize their disobedience and repent their sins.

King Nebuchadnezzar's "... heart was lifted up, and his mind hardened in pride, he was deposed from his kingly throne, and they took his glory from him...till he knew that the highest God ruled in the kingdom of men, and that he appointeth over it whomsoever he will."<sup>103</sup>

As the end times approach, crimes will become more horrible, and the human heart will become harder because then the world will be under fierce attack by evil spirits and people's homes will fall apart.

Paul says that people today must listen in the same way that the Israelites needed to hear then. Reverent Noah Simpe Bediako<sup>104</sup> stipulates seven things that can cause an evil heart of unbelief:

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<sup>100</sup> Hebrews 3:12

<sup>101</sup> Mark 8:17-19

<sup>102</sup> Psalm 139:23-24

<sup>103</sup> Daniel 5:20-21

<sup>104</sup> Cause of an Evil Heart: <https://highcity.org/7-ways-by-which-an-evil-heart-of-unbelief-can-form-in-people/>

- 2.3.1.1.1. Evil communications.
- 2.3.1.1.2. Loving the present world.
- 2.3.1.1.3. Seeing the prosecutions and temptations of your pastor.
- 2.3.1.1.4. Misinterpretation of the times and what must be done.
- 2.3.1.1.5. The seeming success story of others who have departed.
- 2.3.1.1.6. Your own prosperity and fatness.
- 2.3.1.1.7. When the reward of serving the Lord is delayed in coming.

Therefore, choices that affect one's religion and morals are made at the heart. Jesus was able to discern when wickedness was harboured in the heart<sup>105</sup>. A malicious heart produces bad fruit<sup>106</sup>. Your heart can turn to stone if you don't guard it and confess your sins.

In the Hebrew<sup>107</sup> nation, having a “heart of stone” indicates that the centre of one’s being is lifeless. Metaphorically speaking, a person with a heart of stone behaves uncaring, coldly, is not empathetic, is without emotion and is unmoved.

The difference between a heart of flesh and a heart of stone is the exact difference between spiritual life and spiritual death. God says in Ezekiel 11:19 and Ezekiel 36:26 that He will put a new spirit within the people, which indicates that He will remove the heart of stone and give them a heart of flesh.

In the Book of Ezekiel, God said enough is enough. The Israelites would not listen to the prophets because of their hardened hearts and their hearts were as hard as they come; this was because, over time, the things necessary to them were no longer Godly but worldly by worshiping what they should not be worshiping – God gave them a harsh sentence for their actions.

Because of this hard heartedness, the Israelites were exiled to Babylon. Then their most beloved city, Jerusalem, was destroyed, including the special place of worship, the temple. Still, even though the Israelites were exiled and even though Jerusalem and the temple were turned to rubble, God offered them hope for their future<sup>108</sup>.

God searches and knows all hearts<sup>109</sup>. Out of the fifty kinds of hearts described in the Word of God, the author of this dissertation wants to

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<sup>105</sup> Matthew 9:4

<sup>106</sup> Matthew 12:34

<sup>107</sup> Heart of Stone:

[https://www.google.com/search?q=heart+of+stone+versus+heart+of+flesh&rlz=1C1GIGM\\_enZA698ZA699&oq=heart+of+stone+verses+&aqs=chrome.1.69i57j0i13j0i390l2.14118j0j7&sourceid=chrome&ic=UTF-8](https://www.google.com/search?q=heart+of+stone+versus+heart+of+flesh&rlz=1C1GIGM_enZA698ZA699&oq=heart+of+stone+verses+&aqs=chrome.1.69i57j0i13j0i390l2.14118j0j7&sourceid=chrome&ic=UTF-8)

<sup>108</sup> Ezekiel 11:19-20

<sup>109</sup> 1 Samuel 16:7, Romans 8:27

scrutinize the double heart of 1 Chronicles 12:33 and Psalms 12:2.

There is a big void on this subject as not many scholars have engraved on this matter. More scholars explore the double minded that is very close to the double hearted man, yet not the same. The author of this dissertation will pursue the matter of the double heart in future studies. Double hearted and double minded are not the same:

**“For as he thinketh in his heart, so is he: Eat and drink, saith he to thee; but his heart is not with thee.”**

#### **Proverbs 23:7.**

The truth of who you are is shaped by the heart's desires and thoughts. Another notable example is the Pharisees, who were quite skilled at portraying themselves as extremely pious, religious, and saintly people—Jesus, however, called them hypocrites<sup>110</sup>.

The “flattering lips” in verse 2 of Psalms 12 and “the tongue that speaketh proud things” in verse 3 of Psalms 12 will be cut off by God. It explains that God does not love double hearted people. In this Psalm, David sees a dangerous decline of righteous individuals. It seems to him that the entire world has turned to evil, and the arrogant smooth talkers think the power of their words will achieve whatever they desire. Hence, David prays for God to end such wicked people.

1 Chronicles 12:33 is proof of this statement “...they were not of double heart.” It was said about the men of Zebulun that followed David. These men were utterly committed to their cause because they knew that David was the man ordained by God.

Man’s loyalties ought not to be divided; they must not be double hearted or double minded, but more like these men of Zebulun, wholly devoted. A double hearted and double minded man is unstable in all his ways. He cannot love God because loving God requires complete dependence and devotion to Him in his heart, mind, and soul from the beginning.

**“And thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thine heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy might.”**

#### **Deuteronomy 6:5.**

Jesus confirms this in Matthew 22:37. Double hearted people must begin to change their speech. The tongue is capable of great destruction. James calls it “...an unruly evil, full of deadly poison.”<sup>111</sup> Individuals cannot curse people made in the image of God and praise Him out of the same mouth. James describes this beautifully.

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<sup>110</sup> Matthew 23:13

<sup>111</sup> James 3:8

**“Doth a fountain send forth at the same place sweet water and bitter?” Can the fig tree, my brethren, bear olive berries? either a vine, fig? so can no fountain both yield salt water and fresh.”**

**James 3:11-12.**

Clean water and dirty water both cannot flow from the same fountain – the fountain in the Bible<sup>112</sup> symbolizes life, change, truth, and water.

Water streams and fountains had a significant role in the history of the Israelites and were necessary for survival. The purifying symbol is water itself. In the Old Testament, the phrase "fountain of life"<sup>113</sup> is used frequently as a metaphor to highlight several crucial facets of spiritual experience and faith. According to this scripture, "the fear of the LORD"<sup>114</sup> offers rescue from death to life, with the idea that this new life springs from a heavenly spring.

Man's life must be in harmony with God to be a person after God's own heart. David demonstrated his faith and was committed to following God. Even though David sinned, he was still “a man after his own heart”<sup>115</sup> because he sought and received forgiveness. His greatest leadership gift in his youth was knowing which enemies were his to deal with and which were to be dealt with by God.

The reasons why David was a man after God's own heart:

2.3.1.1.8. God was his rock and fortress – Psalms 18:2, Psalms 62:2, 6.

2.3.1.1.9. God was his shepherd – Psalms 23:1.

2.3.1.1.10. God was his light and salvation – Psalms 27:1.

2.3.1.1.11. God was his strength and shield – Psalms 28:7.

2.3.1.1.12. David trusts God – Psalms 25:2, Psalms 31:14.

2.3.1.1.13. He loved God's law – Psalms 119:47-48.

An excellent example of a hardened heart, a heart of stone that is a direct contrast to David's heart, was King Saul. Saul eventually focused on himself with pride because of his victories over the enemies of Israel.

He felt he no longer needed Samuel or the grace of God. Saul also

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<sup>112</sup> Fountain:

[https://www.google.com/search?rlz=1C1GIGM\\_enZA698ZA699&sxsrf=ALiCzsZyHa9tX36uivcwmzfZ3hZ7dQDdSg:1652370216743&q=What+do+fountains+represent+in+the+Bible%3F&sa=X&ved=2ahUKEwjOtrnepr3AhUTXsAKHU3BBiEQzmd6BAgaEAU&biw=1745&bih=852&dpr=1.1](https://www.google.com/search?rlz=1C1GIGM_enZA698ZA699&sxsrf=ALiCzsZyHa9tX36uivcwmzfZ3hZ7dQDdSg:1652370216743&q=What+do+fountains+represent+in+the+Bible%3F&sa=X&ved=2ahUKEwjOtrnepr3AhUTXsAKHU3BBiEQzmd6BAgaEAU&biw=1745&bih=852&dpr=1.1)

<sup>113</sup> Psalms 36:9

<sup>114</sup> Proverbs 2:5, Matthew 10:28

<sup>115</sup> 1 Samuel 13:14



became jealous of David because God was with David; hereafter, Saul was afraid of David, and this contributed to the hardened heart of Saul.

Another example of a king who started as righteous and ended with a heart of stone was King Herod<sup>116</sup>. Herod, to achieve the admiration of his Jewish subjects, rebuilt the Temple and saw himself as the protector of Jews outside of Palestine. Unfortunately, there was a dark and vicious vein in his heart that showed itself increasingly as he grew older and that was his insatiable need for fame and attention.

Herod started to oppress the people to get what he wanted through his attempts to dissolve the Jewish religion and customs. He often either took away people's civil human rights or imprisoned and killed several people he heard might be conspiring against him, whether it was true or not. Yet he feared John because "knowing that he was a just man and holy"<sup>117</sup> while Herod's heart was utterly immoral in the sight of God. Later, he killed all the two years old and younger babies after he heard of Jesus's birth.

Even though God revealed much about Himself to Israel in the Old Testament, they did not always believe what He said. The fruit of unbelief is unfaithfulness, expressed as departing from the relationship<sup>118</sup>. Therefore, sin needs to be explored.

#### 2.3.1.2. Sin

Many scholars have engraved much on this subject, but Jentezen Franklin, a well-known author, uses the python significantly to describe how Satan destroys its prey<sup>119</sup>:

The python is a serpent that waits patiently for its prey and at the opportune moment strikes. It sinks its sharp teeth deep into its victim, but its bite is not fatal. It's what happens next that destroys the prey of the python.

A python is after one thing: breath. It slowly coils itself around its victim and begin to squeeze the life out, little by little: as the grip gets tighter and tighter, it chokes and suffocates its prey until all the air is expunged from the prey's lungs.

It is significant according to Franklin because it is in line with Scripture that breath, air<sup>120</sup> and wind<sup>121</sup> are signs of the Holy Spirit. The picture is clear. Satan is trying to choke and suffocate the lives of people who sin. Everyone must guard their hearts and not leave doors open.

<sup>116</sup> King Herod: <https://www.britannica.com/biography/Herod-king-of-Judaea>

<sup>117</sup> Mark 6:20

<sup>118</sup> Fruit of Unbelief: <https://www.bibletools.org/index.cfm/fuseaction/topical.show/RTD/cgg/ID/3916/Evil-Heart-of-Unbelief-.htm>

<sup>119</sup> Franklin, Jentezen. (2013) *The Spirit of Python: Exposing Satan's Plan to Squeeze the Life out of You*. Florida: Charisma House. p3

<sup>120</sup> John 20:22

<sup>121</sup> Acts 2:2

Purposely disobeying the rules of God equals sin.

**“Whosoever committeth sin transgresseth also the law: for sin is the transgression of the law.”**

**1 John 3:4.**

The Bible describes hundreds of sins literally, but the most important ones were condensed into the Ten Commandments given to Moses<sup>122</sup>. All sins can be forgiven, but Jesus says in Matthew 12:31 that there is no forgiveness, never for blaspheming against the Holy Spirit.

Another sin God cannot also forgive is the sin of refusing to turn to Him<sup>123</sup>. According to Piper,<sup>124</sup> all human beings have sufficient knowledge of what is right and wrong in their hearts. Therefore, God cannot tempt man.

**“Let no man say when he is tempted, I am tempted of God: for God cannot be tempted with evil, neither tempteth he any man: But every man is tempted, when he is drawn away of his own lust, and enticed. Then when lust hath conceived, it bringeth forth sin: and sin, when it is finished, bringeth forth death.”**

**James 1:13-15.**

If God cannot tempt man, then He did not create sin. Some people say God is the creator of all things<sup>125</sup>, so He must have created sin. No, Satan is the source of sin and sin is something God hates<sup>126</sup>. The reason why people are confused is that sin<sup>127</sup> is not created like stars or animals.

Sin can be described as parasitic on the good desires that God created for people to enjoy. The reason hearts can be seduced into sin<sup>128</sup> is that sin is tempting. Sin makes life complex, and truth makes life simple. The goal is to manifest as a Son of God.

It is so easy to say that Satan is an instrument in God's hands. Can it be? The author of this dissertation heard that someone made this statement in passing. After scrutinizing the matter, it was found that there is also an emptiness on this subject and the author of this dissertation will pursue the case in further studies. Satan can do no more than God permits, but that does not mean he is an instrument in God's hands. God allows Satan so that Jesus can be glorified for His victories over the works of Satan.

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<sup>122</sup> Exodus 20

<sup>123</sup> Matthew 15:18-19

<sup>124</sup> John Piper: <https://www.desiringgod.org/interviews/how-is-the-law-written-on-every-heart>

<sup>125</sup> Genesis 1:1, Isaiah 44:24

<sup>126</sup> James 1:13

<sup>127</sup> Sin: [https://www.biblword.net/who-created-sin-god-or-satan/?gclid=Cj0KCQjwpv2TBhDoARIsALBnVnmDalpJD9Ksm67X4OxWGj5SIldh8rIVT1EUf90NJhM324qBECuTKD8aAsDSEALw\\_wcB](https://www.biblword.net/who-created-sin-god-or-satan/?gclid=Cj0KCQjwpv2TBhDoARIsALBnVnmDalpJD9Ksm67X4OxWGj5SIldh8rIVT1EUf90NJhM324qBECuTKD8aAsDSEALw_wcB)

<sup>128</sup> Ephesians 4:22, James 1:14

When humanity rejects God's authority, there is an ever present, dark force, waiting, continuously ready to invade the human heart given the slightest opening<sup>129</sup>. The energy pushes the world toward a cataclysmic end of ruin and destruction. Still, sin shall not have dominion over humanity<sup>130</sup>.

God delivers people from sin at the new birth and if people become subject to it again, it is because of choice, people make sense of the weakness of the flesh. Here Paul emphasizes the double hearted, man cannot be a sinner and a saint, nor be a servant of sin and righteousness or at the same time serve Satan and God.

The question of why a loving God would send people to hell forever rises from time to time. It is the penalty for sin<sup>131</sup>, the eternal separation from God. If it had been physical death, all the people would be automatically justified in the sight of God when they died physically. The penalty was thus paid, and God could not punish the sinner any further.

The physical death would be the means of justification and the door to heaven. This could not be. Some people who die physically will be saved and others will be lost; therefore, the penalty could not be physical death.

Nor can it be spiritual death which is the state of man in sin. All who sin would automatically be justified in the sight of God. This would mean that all who sin would be saved and go to heaven and guarantee everlasting life for all men, for all have sinned<sup>132</sup>. The salvation of souls would be foolish and unnecessary as the death of Christ, for all men were sinners before He came.

Therefore, the actual penalty for sin could not be physical or spiritual death but eternal death and separation from God. Physical death is the cause of spiritual and everlasting death. Eternal death is the punishment for spiritual death or sin<sup>133</sup>. When people die, their souls leave their bodies. Sinners await Hades for the final judgment.

**“And in hell he lift up his eyes, being in torments, and seeth Abraham afar off, and Lazarus in his bosom. And he cried and said, Father Abraham, have mercy on me, and send Lazarus, that he may dip the tip of his finger in water, and cool my tongue; for I am tormented in this flame.”**

**Luke 16:23-24.**

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<sup>129</sup> Jeremiah, Dr. David. (2019) The Book of Signs. Tennessee: W Publishing Group. p.311

<sup>130</sup> Romans 6:14- 23

<sup>131</sup> Dake's Annotated Reference Bible. 1999. p.1030

<sup>132</sup> Romans 3:23

<sup>133</sup> Ephesians 2:1-9

With death, the mortal body will become immortal in the revival<sup>134</sup>. All Scriptures mentioning upcoming immortality refer to the body, not the soul. The soul is now immortal. The time of the dead between death and resurrection of the body is called the intermediate state.

With the physical death<sup>135</sup>, the body returns to dust. It will remain dead until the future resurrection day when the body will be made immortal<sup>136</sup>. The soul and spirit remain thriving, immortal either in heaven or hell.

Believers' souls and spirits go to heaven immediately at death to await the resurrection of the body<sup>137</sup>. The soul and spirit of unbelievers go to hell at death to await the resurrection of the body<sup>138</sup>.

The belief of hell is present in many religions, except the Jehovah's Witnesses hold that the soul ends when the person dies and therefore, hell is a state of nonexistence<sup>139</sup>. It is their belief because they argue that it is entirely against God's nature to torture humans for eternity.

Jesus holds Lot's wife up as a beacon to His church when He says, "Remember Lot's wife" in Luke 17:32. Lot's wife looked back towards the city from behind her husband against God's direct command. Because she looked back, she turned into a pillar of salt. This sin seems small in the eyes of any reader<sup>140</sup>. That "looked back"<sup>141</sup> was not a little thing; little symptoms can often be signs of deadly and incurable diseases. This little thing of Lot's wife is disobedience; hence she refused to obey, and that rebellion is a sin of witchcraft is described in 1 Samuel 15:23. Lot's wife seemed to doubt whether God was really going to destroy Sodom; without faith, it is impossible to please God.

Another excellent example from Scripture of people who limit God is Judas Iscariot. The first sin<sup>142</sup> of Judas was greed<sup>143</sup>. His greed led to the betrayal of Jesus. The betrayal was not an act of violence; it was an act of affection. Judas kisses Jesus in the garden. The kiss is a sign of friendship.

Most of the sins are not sins of violence but sins of affection gone wrong. The greatest sin of Judas was not greed, giving into Satan or betrayal, but his failure to repent because he did not believe in God's ability to forgive him and love him again, thus the reason for

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<sup>134</sup> Dake's Annotated Reference Bible. 1999. p.1030

<sup>135</sup> Genesis 3:19

<sup>136</sup> 1 Corinthians 15:35-54

<sup>137</sup> 2 Corinthians 5:8, Luke 20:38

<sup>138</sup> Luke 16:19-31, Revelation 20:11-15

<sup>139</sup> Believe of the Jehovah Witnesses: <https://www.thegospelcoalition.org/blogs/justin-taylor/the-11-beliefs-you-should-know-about-jehovahs-witnesses-when-they-knock-at-the-door/>

<sup>140</sup> Lot's Wife: Ryle, J.C. (2012) Holiness: Its Nature, Hindrances, Difficulties and Roots. Great Britain: Burleigh Press. pp.103-106

<sup>141</sup> Genesis 19:26

<sup>142</sup> Sins of Judas Iscariot: <https://gbible.org/daily-message/sins-judas-many-not-just-traitor-first-sin-greed/>

<sup>143</sup> John 12:4-8

committing suicide. He did feel remorse and returned the thirty pieces of silver. Remorse is not enough.

Dr C.R. Oliver<sup>144</sup>, a retired professor of Philosophy and Behavioural Science, defines sin as honouring anything or anybody or any belief or any program of flesh above the spirit-led, day-by-day walk with God is sin that brings death. Most people know the outcome of sin and still limit God with their actions from the time of the Old Testament.

## 2.4. An Exposition of People Limiting God from A Biblical Perspective

At times God will do things completely the opposite way people or the world does. As there is no limit to God's power, humanity can still impose limits.

**“For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways, saith the LORD. For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways, and my thoughts than your thoughts.”**

**Isaiah 55:8-9.**

Paul says in Ephesians 3:20 that God can do above all that people request or believe according to the authority that works in them and sometimes God does not do what people ask or think because they do not allow His ability to work in them. Too many people are speaking words of death, yet at the same time expecting to see life happen<sup>145</sup>.

Scripture teaches in the Book of Jude 1:20 to “building up yourselves on your most holy faith.” If Jude gives us this instruction, the question is how do we get to a place where we do not limit God and build ourselves up in our faith so that we can have assurance in God and His Word?

### 2.4.1. Ways We Limit God's Power in Our Lives

#### 2.4.1.1. Complaining and Discontentment

With their whining, mistrust, and moaning, the Israelites constrained God. Psalms 50 and 73–83 were written by Asaph, one of the three men who served as King David's principal musicians, according to 1 Chronicles 15:16–17. Asaph claims that Israel's continued disbelief restricts God in Psalms 78:41: “Yea, they turned back and tempted God, and limited the Holy One of Israel.” Asaph experienced all the miracles, and all that God did for Israel and still, at the end of all those astonishing works, Israel still provoked Him to anger<sup>146</sup> if they encountered a problem and a result, distrusted God. Resultantly they transfer all their frustration to Moses.

Moses was so defeated that he chose to end his life rather than carry on in this manner. He spoke hastily out of exhaustion, and God disqualified him from leading the people into the Promised Land. Man restricts God

<sup>144</sup> Dr. C.R. Oliver: Oliver, Dr. C.R. (2000) The Sons of Zadok. Texas: Zadok Publications Inc. p.30

<sup>145</sup> Proverbs 18:21

<sup>146</sup> Psalms 78:17-18

through mistrust and terror<sup>147</sup>. At this point, folks began to see their problems as rolling mountain waves and began to pay attention to their worries, which were howling in their ears like ferocious winds. He claimed that his issues were more important than God's might.

Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego trusted God when they answered King Nebuchadnezzar carefully and were confident their God could deliver them.

**“If it be so, our God whom we serve is able to deliver us from the burning fiery furnace, and he will deliver us out of thine hand, O king.”**

**Daniel 3:17.**

There are six results if one puts trust in God<sup>148</sup>:

2.4.1.1.1. One will be a tree planted by the water.

2.4.1.1.2. One will spread out one's roots by the river.

2.4.1.1.3. One shall not see when the heat comes.

2.4.1.1.4. The leaves will be green.

2.4.1.1.5. One shall not be careful in a year of drought.

2.4.1.1.6. One shall never cease to bear fruit.

The three characteristics of One who puts trust in man are<sup>149</sup>:

2.4.1.1.7. He is like the heath in the desert.

2.4.1.1.8. He does not see when good comes.

2.4.1.1.9. He will inhabit the parched places in the wilderness.

Then there are three characteristics of a cursed man<sup>150</sup>:

2.4.1.1.10. Trust in man.

2.4.1.1.11. Makes flesh his arm – the power of trust.

2.4.1.1.12. His heart departs from God.

It is better to be a blessed man<sup>151</sup>:

<sup>147</sup> Distrusting: <https://www.spurgeon.org/resource-library/sermons/limiting-god/#flipbook/>

<sup>148</sup> Jeremiah 17:8, Dake's Annotated Reference Bible. 1999. p.1291

<sup>149</sup> Jeremiah 17:6, Dake's Annotated Reference Bible. 1999. p.1291

<sup>150</sup> Jeremiah 17:5, Dake's Annotated Reference Bible. 1999. p.1291

<sup>151</sup> Jeremiah 17:7, Dake's Annotated Reference Bible. 1999. p.1291

2.4.1.1.13. He trusts God.

2.4.1.1.14. His hopes are in the Lord.

2.4.1.2. Fear, Unbelief and Despair

Fear is a significant limitation of faith. Fear kept the Apostles in the upper room. In conflict, faith led them into the streets and their witness altered the world. Faithlessness is a limitation on God working through us. It is hesitation, absence of faith and doubt that steal from seeing the miracles He has done and the assurances He still plans to fulfil in people's lives.

**“But ye, beloved, building up yourselves on your most holy faith, praying in the Holy Ghost.”**

**Jude 1:20.**

People who believe there is no mercy for them live with the limitation of despair. These people imagine that the free grace and sovereign love of Jesus Christ are not for them because they are not good enough. Sometimes they experience the rays of sunshine of God's love, they believe, but when the comfortable presence of God is gone, they relapse into their old despair. These people think God looks at them with cold indifference and will never hear their prayers. This is not limiting God but also slandering God<sup>152</sup>.

2.4.1.3. Comparison with the Wrong People

If people comply with the above mentioned, then they will not get to a place where they do limit God but rather build themselves up because of their confidence in God and His Word. To compare yourself with the wrong people is one of the greatest limits to what God can do in people's lives.

**“For we dare not make ourselves of the number, or compare ourselves with some that commend themselves: but they measuring themselves by themselves, and comparing themselves among themselves, are not wise.”**

**2 Corinthians 10:12.**

Paul rebuked the Corinthians for judging him on outward appearances and speech because he was not eloquent and small. Paul took the limits off and two thousand years later, people still talk about him and his teachings. Paul made a significant contribution by writing half of the books of the New Testament from the revelations God gave him.

Some people restricted God in the timeline of the Bible by mocking Him. God prohibits people from challenging His authority, He is not a man He should be mocked.

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<sup>152</sup> Despair and Slandering: <https://www.spurgeon.org/resource-library/sermons/limiting-god/#flipbook/>

**“Be not deceived; God is not mocked: for whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap.”**

**Galatians 6:7.**

It does not make a difference how much fame, money and triumph people have; it still does not give them the right to think or believe they are past God's wrath. Sennacherib was the king of Assyria. He wanted to invade Judah. Sennacherib sent messengers to Jerusalem to tell Hezekiah that God would not defend Judah<sup>153</sup>. Hezekiah begged God about Sennacherib's insults and mockery and demanded rescue. God responded through the prophet Isaiah.

**“Because thy rage against me and thy tumult, is come up into mine ears, therefore will I put my hook in thy nose, and my bridle in thy lips, and I will turn thee back by the way which thou camest.”**

**Isaiah 37:29.**

That night the angel struck down 185 000 men in the camp of Assyrian; Sennacherib had no other choice but to withdraw. Still, God was not finished with him because while he was honouring his god in its temple, he was killed by two of his sons with a sword.

#### 2.4.1.4. Relying on Our Own Power, Instead of God's Power

People today do not take God seriously or do not know his Word because influential and famous people thought they could mock God and get away with it. The following famous people mocked God<sup>154</sup>:

- 2.4.1.4.1. Singer John Lennon predicted that Christianity would die and vanish in a 1966 interview with an American magazine. I don't need to debate it. I'm positive. Jesus was alright, but his themes were rather basic; now, we are more well-known than He was. After claiming that the Beatles were more renowned than Jesus, Lennon was shot six times.
- 2.4.1.4.2. Actress Marilyn Monroe had a visit from Billy Graham in 1962 while a show was being presented. The Spirit of God sent Graham to her as a preacher. She remarked, "I don't need your Jesus," after hearing what he had to say. She was discovered dead in her apartment a week later.
- 2.4.1.4.3. Bon Scott, a singer (the ex-vocalist of AC/DC), in 1979 in one of his songs, sang: Don't stop me; I'm going down all the way, down the highway to hell. A year later, he was

<sup>153</sup> Isaiah 37:10

<sup>154</sup> People who Mocked God: <https://www.maravipost.com/meet-world-famous-people-who-mocked-god-jesus-read-what-happened-to-them/>



found dead, choked by his vomit.

- 2.4.1.4.4. Edward John Smith, the captain of the RMS Titanic, said in 1915: Not even God Himself could sink this Ship<sup>155</sup>. The Titanic sank on its maiden voyage. The sinking of the Titanic was undoubtedly avoidable. Many plans have been suggested to pull it out of the ocean<sup>156</sup>, but it is just not possible because it has split into two pieces while it is rusted away. Scientists discovered in 2016 an organism called Extremophile bacteria that has been more aggressive in destroying what is left of the ship. They determined that the entire ship would be dissolved by 2030.
- 2.4.1.4.5. On the eve of his inauguration, Ancredo Neves, the president of Brazil in 1985, developed a serious illness. He claimed that not even God could remove him from the presidency if he received 500 000 votes from his party. Despite receiving votes, he was not admitted.
- 2.4.1.4.6. Cazuza<sup>157</sup>, a bi-sexual Brazilian composer, singer, and poet, in 1990, during a show in Cancio, while smoking his cigarette, he puffed out smoke into the air and said: God, that's for you. He died of lung cancer at 32 in a horrifying way.
- 2.4.1.4.7. Christine Hewitt<sup>158</sup>, a Jamaican Journalist and entertainer, in 2006 was found burnt beyond recognition in her vehicle after she said that the Bible was the worst book ever written.
- 2.4.1.4.8. In Campinas, Brazil<sup>159</sup>, friends drank in 2005 and wanted to pick up a friend. The mother escorted her daughter to the car and was worried about the drunkenness of her friends. The mother said to her daughter, holding her hand, who had already settled in the car: My daughter, go with God and may He protect you. The daughter responded: Only if He travels in the trunk, cause inside here...It's already full. Hours later, they were involved in a fatal accident and everyone in that vehicle died. The car was beyond recognition. Only the trunk was intact. According to the police, there was no way that the trunk could have remained intact. When opening the trunk, there was a crate of eggs. None was broken.

#### 2.4.1.5. Arrogance in Our Prayers

Still, people act as if God owes us when we owe God everything

<sup>155</sup> Titanic: <https://ng.opera.news/ng/en/science/fc0af2d80db3bfe897e3695baeddf49d>

<sup>156</sup> Raising the Titanic: <https://www.thetravel.com/titanic-cant-be-raised/>

<sup>157</sup> Cazuza: <https://www.maravipost.com/list-of-5-famous-people-who-died-soon-after-mocking-god-cazuza/>

<sup>158</sup> Christine Hewitt: <https://ng.opera.news/ng/en/entertainment/1047420c0f6dfa8b7f9b6912f7f80d24>

<sup>159</sup> Never Mock God: <https://ng.opera.news/ng/en/accident/6aaa27af708c918e298c50af79685319>

because of the sacrifice of Christ. All the things we have and all the things we experience are a blessing of God. Then there are people asking God for a specific thing. Popular books on this theme are David Yonggi Cho, *The Fourth Dimension*, Mark Batterson, *The Prayer Circle* and a well-known movie by The Kendrick brothers: *War Room*.

There are different secular opinions on praying for a specific thing or a specific need. Discussing this topic further is not the purpose of this dissertation and can be recommended for further studies. However, praying for something specific can be seen in Scripture. The blind Bartimaeus, the son of Timaeus, came running after Jesus and cried<sup>160</sup>: “Jesus, thou Son of David, have mercy on me.” Although Jesus and everybody knew that Bartimaeus was asking for the healing of the blindness, Jesus asked: “What wilt thou that I should do unto thee?”

Jesus wanted here a specific request on which Bartimaeus asked: “Lord, that I might receive my sight.” Jesus answered: “Go thy way; thy faith hath made thee whole. And immediately he received his sight and followed Jesus in the way.” Jesus did not speak of healing before Bartimaeus specifically asked for healing and for his eyes specifically. The Bible is clear that we can ask God for our every need<sup>161</sup>. Contrary to asking according to God’s will for our life is asking selfishly.

**“Ye lust, and have not: ye kill, and desire to have, and cannot obtain: ye fight and war, yet ye have not, because ye ask not. Ye ask, and receive not, because ye ask amiss, that ye may consume it upon your lusts. Ye adulterers and adulteresses, know ye not that the friendship of the world is enmity with God? whosoever therefore will be a friend of the world is the enemy of God.”**

**James 4:2-4.**

This will limit God to a particular answer, not doing according to God’s will for our life but according to “my own will be done.” Charles Haddon Spurgeon<sup>162</sup>, a Baptist preacher known as the “Prince of Preachers” from 1850, elaborates on this subject that often people have in their prayers wrestled with God for a blessing while arrogantly demanding it. Some people have asked and declared that they would not be content unless they had the blessing upon which they had set their hearts. Spurgeon believed<sup>163</sup> people could ask for a blessing but must not define what the blessing shall be.

Thus, people must not intervene in God’s blessings. Further, prayer was never meant to be a restraint upon the sovereignty of God, much less a licensed channel for blasphemy. People must instead end their prayers

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<sup>160</sup> Mark 10:46-52

<sup>161</sup> Hebrews 4:16

<sup>162</sup> Charles Haddon Spurgeon:

[https://www.google.com/search?gs\\_ssp=eJzj4tDP1TcoNE1KMmD0Ek\\_OSCzKSS1WyEhMSnPUyguKC1KT83PAwDGdQwN&q=charles+haddon+spurgeon&rlz=1C1GIGM\\_enZA698ZA699&oq=charles+haddon+&aqs=chrome.1.69i57j46i512l2j0i512j46i512l2j0i512l3.10426j0j7&sourceid=chrome&ie=UTF-8](https://www.google.com/search?gs_ssp=eJzj4tDP1TcoNE1KMmD0Ek_OSCzKSS1WyEhMSnPUyguKC1KT83PAwDGdQwN&q=charles+haddon+spurgeon&rlz=1C1GIGM_enZA698ZA699&oq=charles+haddon+&aqs=chrome.1.69i57j46i512l2j0i512j46i512l2j0i512l3.10426j0j7&sourceid=chrome&ie=UTF-8)

<sup>163</sup> Spurgeon Believed: Spurgeon, Charles Haddon. (1859) *Limiting God*. New Park Street Pulpit Volume 5. The Spurgeon Center for Biblical Preaching at Midwestern Seminary.

with these words: Father, deny this if it be most for thy glory.

God calls us to pray about everything! We can tell God exactly what we want. When the wedding ran low on wine. Mary was not content to say, "Help us, Jesus." She was specific: "They have no wine."<sup>164</sup> Serious prayer involves a precise request. It is not about getting an answer when you learn the power of targeted prayer; rather, it is about growing closer to Jesus. People are able to be very particular in their wishes. God wants people to ask Him for what they need and want even though He already knows what they want because they need His grace. Prayer enhances our faith and connection to God by bringing us closer to him.

**"Be careful for nothing; but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known unto God."**

**Philippians 4:6.**

Sometimes people dictate to God regarding the measure of the blessing they want. When the blessing comes, it is not what was expected and then they complain to God that He has not answered them, whereas God has responded to the spirit of their prayer.

For example, if people prayed for silver, but He gave them gold, then it is that they do not understand the value of the blessing<sup>165</sup>. God will have nothing to do with dictatorial prayers and He will not be a partaker with men in the sin to be limited. Often people dictate to God regarding the time when they pray for a blessing<sup>166</sup>. Most people expect it to be done or delivered by next week. People then pray again and again and at last, they begin to fade and to no avail. This is because, in their heart, they have been setting a date and a time with God. God's promises bear no dates.

**"For the vision is yet for an appointed time, but at the end it shall speak, and not lie: though it tarry, wait for it; because it will surely come, it will not tarry."**

**Habakkuk 2:3.**

Always close your prayers by letting it be not as I will, but as Your will. To close this point of dictation through prayers<sup>167</sup> - do not dictate to God what vision He must send for your assurance that He has forgiven you for your sin. Again, God will have nothing to do with your dictation or desire of how He should save you.

#### 2.4.1.6. Wrong Beliefs and Unrenewed Mind

The mind of man is his organ of thought. Through it, he is equipped to

<sup>164</sup> John 2:3

<sup>165</sup> Dictating to God: <https://www.spurgeon.org/resource-library/sermons/limiting-god/#flipbook/>

<sup>166</sup> Time and Prayers: <https://www.spurgeon.org/resource-library/sermons/limiting-god/#flipbook/>

<sup>167</sup> Prayers: <https://www.spurgeon.org/resource-library/sermons/limiting-god/#flipbook/>

know, think, imagine, remember, and understand. Broadly speaking, the mind is the brain. Mind is a psychological term, whereas the brain is a physiological term. The mind of psychology is the brain of physiology. Man's mind occupies a prominent place in his life because his thought easily influences his action.

According to the Bible, man's mind is unusual because it constitutes a battlefield where Satan and his evil spirits contend against the truth and hence against the believer. Thus, people limit God in their thought life reasoning and in their intellect. Because of this, it is possible for a child of God to have a new life and a new heart but be without a new head.

Reverend Rickey Edwards<sup>168</sup>, the author of *The Soul: Renew your Mind to Save Your Soul*, is inspired by the movie *Transformers*<sup>169</sup>. This is a science fiction action movie about the ancient struggle between two Cybertronian races, the heroic Autobots who are the defenders of Earth and the evil Decepticons who brought their war to Earth.

A small yellow Camaro named BumbleBee is driving along with other "transformers" and suddenly, it stands up, ready for battle as a great warrior. For Edwards, spiritually speaking, this must happen when people renew their minds with God daily. People must transform into diligent and anointed Christians by renewing<sup>170</sup> their minds every day to be prepared for the spiritual warfare<sup>171</sup> in their minds.

Ephesians 4:22-24 shows that if people want their understanding and mind to be renewed, they must specifically put off their old man. If people want to be renewed continuously, they must put it off continuously. Just as people exercise their will to take off their clothes and cast them aside when they undress, they should exercise their will to put off the old man and throw it aside especially.

Everything that fits to the old man, whether our speech, thoughts, or behaviour, should be specifically thrown aside; we should reject everything sinful, unclean, or of the self. At the same time, we must seek the Lord single-heartedly and trust the Holy Spirit to renew our minds. This renewing act belongs to the Holy Spirit through the Word of God. If people remove the obstacles and trust in Him to do the renewing work, He will renew their nous gradually.

Kenneth E. Hagin<sup>172</sup> confirms this by explaining in a similar manner that your mind will not stay renewed any more than your hair will remain combed because people must comb their hair every day.

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<sup>168</sup> Reverent Ricky Edwards: <https://www.amazon.com/Soul-Renew-Your-Mind-Save/dp/0997604646>

<sup>169</sup> *Transformers*: This is a trilogy science fiction film, released in 2007 by the Production Company DreamWorks Pictures with Executive Producer Steven Spielberg.

<sup>170</sup> Ephesians 4:23

<sup>171</sup> Ephesians 6:12

<sup>172</sup> Kenneth E. Hagin: He was an American preacher and known as the Apostle of the World of Faith movement.

**“And be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God.”**

**Romans 12:2.**

Putting off something is not done by faith alone but by the act of the will so that people can receive everything from God, know God's will, understand God's desire, and understand the teaching of the Bible.

It is equally vital for a person's mind to be renewed, enlarged, and strengthened to demonstrate God's perfect will according to His Word. Otherwise, we shall witness an unbalanced life, continuing in sin. God desires that our minds be renewed, as is our spirit. God wishes to restore our thought life so that we may glorify not only Him in our walk but also in our thinking.

Who can estimate the multiplied number of God's children who, due to neglecting their minds and thus limiting God, grow narrow, stubborn, and obstinate and even sometimes defiled? Humanity falls short of the grandeur of God. The Lord's people need to know that if they want to live an entire life, their minds must be renewed.

Paul includes Demas in a place of honour as a fellow missionary spreading the Gospel. While waiting for execution, Paul was sad as Demas forsook him in a time of need because Demas loves the things of his life<sup>173</sup>. Paul writes in Romans 12:2 that people must no longer be conformed to the world to abandon the chase for pleasure, status, and possessions. Instead, people must transform from the inside out and renew their minds. People must also not fear what God might ask them to do.

**2.4.1.7. We Fear What God Might Ask Us to do**

Many people do not turn to God because they fear God will make them do something they do not want to. This limitation is due to the fear that He will make them give up something significant to them. It can be their possessions, money, time, or even their sin. This selfishness keeps them isolated but giving can repair and rebuild.

People do not realize who they can become without the chains limiting them, what they could accomplish without that chain of fear and insecurity, guilt, and shame. God is the chain breaker.

**“O LORD, truly I am thy servant; I am thy servant, and the son of thine handmaid: thou hast loosed my bonds.”**

**Psalm 116:16.**

Many people are troubled by the command to fear God. When the Word

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<sup>173</sup> 2 Timothy 4:10

of God raises to the “fear of the Lord,” it implies having deep respect, reverence, and awe for the power of God and His authority. This is not the same as being afraid of God, He does not want us to be frightened of Him. Although there are different categories of fear, part of the respect and awe is the knowledge of His wrath and power. A healthy fear of God includes the fear of the consequences of disobedience.

When the Rich Young Ruler<sup>174</sup> met with Jesus, he asked Him: “Good Master, what shall I do that I may inherit eternal life?”<sup>175</sup> Jesus answered him: “One thing thou lackest: go thy way, sell whatsoever thou hast, and give to the poor, and thou shalt have treasure in heaven: and come, take up the cross, and follow me.”<sup>176</sup>

The weakness of the Rich Young Ruler was that he trusted in the security of his personal finances more than anything else but most of all that is not what he wanted to hear. That day the Rich Young Ruler could have conquered his weakness by trusting God but made the wrong choice<sup>177</sup>.

Another reason some people do not give God the tithe, first fruits, alms, or seed is that their love is not perfect<sup>178</sup> and fear is still ruling their lives<sup>179</sup>. To tithe<sup>180</sup> is to be obedient to the Word of God; disobedient is to rob God<sup>181</sup>. It is also a divine connector to the blessing because, in Genesis 1:28, God blessed them and said: “Be fruitful, and multiply, and replenish the earth, and subdue it: and have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over every living thing that moveth upon the earth.”

Tithing holds God to His promise to rebuke the devourer for humanity’s sake. Rather have ninety percent of your income blessed than a hundred percent of it cursed. No one will learn to live in prosperity when they get to heaven. First fruits are done once a year and by this, people honour God<sup>182</sup> and it shows gratitude to God for the extra blessing He bestowed upon them<sup>183</sup>. Then, Alms Giving is the giving that is not given to God but to humanity; it is all about compassion for fellow man<sup>184</sup>.

Very important, when a charitable deed will be carried out, do not shout it from the rooftops<sup>185</sup>. For this, no one receives a reward from God. Almsgiving is a secret to protect people’s dignity in their crisis.

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<sup>174</sup> Jesse Duplantis – Trust God p5: [https://dailywisdomtv.com/wp-content/uploads/2019/05/VOTC\\_2013-01.pdf](https://dailywisdomtv.com/wp-content/uploads/2019/05/VOTC_2013-01.pdf)

<sup>175</sup> Mark 10:17

<sup>176</sup> Mark 10:21

<sup>177</sup> Mark 10:22

<sup>178</sup> Jesse Duplantis: Perfect Love p7: [https://dailywisdomtv.com/wp-content/uploads/2019/05/VOTC\\_2013-01.pdf](https://dailywisdomtv.com/wp-content/uploads/2019/05/VOTC_2013-01.pdf)

<sup>179</sup> 1 John 4:18

<sup>180</sup> Jesse Duplantis – Giving: <https://www.rhemabiblechurch.net/index.php/articles/teachings/268-why-isn-t-my-giving-working-by-dr-jesse-duplantis>.

<sup>181</sup> Malachi 3:8-12

<sup>182</sup> Proverbs 3:9

<sup>183</sup> Romans 11:16

<sup>184</sup> Proverbs 19:17

<sup>185</sup> Matthew 6:1-8

Disobedience is when people keep telling everyone how much they help the poor.

The motivation for faith and reward is seed giving, expressed in Mark 4:3-9. This is the way the thirty-fold, sixty-fold, or hundred-fold harvest is received. If people take the seed and not tithe, the devourer is going to take it and God cannot then rebuke the devourer for their sake. Here what is important is that the seed must be sown on good ground. The tithe is for God. People cannot take the tithe and make alms; God will shut the windows, as in Malachi 3:10.

The fear of losing their security and the fear of not having money has gripped them, so they are too scared to give. The base of all disbelief and uncertainty is fear. These people have an inner struggle between a truthful love for God and the fear of losing personal security, which God can also provide. It is the same battle the Rich Young Ruler fought and lost. Those who choose to put God first and put their personal security in Him and tithe will prosper<sup>186</sup>.

#### 2.4.1.8. We Expect Little, Therefore We Receive Little

People limit God by seeing Him, not as He really is but as they had been taught that He is, and this is being handed down from generation to generation by their predecessors through the churches. Therefore, some churches today are not realizing the authority of God manifested in signs and wonders and powerful miracles. Some pastors are hesitant to empower their youth, fearing they will be out of a job if they do. Thus, one of the reasons why some pastors grow old in their churches. Elisha boldly asked in 2 Kings 2:14: "...Where is the LORD, the God of Elijah..." Each generation must be educated about who God is.

**"One generation shall praise thy works to another, and shall declare thy mighty acts."**

#### **Psalm 145:4.**

God provides seedtime and harvest so that humans have food to eat and pleasure and to maintain the physical function of their bodies so that they continue to be biologically alive. A person who sows to appease his sinful natural existence will reap destruction from that natural life, whereas a person who sows to appease the Spirit will reap eternal life from the Spirit.

A farmer who scatters little seeds can expect a small harvest, but if he scatters many seeds, the harvest will be significant. The Word of God is an eternal seed that will produce no matter what the external circumstance may be. Even though you reap what you sow has spread well beyond religion and mortality, the proverb still has use in those contexts, especially owing to its biblical origins. Yet, man is created as a finite being but wants to limit an infinite God.

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<sup>186</sup> Galatians 6:7

**“Woe unto him that striveth with his Maker! Let the potsherd strive with the potsherds of the earth. Shall the clay say to him that fashioneth it, What makest thou? or thy work, He hath no hands?”**

**Isaiah 45:9.**

Some people fast and pray to receive abundant results but receive no answers or results. Others believe that fasting achieves something from God. This is not twisting God's Arm to solve problems. It is a tremendously dangerous territory to enter because fasting does not earn forgiveness of sin or merit with God.

#### 2.4.1.9. Biblical Fasting

Fasting is an ancient though powerful spiritual disciple for all Christians. Through fasting and prayer, the Holy Spirit can transform lives. Dr Bill Bright, an evangelist, and the Founder and President of the Campus Crusade for Christ International, said that fasting with prayer is a spiritual atomic bomb in its potential power<sup>187</sup>. Correspondingly Dr Ronnie W. Floyd,<sup>188</sup> the senior pastor of Cross Church, President of the National Day of Prayer, and Past President of the Southern Baptist Convention, describes fasting and prayer as God's gateway to supernatural power and spiritual breakthroughs.

Biblical fasting is voluntarily abstaining from food for a specific time and sincerely desire for deeper intimacy with God and knowledge of God's perfect will. Franklin<sup>189</sup> proclaims that if God has placed a dream inside you that only He can make possible, you need to fast and pray. The discipline of fasting releases the anointing, blessing and favour of God in the life of a believer.

**“Blessed are they which do hunger and thirst after righteousness: for they shall be filled.”**

**Matthew 5:6.**

Fasting is a potent discipline because when food is eliminated from a person's diet for a few days, the person's spirit becomes uncluttered by the things of God. David's hunger and thirst for God were more significant than his natural desire for food.

David states in Psalm 42:7, “Deep calleth unto deep at the noise of thy waterspouts: all thy waves and thy billows are gone over me.” Thus, David reached a place where he could cry out from the depths of his spirit without limitations to the depths of God, even amid his trial.

The myriad joys and blessings that come after even a small taste of that

<sup>187</sup> Floyd, Ronnie W. (2010) The Power of Prayer And Fasting. Nashville, Tennessee: B&H Publishing Group. pxi

<sup>188</sup> Dr Ronnie W. Floyd: <https://www1.cbn.com/node/454176>

<sup>189</sup> Franklin, Jentezen. (2008) Fasting. Florida: Charism House. p.4



kind of connection with God will alter a person's entire worldview<sup>190</sup>. They will come to understand that fasting is a powerful tactic that is often ignored. Scripture mentions a few different forms of fasts, including<sup>191</sup>:

- 2.4.1.9.1. The Daniel Fast involves abstaining from foods and drink for an extended period as found in Daniel 10:2-3.
- 2.4.1.9.2. Forty days fast are extreme absolute fasting with no food and no water. Moses in Exodus 34:28 and Jesus in Matthew 4:1-2 are great examples of this type of fasting.
- 2.4.1.9.3. Three-day Ester fast is also without food or water, day and night, as found in Ester 4:16.
- 2.4.1.9.4. Sexual fasting. Paul poses this fast through mutual consent for married people to devote themselves to praying, as described in 1 Corinthians 7:3-6.
- 2.4.1.9.5. Corporate fasting can be found in Ezra 8:21-23. They fasted for protection on their journey to Jerusalem.
- 2.4.1.9.6. Regular Fasting is without food of any kind but plenty of water<sup>192</sup>.

The Feast for Unleavened Bread celebrates the journey of Israel's children through the wilderness, which can also be considered a type of fasting, the author of this dissertation believes. This feast for seven days<sup>193</sup> commenced just after Passover (Passover was a meal held on the fourteenth day of the month Nisan at twilight), as described in Exodus 12:11.

The command for this seven-day feast<sup>194</sup> is to eat only unleavened bread during this feast because “neither shall there any thing of the flesh, which thou sacrificedst the first day at even, remain all night till the morning.” this indicates no meat to be eaten. All leaven must be removed from the homes before the feast begins. The reason for getting rid of all leaven is to remove sin from the homes.

Though the Jewish people still celebrate this feast, Christians must not because Jesus breaks the bread at the Last Supper, which is the Passover meal at the Feast of Unleavened Bread and tells His disciple that this bread represents His Body.

Reasons for fasting are:

- 2.4.1.9.7. For strengthening prayers – Ezra 8:23.

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<sup>190</sup> Franklin, Jentezen. (2008) Fasting. Florida: Charism House. p.10

<sup>191</sup> Biblical Fasting: <https://justdisciple.com/fasting-types/>

<sup>192</sup> Franklin, Jentezen. (2008) Fasting. Florida: Charism House. p.32

<sup>193</sup> Exodus 12:15

<sup>194</sup> Deuteronomy 16:4

- 2.4.1.9.8. Seeking God's guidance – Judges 20:26-28.
- 2.4.1.9.9. Expressing grief – 1 Samuel 31:13.
- 2.4.1.9.10. For deliverance or protection – 2 Chronicles 20:3-4.
- 2.4.1.9.11. For repentance – 1 Samuel 7:6.
- 2.4.1.9.12. To humble oneself before God – 1 Kings 21:27-29.
- 2.4.1.9.13. For expressing concern for the work of God – Nehemiah 1:3-4.
- 2.4.1.9.14. For ministering to others through fasting – Isaiah 58:3-7.
- 2.4.1.9.15. To overcome temptation – Matthew 4:1-11.
- 2.4.1.9.16. To worship God – Luke 2:37.

When fasting, do not deface yourself as the hypocrites do in Matthew 6:16-18. The fasting period is entirely up to the individual, led by the Holy Spirit<sup>195</sup>. All Christians are supposed to fast. There are no directions or guidelines for how long or how often<sup>196</sup>. Since fasting and prayer are so prominent in the Bible, Christians should do more of this until they receive power from God over all Satan's powers.

The disciples asked Jesus why they could not heal a lunatic boy. Jesus answered them in Matthew 17:17, "O faithless and perverse generation, how long shall I be with you? how long shall I suffer you? bring him hither to me." Faith needs prayer for its development and complete growth. Prayer needs fasting for the same reason Jesus later explains to his disciples in Matthew 17:21, "Howbeit this kind goeth not out but by prayer and fasting." Thus, fasting is a Biblical doctrine.

## 2.5. Conclusion

To limit God is to withhold blessings and prosperity in one's life. People put their own limitations on God's involvement in their lives by neglecting to remember His historically demonstrated power, signs, and wonders. Not necessarily deliberately, but still often diminish their expectations of His unlimited power on their behalf because they doubt His constant willingness to bless. Man is finite and part of God's perfect design in creation to remind him of their need for God. Whether people be sinners or saints, all have tempted God and have limited Him in one way or another.

The three ways people limit God are sometimes by dictating to Him, other times by distrusting Him and then some force this sin to its furthest extreme by utter and entire anguish of His righteousness and grace.

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<sup>195</sup> Acts 13:2-4, 1 Corinthians 7:5, Matthew 9:14-15

<sup>196</sup> Dake's Annotated Reference Bible. 1999. p.1043



### 3. Chapter 2: Scriptural Exegesis on Divine Authority Free Will and Sin

#### 3.1. Introduction

God created man on the sixth day. Although it is in His own image<sup>197</sup>, man was created with a spirit, a soul, and a body. The body is made of flesh and flesh is mortal, thus limited.

According to Genesis 2:7, man was formed of the dust of the ground, then the breath of life was blown into his nostrils, after which man became a living soul. The woman was made from the rib out of the man<sup>198</sup>. All these things that man was created of were created in the beginning by God<sup>199</sup>.

#### 3.2. Man Created as A Finite Being Versus God, An Infinite God

Some people reason that since man is made in the image of God, God must also have a body. It is beyond a person's imagination to think that a spirit without a body can create a perfect universe out of nothing. The Scripture teaches that God does not have a body, that God is Spirit and that a spirit does not include flesh<sup>200</sup>. It is invisible.

**“God is a Spirit: and they that worship him must worship him in spirit and in truth.”**

**John 4:24.**

As Spirit, God does not matter to the limitations of a body of flesh like man. To define a spirit, a spirit is invisible and therefore, God is invisible<sup>201</sup>. Paul testifies to this:

**“For the invisible things of him from the creation of the world are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even his eternal power and Godhead; so that they are without excuse.”**

**Romans 1:20.**

The best definition of God ever penned by man is that God is a Spirit, infinite, eternal and unchangeable, in his being, wisdom, power, holiness, justice, goodness and truth<sup>202</sup>. God

<sup>197</sup> Genesis 1:27

<sup>198</sup> Genesis 2:22

<sup>199</sup> Genesis 1:1

<sup>200</sup> Luke 24:39

<sup>201</sup> Deuteronomy 4:15, Exodus 33:20, 1 Timothy 1:17, John 1:18

<sup>202</sup> Packer, J.I. (2021) Knowing God. Illinois, United States of America: Inter Varsity Press. p21

created man for His glory<sup>203</sup>. Earth is the only inhabited planet and man's only rational inhabitant of it in the whole universe. Therefore, it is not about man but about God. Piper explains<sup>204</sup> that it is declaring the glory of God and the reason man exist is to look at it and be astonished by it and glorify God because of it.

**“Because that, when they knew God, they glorified him not as God, neither were thankful; but became vain in their imaginations, and their foolish heart was darkened.”**

**Romans 1:21.**

While man was made to glorify God, man has fallen short of this principle and replaced the glory of the eternal God with images that resemble mortal man<sup>205</sup>, which is a great tragedy of the universe.

When God created the world, He did not create it out of any need or any weakness or any deficiency but out of fullness and strength and complete sufficiency. Thus, man was created to see His glory, be thrilled by His glory, and help others see, know, and love Him as God. Luther is also clear about this; he believes that people should know that they cannot put God in one's pockets. God does not exist for man's sake, but for God's and that man must adapt themselves to Him, for Him will not adapt Himself to them<sup>206</sup>.

Then what are the reasons that a finite man thinks he has the power to limit an infinite God? Is it maybe that man has a false image of God and does not know Him?

### 3.2.1. Knowing the Word is Knowing God

First and what some people for convenience's sake, forget is that God is the Creator of the universe and man; therefore, He owns everything and legally, it belongs to Him. God thus has authority over all and made His children heirs<sup>207</sup> to everything.

**“The earth is the LORD'S, and the fulness thereof; the world and they that dwell therein.”**

**Psalm 24:1.**

Secondly, God expects everyone to be good stewards<sup>208</sup>. Stewards<sup>209</sup> are caretakers of the creation of God to use wisely and distribute honourably the belongings of God to meet the desires of God's children.

Joseph is the very best example of a steward in Genesis 39. Like Joseph, people have responsibilities to manage whatever territories God has granted people in which they have the power to lead and serve. Resources are not to be wasted and

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<sup>203</sup> Isaiah 43:7

<sup>204</sup> For the Glory of God: <https://www.desiringgod.org/messages/why-did-god-create-the-world>

<sup>205</sup> Romans 1:23

<sup>206</sup> Watson, Philip S. (1947) Let God be God: An Interpretation of the Theology of Martin Luther. Oregon: Wipf and Stock Publishers. p.90

<sup>207</sup> Romans 8:17

<sup>208</sup> 1 Peter 4:10

<sup>209</sup> Stewards: <https://www.christianity.com/wiki/christian-terms/stewards-in-the-bible-meaning-of-stewardship.html>

most important is that man's power is not to be lorded over others as Joseph at first sought to do over his brothers.

With the above mentioned, it is clear where man's place is in the order of the Creation. Still, the knowledge about God, according to Luther<sup>210</sup> without Christ, there is nothing else but mere idolatry, an idol, and a false imagination of God.

The knowledge of God, we may therefore say, is not opposed to the general knowledge, but to what men have falsely made of it; and it furnishes the necessary principle for its correct interpretation.

Men have abused their knowledge of God from His works. Luther describes<sup>211</sup> two kinds of knowledge, one is general and the other is proper or knowledge. All men have a broad understanding – there is a God who created heaven and earth in the beginning, that He is just and punishes the sinful. To have general knowledge will be to know someone by sight and is unaware of that person's affection toward him.

Although officially Hophni and Phinehas<sup>212</sup>, the sons of the high priest Eli, were priests because they were Eli's offspring, in 1 Samuel 2:12 they were referred to as Belial's offspring due to their wickedness and lack of knowledge of God. Through the abuse of their position as priests, they became into champions of religious libertarianism<sup>213</sup>. These boys took possession of things that weren't theirs and did so earlier than they should have. By doing this, they took God's offering and cheated the populace<sup>214</sup>.

Luther<sup>215</sup> continues, Men should, no doubt, have recognized the true nature of God, even from their general knowledge, at least sufficiently to avoid idolatry – otherwise they could hardly be said to be without excuse. A proper understanding of God is not opposed to the general knowledge but to what men have mistakenly made of it. Thus, it provides the necessary principle for its correct understanding.

The true knowledge of God is what His will is toward men, what He will give, or what He will do to the end. There is no other way by which man can attain true knowledge of God and fellowship with Him than the way through Christ, who is Himself the Way and the Truth. Jesus Christ is the only source of knowledge of God.

**“All things are delivered unto me of my Father: and no man knoweth the Son, but the Father: neither knoweth any man the Father, save the Son, and he to whomsoever the Son will reveal him.”**

**Matthew 11:27.**

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<sup>210</sup> Watson, Philip S. (1947) Let God be God: An Interpretation of the Theology of Martin Luther. Oregon: Wipf and Stock Publishers. p.93

<sup>211</sup> Watson, Philip S. (1947) Let God be God: An Interpretation of the Theology of Martin Luther. Oregon: Wipf and Stock Publishers. p.73

<sup>212</sup> 1 Samuel 2

<sup>213</sup> Dr C.R. Oliver: Oliver, Dr C.R. (2000) The Sons of Zadok. Texas: Zadok Publications Inc. p.25-40

<sup>214</sup> 1 Samuel 2:12-17,22

<sup>215</sup> Watson, Philip S. (1947) Let God be God: An Interpretation of the Theology of Martin Luther. Oregon: Wipf and Stock Publishers. p.93

Knowledge of God as known in the New Testament reflects Old Testament understandings yet is also extensive regarding the centrality of Jesus. Both Testaments represent theological knowledge based on divine self-revelation – a gift of the Spirit.

This divine disclosing is seen in countless ways and is intended to lead human beings to an acknowledgment of the sovereignty and power of God. God is not to be pursued behind His creation by implication from it but is instead to be apprehended in and through it<sup>216</sup>.

For Luther: Nature teaches that there is one God, who gives all good and helps against all evil, as even the heathens show by their worshipping of idols.

For how they could call an image or any other creature “God” if they knew nothing of what God was and what it pertained to Him to do?<sup>217</sup>

### 3.2.2. Knowing About God Is Crucially Important

Many believers exist in defeat because their visions of Jesus and God are limited to their natural minds. God wants to take you past the limitations of your natural mind so that you can see Him as He is and really knows Him in His fullness of His manifested power.

After Paul became a Christian, travelled the world, and was used by God as few men ever had or will be, he was still seeking to know God more<sup>218</sup>. Paul admits that he had not arrived but had left and was pressing toward the goal of knowing God more<sup>219</sup>. J. I. Packer, in his book *Knowing God*,<sup>220</sup> gives an excellent example of knowing God. It would be cruel to an Amazonian tribe member to fly him to London and leave him in Trafalgar Square without help or explanation as one who knew nothing of English or England.

This tribesman will not be able to fend for himself in any way. Thus, people are cruel to themselves if they try to live in this world without knowing about God, whose creation it is. For people who do not know God and His creation, for them this world becomes a mad, strange, and painful place.

**“Now as touching things offered unto idols, we know that we all have knowledge. Knowledge puffeth up, but charity edifieth. And if any man think that he knoweth any thing, he knoweth nothing yet as he ought to know.”**

**1 Corinthians 8:1-2.**

The understanding of God must be transformed into the understanding of God. Packer's suggestion<sup>221</sup> in this regard is to use each revelation of God's truth as a

<sup>216</sup> Watson, Philip S. (1947) *Let God be God: An Interpretation of the Theology of Martin Luther*. Oregon: Wipf and Stock Publishers. p.78

<sup>217</sup> Watson, Philip S. (1947) *Let God be God: An Interpretation of the Theology of Martin Luther*. Oregon: Wipf and Stock Publishers. p.81

<sup>218</sup> Philippians 3:10

<sup>219</sup> Philippians 3:12-14

<sup>220</sup> Packer, J.I. (2021) *Knowing God*. Illinois, United State of America: Inter Varsity Press. p.19

<sup>221</sup> Packer, J.I. (2021) *Knowing God*. Illinois, United State of America: Inter Varsity Press. p.23

topic for prayer and adoration of God.

People experience grievously from their ignorance of this exercise of meditation. Meditation<sup>222</sup> is the activity of holy thought, consciously performed in the presence of God and as means of communication with God. Knowing God is a matter of personal commitment. Those who know God show extraordinary boldness for Him. The book of Packer Knowing God is highly recommended on this subject.

Many people think they must receive God's love and favour. Others feel unworthy of His love. All this is because they do not have fellowship with Him and therefore see Him as a "harsh taskmaster" and He is the source of all their troubles and suffering; thus, they have a false image of Him.

### 3.2.3. False Image of God

Robert Banks, author of the book *And Man Created God: Is God a Human Invention?*<sup>223</sup> He came across writers who were seeking to disprove the existence of God. These writers were more interested in asking what it was that motivated people to imagine God, who they think or imagine He is.

Banks then went through a period of considerable doubt, confusion and for a short time, unbelief. He could confidently then discern when and whether he was relating to a God with his best interests at heart or was just projecting his own interests onto an imaginary person. Banks eventually concludes that God is not a scientific or mathematical proposal. He focused on the views of some of the leading modern critics of religion on how belief in God began.

Banks quotes<sup>224</sup> the well-known author C. S. Lewis (1898 – 1963) that when Lewis was nine years old, his mother was diagnosed with cancer. Lewis prayed that her recovery would be successful, but she died, and he still believes that there would be a miracle that did not happen.

Lewis realized he had approached God, or the idea of God, without awe, without love and even without fear. God was in his mental picture of this miracle, merely as a magician. To conclude, Lewis imagines that faith of this kind is often generated in children.

People limit God because they do not fear Him. Fear keeps people from pursuing harmful things. It gives healthy respect for the things that are stronger, bigger, and mightier. Solomon wrote:

**“The fear of the LORD is the beginning of wisdom: and the knowledge of the holy is, understanding.”**

**Proverbs 9:10.**

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222 Joshua 1:8, Matthew 6:6

223 Banks, Robert. (2011) *And Man Created God: Is God a Human Invention?* Oxford, England: Lion Hudson Plc.

224 Banks, Robert. (2011) *And Man Created God: Is God a Human Invention?* Oxford, England: Lion Hudson Plc. pp.27-28

Thus, fear of God is not to fear itself but more to a sense of submission and awe. Jesus said:

**“Fear thou not; for I am with thee: be not dismayed; for I am thy God: I will strengthen thee; yea, I will help thee; yea, I will uphold thee with the right hand of my righteousness.”**

**Isaiah 41:10.**

Philippians 4:6 teaches to overcome fear: “Be careful for nothing; but in every thing by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known unto God.”

Williams Rodman<sup>225</sup> gives a reasonable explanation about the knowledge of God: All knowledge must be prefaced by the realization that God himself cannot be known as other things or persons are. God is veiled from human understanding as there are two obstacles blocking the way of man to know God. The one is that God is infinite and does not exist in the same manner as creation. The atheist denies the existence of God altogether. Agnosticism believes that God cannot be known.

According to Rodman, the second obstacle is that God is holy, and man is sinful; therefore, man’s sin has created a barrier to the knowledge of God. If man knows God, is God a figment of man’s imagination or a human intervention? People are very good at inventing worlds they would like to be accurate in and figuring out intellectual justifications for these views afterward.

The desire comes first to escape the reality of God, then the rational justification follows. Most people must confront the limits of being human and that there is a higher power in control.

Recognition of the limits on epistemic capacities does not require the random or arbitrary belief of the generation or selection in religion. People need to justify their beliefs and limitations.

Therefore, God is not a human intervention. To refer to paragraph 2.4.1.4 of this dissertation, God is not mocked for any reason, nor will He be limited by man because He is an infinity, God with limitations.

### **3.3. Limitations Of God Infinite God**

Many people know the four to six limitations of God. Through Scripture, about thirty limitations can be found. God is unlimited in knowledge, but although He is infinite, His Word is limiting Him to the following that He cannot<sup>226</sup>:

3.3.1. Break His own laws (Numbers 23:19).

3.3.2. Lie (Hebrews 6:17-19).

<sup>225</sup> Rodman, Williams, J. (1988) *Renewal Theology*. Grand Rapids, Michigan: Zondervan Publishing.

<sup>226</sup> Dake’s Annotated Reference Bible. 1999. p.1058



- 3.3.3. Deny Himself (2 Timothy 2:13).
- 3.3.4. Have respect for persons (Romans 2:11, James 2:9-10).
- 3.3.5. Be unrighteous (Romans 9:14).
- 3.3.6. Save one soul separately from grace and faith in Christ (Romans 3:26, John 3:16).
- 3.3.7. Bless men separately from faith (Hebrews 11:6, James 1:5-8).
- 3.3.8. Curse men when they meet His conditions (1 John 1:9).
- 3.3.9. Do away with or change His eternal plan (Acts 15:18, Ephesians 2:7, 3:11).
- 3.3.10. Save rebels who persist in rebellion, refusing to meet His terms (Proverbs 1:22-33, 29:1, Matthew 18:3).
- 3.3.11. Be tempted with evil (James 1:15).
- 3.3.12. Tolerate hypocrisy (Isaiah 1:13).
- 3.3.13. Spare Himself or Christ in the redemption of humans from eternal hell (Matthew 27:42).
- 3.3.14. Turn down one soul that comes to Him according to His terms (John 6:37).
- 3.3.15. Judge the righteous with the wicked (Revelation 20:5-6).
- 3.3.16. Fail to answer prayer when unwavering faith is exercised (Matthew 17:20, 21:22, Mark 11:22-24, Hebrews 11:6, James 1:5-8).
- 3.3.17. Forgive one unconfessed sin (Luke 13:1-5, 1 John 1:9).
- 3.3.18. Keep one save who lives in sin (Romans 8:12-13, Galatians 5:19-21).
- 3.3.19. Automatically cancel the death penalty when men sin and incur that penalty (Romans 6:23, 8:1-13, Ezekiel 18:4).
- 3.3.20. Do away with free moral agency and moral responsibility (Romans 6:16, Galatians 5:19-21).
- 3.3.21. Make one a slave to Himself so that he can never go back into sin if he chooses (Romans 6:16-23, Hebrews 6:4-9).
- 3.3.22. Guarantee that every saved man will continue in Christ (Romans 6:16-23, Galatians 1:6-8).
- 3.3.23. Make any man a son of God in the same sense Jesus is (John 1:18, 3:16, Romans 8:14-16).
- 3.3.24. Look upon the sins of the saved as being unreal, or deal with them on a different

basis from those of the unsaved (Romans 6:16-23, Galatians 5:19-21, 1 Corinthians 6:9-10).

- 3.3.25. Cancel any reaping for what is sown (Romans 8:12-13, Galatians 6:7-8).
- 3.3.26. Force a man to serve Him against his will (John 7:17, 8:34, Revelation 22:17).
- 3.3.27. Recognize any man as His child or His servant who serves sin and the devil (Matthew 6:24, 1 Corinthians 3:16-17).
- 3.3.28. Keep the saved from sin if he chooses to go back into sin (1 Corinthians 3:16-17, James 5:19-20).
- 3.3.29. Keep one from incurring the death penalty should he go back into sin (James 5:19-20, Hebrews 6:4-9).
- 3.3.30. Be lenient with any who sin or encourage anarchy in a moral government (Genesis 2:17, Galatians 5:19-21).

God infinite God is the only God that does not need people to help Him or help Him save face. A good example can be found in 2 Samuel 6:6-7 when Uzzah died by the Ark of God. The Ark had been stored for years in a tent in the old military capital of Baalah of Judah. David wanted to make Jerusalem the capital of Israel and the religious centre as well. He tried to bring the Ark to Jerusalem the same way he carried stolen Amalekite loot on an ox cart.

Bringing back the Ark was the right decision, but it was never supposed to be carried on an ox cart; it was supposed to be held on the shoulders of priests. As the Ark wobbled when the ox cart lurched in an unstable creek bed, Uzzah foolishly laid out his hand to steady the Ark. Uzzah was there and then struck dead by God because of touching the Ark.

The word infinite implies to be without limits or not to be limited<sup>227</sup>. To acknowledge that God is infinite is to say that He is not limited to the constrictions of the created universe. Scripture uncovers many of the attributes of God; He is omnipotent, omniscient, omnipresent, transcendent, and immanent. These qualities can only describe an infinite being.

God's eternal existence is also an illustration of His infinite nature. God exists before the creation, which means He is more significant than all creation which also declares He exists outside time and before time. King Hezekiah prayed:

**“O LORD God of Israel, which dwellest between the cherubims, thou art the God, even thou alone, of all the kingdoms of the earth; thou hast made heaven and earth.”**

**2 Kings 19:15.**

King David adds:

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<sup>227</sup> Infinite: <https://www.compellingtruth.org/infinite-God.html>

**“Thine, O LORD, is the greatness, and the power, and the glory, and the victory, and the majesty: for all that is in the heaven and in the earth is thine; thine is the kingdom, O LORD and thou art exalted as head above all.”**

**1 Chronicles 29:11.**

There is only one God, an infinite God, a Trinity that no other being can also claim to be. The author of this dissertation will not explore nor discuss the Trinity of God for this dissertation. The Bible clearly states that only one God exists through the following verses: Mark 12:28-30, James 2:19, Galatians 3:20, John 5:44, 1 Corinthians 8:6, 1 Timothy 2:5, Ephesians 4:4-6, Jude 1:25, 1 Timothy 1:17 and John 17:3. The vital point is that the Father alone is God in all these verses.

**“But to us there is but one God, the Father, of whom are all things and we in him; and one Lord Jesus Christ, by whom are all things, and we by him.”**

**1 Corinthians 8:6.**

There is none like God<sup>228</sup> and His greatness is unsearchable<sup>229</sup>. God has more for everyone than anyone has experienced; therefore, He wants people to stop limiting Him. People at times may be tempted to reject the supernatural power of God out of fear of the unknown, then seek it again during times of need<sup>230</sup>. To quote Dr Mark Rutland: we can't park God's power in a farmer's barn just because we don't understand it. That's the same as trying to control God. Let God do what He wants to do and let Him do it His way.

He is a God of blessing and abundance. Don't hide Him in a basement because you are afraid of the unknown. Man has no reason to limit God. Jesse Duplantis<sup>231</sup>, during a sermon<sup>232</sup>, made it clear; you know what you want, you do not know what you need and your blessing is limited by your capacity to receive; do not let the fear of choosing, choose nothing, God wants you to prosper, don't let critical people steal your joy, you are worthy to receive unlimited.

Duplantis also believes that God always gives in overflowing<sup>233</sup>; do not cap off what God gives with limited thinking, limited faith, and limited words. Each one has an image on the inside of them of who they are and what they can do. Sometimes the image on the inside hide the ceiling, which is the limitations of people.

### **3.4. Man Created as A Finite Being**

According to the Encyclopaedia, the word finite<sup>234</sup> derives from the Latin word finis, meaning end, boundary or limit and is the same as a limited being. The man was created on the sixth day with limitations although he was created in “our image, after our

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<sup>228</sup> Isaiah 46:9-10

<sup>229</sup> Psalms 144-145:3

<sup>230</sup> Rutland, Mark. (2018) David the Great: Deconstructing the Man After God's Own Heart. Florida: Charisma House. p.97

<sup>231</sup> Jesse Duplantis: He is from United states and a well-known Evangelical Charismatic Christian minister and author of many Christian books. He was granted an honorary Doctor of Divinity in 1999 from Oral Roberts University.

<sup>232</sup> 40 Days of Glory: Night 1, Jesse Duplantis: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=CEFKXOc6gVU>

<sup>233</sup> 40 Days of Glory: Night 1, Jesse Duplantis: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=CEFKXOc6gVU>

<sup>234</sup> Finite: <https://www.encyclopedia.com/religion/encyclopedias-almanacs-transcripts-and-maps/finite-being>

likeness”<sup>235</sup>.

The body is made in God’s own likeness bodily<sup>236</sup>. There is no question that man was made in the likeness of God in soul and spirit, as Colossians 3:10 confirmed but this does not do away with the human image and likeness of God<sup>237</sup>.

All the angels and spirit beings have bodies as well as souls and spirits. Still, man does not have any of the attributes of God; he is limited because of the mortal flesh. Psalms 139:14 confirms that man is “...fearfully and wonderfully made...” beyond man’s imagination and knowledge.

Except for man’s physical consistency of various chemicals, bones, muscles, blood vessels, organs and skin, man’s body bears the soul in which the emotions, passions, desires, appetites, and all feelings are seated.

The inner and incorruptible man, consisting of soul and spirit is eternal<sup>238</sup>. When man was created, he was made a little lower than the angels<sup>239</sup> but created sinless though capable of sin. Still, his flesh differs from all other creatures.

The limitations of the flesh are as follows<sup>240</sup>:

- 3.4.1. It is weak (Romans 6:19, Mark 14:38).
- 3.4.2. Cannot enter the Kingdom of God (1 Corinthians 15:50).
- 3.4.3. The years to live are numbered (Genesis 6:3).
- 3.4.4. Have desires against the Spirit (Galatians 5:17, Romans 7:18, 1 John 2:16).
- 3.4.5. Minds are set on the things of the flesh (Romans 8:1-39).
- 3.4.6. Can be tempted by Satan (2 Corinthians 12:7, James 1:13-14).
- 3.4.7. Fall short of the glory of God (Romans 3:23).
- 3.4.8. Have Lawlessness (1 John 3:4).
- 3.4.9. The flesh is mortal (Romans 7:24, 8:13, 2 Corinthians 4:16-18).
- 3.4.10. Must be born again (1 Peter 1:23).
- 3.4.11. Must take up the shield of faith to extinguish the darts of Satan (Ephesians 6:16).
- 3.4.12. Spirit leaves the body at death (Revelation 6:9-11, James 2:26).

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<sup>235</sup> Genesis 1:26

<sup>236</sup> Romans 1:23, 1 Corinthians 15:49

<sup>237</sup> Dake’s Annotated Reference Bible. 1999. p.1028

<sup>238</sup> 1 Peter 3:4

<sup>239</sup> Psalms 8:5, Hebrews 2:7

<sup>240</sup> Dake’s Annotated Reference Bible. 1999. p.1028

- 3.4.13. Must walk in the Spirit, not to gratify the desires of the flesh (Galatians 5:16-17).
- 3.4.14. The body can be killed, not the soul (Matthew 10:28).
- 3.4.15. The spirit can be willing the powerless to execute (Matthew 26:41).
- 3.4.16. The inner man is fully conscious after leaving the body (1 Peter 3:4).
- 3.4.17. Souls can be dead while the bodies are alive (Ephesians 2:5-6, Revelation 3:1).
- 3.4.18. Bodies go to graves after death (Isaiah 14:9, Revelation 20:11-15).

In the Bible, the way of all flesh is a religious phrase that in its original sense, meant the death of all living things. A human body needs fiscal things to endure water, food and oxygen. But to survive and inherit eternal life, humanity with its limitation, is part of God's perfect design in creation.

Life would be awful if sinful human beings were limitless; sin then would ravage the world. God uses people who have experienced failure and know what it means to feel useless to remind them of their need for God. Instead, see the limitations as gifts than hindrances or to limit God.

The key to embracing our limitations is not found in our strengths. Satan, with his limitations, is an enemy<sup>241</sup> not to be underestimated. Satan is more powerful than any man and more than most angels. Still, he is not the equal of God though he would like people to think so.

### 3.5. Satan's Limited Power

Satan was first called Lucifer<sup>242</sup> and created by God as He did the angels. They were also created very good<sup>243</sup>, but Lucifer was a model of perfection as described in Ezekiel 28:14. Like humanity, God allowed the angels to decide whether to follow Him or to turn from Him<sup>244</sup>. Lucifer was at first the anointed guardian cherub and was placed by God on the holy mountain of God in the heart of the stones of fire<sup>245</sup>. The cherubim are the highest rank of angels followed by the seraphim.

The guarding could refer to as the honour guard and proclaimer of God's glorious presence and holiness. The mountain of God<sup>246</sup> was the place where Lucifer had his throne and kingdom before Adam was created<sup>247</sup>. According to Isaiah 28:15-17, this was on earth before the fall of Lucifer because he reigns over the world that then was<sup>248</sup>. Lucifer was the first ruler<sup>249</sup> of the earth and his reign is unknown.

Lucifer's rebellion against God sprung from his free will. He fell through pride over his

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<sup>241</sup> Matthew 13:39

<sup>242</sup> Isaiah 14:12

<sup>243</sup> Genesis 1:31

<sup>244</sup> 2 Timothy 2:26

<sup>245</sup> Ezekiel 28:14

<sup>246</sup> Dake's Annotated Reference Bible. 1999. p1440

<sup>247</sup> Genesis 1:2, Isaiah 14:12-14

<sup>248</sup> Jeremiah 4:23-26, Colossians 1:15-18

<sup>249</sup> Dake's Annotated Reference Bible. 1999. P.78, 1051

exquisiteness<sup>250</sup> and tried to exalt himself above God<sup>251</sup>. With Lucifer's rebellion against God, he was cast out of heaven and his place of authority forever<sup>252</sup>. Lucifer then became known as Satan; he then led an invasion into heaven and was defeated for the first time. At that time the earth was cursed, and all life was demolished by the first flood described in Genesis 1:2.

Satan regained rulership over the earth in Adam's time, appropriating man's dominion by causing his fall. His relationship through the ages has been that of a usurper and if man tolerates his dictatorship, that long will man remains subject to Satan. But by the power of the gospel, each man can now defeat Satan.

Although Satan has lost his once the high-ranking position in heaven, he can still see God but must seek permission from God before he can do something to a child of God because of the "hedge of protection"<sup>253</sup> God has put all around his children. Though God allowed Satan to test Job through various tragedies such as the death of servants, storms, stolen goods, loss of family and sickness, Satan was refused because "only upon himself put not forth thine hand."<sup>254</sup> Demons must also receive permission from God to do certain things. When Jesus threw out a group of demons called "Legion," they asked Jesus for permission<sup>255</sup> to enter a herd of pigs. Demons are fallen angels and not ministering spirits. They are also limited<sup>256</sup>.

All things and beings in both the physical and spiritual realms<sup>257</sup> are constrained because God is the Father of all Creation. Satan is likewise humankind, yet he lacks God's divine qualities. Satan is limited to what God permits:

- 3.5.1. Satan cannot approach God as an equal but as a subordinate – Job 1:6.
- 3.5.2. Satan cannot tempt anybody without God's permission – Matthew 4:1-11, Job 1:12.
- 3.5.3. Satan cannot influence nature without God's permission – Job 1:16, 19.
- 3.5.4. Satan cannot harm physically or kill anybody without God's permission – Job 2:2-6, Hebrews 2:14.
- 3.5.5. Satan cannot touch a believer without the permission of God – Job 1:10, 1 John 5:18.
- 3.5.6. Satan cannot mention a believer's name without God's permission – Job 2:3.
- 3.5.7. Satan cannot force believers to do anything – Acts 26:18.
- 3.5.8. Satan cannot read man's thoughts – Isaiah 40:28, 1 King 8:39.

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<sup>250</sup> Ezekiel 28:11-17

<sup>251</sup> Isaiah 14:14, 2 Thessalonians 2:4

<sup>252</sup> Ezekiel 28:18, Luke 10:18

<sup>253</sup> Job 1:10

<sup>254</sup> Job 1:12

<sup>255</sup> Mark 5:1-9

<sup>256</sup> Matthew 8:28-32

<sup>257</sup> John 1:3, Colossians 1:15-17

- 3.5.9. Satan does not know the future – Isaiah 46:9-10.
- 3.5.10. Satan does not know what man dreams – Daniel 2:27-28.
- 3.5.11. Satan cannot curse what God has blessed – Numbers 23:8.
- 3.5.12. Satan cannot bless anybody – 1 John 4:1.
- 3.5.13. Satan cannot understand when praying in tongues – 1 Corinthians 14:16, 14:2.
- 3.5.14. Satan cannot heal – Exodus 15:26, 1 Corinthians 12:28-30.
- 3.5.15. Satan cannot stop a prophecy from God from coming to pass – Mark 6:12-13, John 14:30.
- 3.5.16. Satan cannot possess a Christian – 1 John 5:18, 1 Peter 1:5.
- 3.5.17. Prophetic Words Create Spiritual Battles

During major prophetic seasons, there will always be an increase in spiritual warfare with Satan and demonic activity<sup>258</sup>. Zechariah the prophet, saw a vision of Satan himself standing at the altar in Jerusalem, attempting to prevent the progress of the Jews in rebuilding the temple<sup>259</sup>.

The more often a prophet's prediction of a person's future is made public, the more likely it is that a spiritual battle will begin. As stated in 1 Samuel 17:28–29, David's brothers did not approve of him when he was anointed as the next king of Israel by Samuel. Anointed young man David spends nearly thirteen years being chased by his jealous father-in-law King Saul, who was trying to kill him, through the Judean wilderness<sup>260</sup>.

Experiencing one battle after another, he came to Ziklag, where the entire city was burned, and the enemy captured his family and spoiled him with six hundred of his mighty men. At the lowest moment of David's life, he still "encouraged himself in the LORD his God" – 1 Samuel 30:6.

David received a prophetic instruction to "Pursue: for thou shalt surely overtake them, and without fail recover all" in 1 Samuel 30:8. Certainly, David was a threat to his enemies and the word that he would be the next king set Satan on alert to prevent the prophecy of his kingship from coming to pass.

Jesus intercedes during tough times and God knows the shattering point of everybody; therefore, He will never stretch people more than they can handle<sup>261</sup>. In Luke 22:31-32, Satan specifically asked to test the disciple Simon when Jesus intercedes: "Simon, Simon, behold, Satan hath desired to have you, that he may sift you as wheat: But I have prayed for thee, that thy faith fails not: and when thou art converted, strengthen thy brethren."

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<sup>258</sup> Stone, Perry. (2012) Exposing Satan's Playbook. Florida: Charisma House. pp.23-26

<sup>259</sup> Zechariah 3:1-2

<sup>260</sup> 1 Samuel 19:1-17

<sup>261</sup> 1 Corinthians 10:13

The South African Satanic Church's co-founder, Riaan Swiegelaar<sup>262</sup>, revealed in the national Sunday newspaper Rapport on July 10, 2022, that he left the organization on June 29, 2022, after receiving unconditional love from four Christians and having a personal encounter with Jesus Christ on May 25, 2022. Swiegelaar said that he had carried out a ritual to gain more strength and influence and to see demons manifest themselves before him.

Instead of demons, Jesus appeared to him. He wanted Jesus to prove that He was Jesus who flooded him with the most beautiful love and energy. This was confirmed to him by the woman at the radio station. Swiegelaar said people limited him, thus the reason he turned to Satan for a long time; he thought that he was unworthy of God's grace because he was gay and had certain abilities. After he had resigned, he had to sign a non-disclosure agreement. Satan wants to keep his secrets in the darkness, while in God there is no darkness at all<sup>263</sup>. Still, many people believe that God is responsible for Evil. Many Scriptures confirm that God is not the creator of evil or confusion.

**“Let no man say when he is tempted, I am tempted of God: for God cannot be tempted with evil, neither tempteth he any man.”**

**James 1:13.**

**“For God is not the author of confusion, but of peace, as in all churches of the saints.”**

**1 Corinthians 14:33.**

Sporadically someone will misinterpret Isaiah 45:7 and claim that God creates evil as a part of His design: “I form the light, and create darkness: I make peace, and create evil: I the LORD do all these things.”

God formulates tragedy as a judgment on the deprived. Evil originates from Satan who must have first permission from God to touch a believer. God makes all the fruits of evil for the greater good:

**“And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose.”**

**Romans 8:28.**

Sin is not a spirit<sup>264</sup>, being, entity, nor a material thing; it was not formed. Sin is just a fallen creature's lack of moral perfection. Sin is to blame for suffering, demise, illness, tiredness, stress, catastrophe, and everything else unpleasant that occurs. The result of sin was the introduction of death<sup>265</sup>.

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<sup>262</sup> Riaan Swiegelaar: <https://www.iol.co.za/news/south-africa/kwazulu-natal/watch-sa-satanic-church-co-founder-explains-why-he-turned-his-back-on-satanism-and-why-he-now-believes-in-christ-2786967c-decd-46da-8304-e4dbd8987232>

<sup>263</sup> 1 John 1:5

<sup>264</sup> Sin Was Not Created: <https://www.gty.org/library/articles/A189/is-god-responsible-for-evil>.

<sup>265</sup> Romans 5:12



Too often, people question God's presence when there is a tragedy in their lives. Live by the sword, die by the sword is a proverb in the form of a parallel phrase. Those who lead a violent life are most likely to become victims of violence.

**“Then said Jesus unto him, Put up again thy sword into his place: for all they that take the sword shall perish with the sword.”**

**Matthew 26:52.**

Paul warns believers not to be yoked with unbelievers<sup>266</sup>. Perry Stone, the international evangelist, believes that if Christians cease to follow Christ's instructions and wilfully choose to open the door to hidden or public sin, Satan can enter that person's life including the mind<sup>267</sup>. To conclude, the believer's spirit is off limits to the intrusion of Satanic or demonic forces if the believer maintains a covenant with God.

To question God's presence also indicate that man does not know God and therefore is not obedient to His principles. Although Satan is limited, he too knows the Bible. An empty mind is Satan's workshop. Evil thoughts enter minds easily when people are lazy and idle. Uninterested people who do not have enough work will find themselves on Satan's playground.

### 3.5.18. Satan's Workshop and Playground

An idle mind is Satan's workshop. Though this statement is not found verbatim in the Bible, it has its roots in Scripture. Sloth often stems from not having a specific aim or purpose in mind.

**“An ungodly man diggeth up evil: and in his lips there is a burning fire.”**

**Proverbs 16:27.**

Sin begins in the mind if the soul is empty because there is nothing else to think and talk about. Most of the problems people experience are rooted in unhealthy thinking patterns. Then the mind becomes Satan's playground.

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

**2 Corinthians 10:3-5.**

People must continually renew the spirit of their minds<sup>268</sup> and cast down carnal imaginations<sup>269</sup>. If people are unsatisfied with their lives but won't put in any

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<sup>266</sup> 2 Corinthians 6:14-16

<sup>267</sup> Stone, Perry. (2012) Exposing Satan's Playbook. Florida: Charisma House. pp.105-106

<sup>268</sup> Ephesians 4:23, Romans 12:2

<sup>269</sup> 2 Corinthians 10:5

effort to change it, they have a wilderness mentality<sup>270</sup>. If the mind stays filled with negative thoughts, it will keep the mind in bondage. Satan will step through this open door and gain a stronghold. Strongholds are an area in which people are held in bondage, any part of people's lives where Satan imprisoned them. On the battlefield of the mind where there is almost constant spiritual warfare, praise and prayer are some of the great weapons that Christians should use in overcoming the power of Satan. Spiritual weapons defeat the warfare of Satan because he fights a carnal, fleshly warfare.

Other spiritual weapons are the tongue and mind. The tongue has the power of life and death<sup>271</sup>. Christians have the same mind as Christ<sup>272</sup> therefore, they have the same powers as Jesus must defeat Satan in spiritual warfare. Christ forewarned His disciples in Matthew 16:21 of a future time when He would be crucified. Peter then took Him aside and reprimanded Him for this revelation saying, "Be it far from thee, Lord: this shall not be unto thee."<sup>273</sup> Jesus answered him:

**"Get thee behind me, Satan: thou art an offence unto me: for thou savourest not the things that be of God, but those that be of men."**

**Matthew 16:23.**

Satan himself was being rebuked for giving Peter the thoughts he spoke. Peter was an active believer, but he had suddenly listened to the wrong voice. Christians can come under demonic influence without ever being possessed by a spirit<sup>274</sup>.

Many people allow their minds to wander. These people have never applied principles of discipline to their thought lives. Some people who cannot concentrate, think they have a mental deficiency. To not concentrate can be the result of years of letting the mind think whatever comes to mind. Therefore, if people have the inability to concentrate<sup>275</sup>, certain B-vitamins enhance concentration, and they must start to eat nutritionally correctly.

Extreme fatigue can also affect concentration. Satan will then try to attack the mind because he knows the person's guard is down and therefore, it is difficult to resist him. Remember God's vision for you<sup>276</sup> and "grid up the lions of your mind."<sup>277</sup>

In an interview with Pastor Steven Furtick<sup>278</sup>, the famous cognitive neuroscientist Dr Caroline Leaf said that one of the best ways to detox your brain is to consciously manage your thinking life. It enables you to get rid of negative feelings and thoughts that might take over and rule your mind. The human brain is made to control all thoughts, according to Leaf.

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<sup>270</sup> Meyer, Joyce. (2005) *Battlefield of the Mind*. New York: Hachett Book Group USA.

<sup>271</sup> Proverbs 18:21

<sup>272</sup> 1 Corinthians 2:16

<sup>273</sup> Matthew 16:22

<sup>274</sup> Stone, Perry. (2012) *Exposing Satan's Playbook*. Florida: Charisma House. p.98

<sup>275</sup> Meyer, Joyce. (1995) *Battlefield of the Mind: Winning the Battle in your Mind*. New York: Time Warner Book Group. p.73

<sup>276</sup> Jeremiah 29:11

<sup>277</sup> 1 Peter 1:13

<sup>278</sup> Controlling Thoughts: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Ea8pHeetkgo>

In the book Leaf, *Cleaning Up Your Mental Mess: 5 Simple, Scientifically Proven Steps to Reduce Anxiety, Stress and Toxic Thinking*<sup>279</sup>, she provides simple and practical steps from a scientific and clinical research on how to clean up your mental mess such as anxiety, stress, and toxic thinking. Leaf also, in her above-mentioned book advises on how to build a healthy mind and resilience to toxic thoughts.

God can restore any evil act of Satan<sup>280</sup> when people remember the Hand of God<sup>281</sup> which expresses the power of God<sup>282</sup> and that they have divine appointments by making themselves available to God<sup>283</sup> through obedience.

The Samaritan woman at Sychar's well<sup>284</sup> is an excellent example of a divine appointment. When Jesus met the woman at a well, He seized the opportunity to minister to her. It was a divine appointment because of the results. The Samaritan woman and the whole village believed in Him. Faith can be built up by obedience, believing in God no matter what and dealing with doubt quickly.

### 3.6. Obedience

When the absence of faith is overcome, the power of God is manifested. Justification and forgiveness<sup>285</sup> are crucial starting points for the Christian life and form the ongoing foundation of every act of Christian obedience.

Without it, two catastrophes can happen. First, believers dishonour Christ by seeking acceptance from God by supplementing the highest price Christ paid for it. Second, believers lose the definite foundation of their hope in the promises of God. God pleasing obedience is not possible in the way God's divine intervention brings His children to infinite perfection and joy.

Therefore, His glorious work in providing His Son's blood and righteousness by securing our forgiveness and justification proves to be the utmost work of providence designed to bring believers to exaltation in His presence.

Title and awards do not give power. Only obedience to God does. King Saul rejected and disobeyed the Word of God. Because of his disobedience,<sup>286</sup> he not just lost the Kingdom that God had for him, but he also lost the ability to hear from God when he consulted a witch for answers. The spirit of rebellion ruled in his life and resulted in strong bitter issues towards his successor David. The intense level of bitterness opens the door to witchcraft.

**“For rebellion is as the sin of witchcraft, and stubbornness is as iniquity and idolatry. Because thou hast rejected the word of the LORD, he hath also rejected thee from being king.”**

**1 Samuel 15:23.**

<sup>279</sup> Leaf, Dr. Caroline. (2021) *Cleaning Up Your Mental Mess: 5 Simple, Scientifically Proven Steps to Reduce Anxiety, Stress and Toxic Thinking*. Grand Rapids: Baker Books.

<sup>280</sup> Zechariah 10:6, Isaiah 57:18

<sup>281</sup> The Hand of God: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=VVSEypFBIf4>

<sup>282</sup> Exodus 15:6, Matthew 26:64

<sup>283</sup> 1 Peter 3:15

<sup>284</sup> John 4:5-42

<sup>285</sup> Piper, John. (2020) *Providence*. Illinois: Crossway. p.589

<sup>286</sup> Deuteronomy 31:27-29

Many people fail to 'reign as kings in life' because of their stubbornness and rebellion<sup>287</sup>. God will never give commandments that man cannot obey. Faith in action is obedience and through the atonement of Christ, man can abide. Thus, the obedience of Christ dying on the cross for our sins is the basis for our justification. Another excellent example of obedience can be found in Moses. God told Moses from the very start that He would harden Pharaoh's heart recurrently. Still knowing that Pharaoh would be against letting the Israelites go, Moses obeyed God's command and went to Pharaoh. The reason for God to harden Pharaoh's heart was to promote His own glory.

Holy communion is a crucial point of obedience and God's Word teaches us to gather regularly with other believers to have communion.

### 3.6.1. Holy Communion

Holy Communion is a religious ceremony. Wine and bread serve as metaphors. According to the author of this dissertation, Melchizedek, the High Priest<sup>288</sup> and King of Salem, administered the first communion. After Abram returned from fighting Kedorlaomer, the king of Sodom, Melchizedek brought out bread and wine to bless him.

Passover was for Israel to remember how God had dominated and disgraced the false gods of Egypt and how God saved them from slavery<sup>289</sup>. As a feast, it was a festivity for God because He gave precise instructions, including the way the meal was to be prepared and how the meal was to be eaten. All the details symbolized Israel's experience in Egypt and their deliverance<sup>290</sup>.

The male lamb for the Passover was to be without defect and none of its bones were to be broken. During the celebration of holy communion, some pastors will say, 'the broken body of Christ' or 'the bread is Christ's body broken for you.'<sup>291</sup>

The word 'break' is used in Matthew 26:26, Mark 14:22, Luke 22:19 and 1 Corinthians 11:24, it refers to Jesus breaking the bread. These passages never indicate that the body of Christ is literally 'broken for you.' Theologically pastors should never say that Jesus' body was 'broken' because Scripture clearly shows that the body of Jesus was not broken even in death<sup>292</sup>.

After the firstborn sons of Israel were preserved by the blood on the tops and sides of the doorframes of the homes, God told Israel that the Passover must be observed every year for all upcoming generations. The rhetoric of "breaking" the bread with Jesus' body must be distinguished from the real broken bread<sup>293</sup>. Jesus did not just fulfil the Passover; He republished it in the form of the Lord's Supper and established the new covenant with His disciples in Luke 22:19-20, the eve before the crucifixion of Jesus. As the Passover was to be held in remembrance as an

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<sup>287</sup> Romans 5:16

<sup>288</sup> Genesis 14:17-20

<sup>289</sup> From Passover to New Covenant: <https://www.christianstudylibrary.org/article/exodus-121-29-passover-memorial-feast-and-lasting-ordinance>

<sup>290</sup> Exodus 12:1-28

<sup>291</sup> Broken Body: <https://knowingscripture.com/articles/was-jesus-body-broken-for-you>

<sup>292</sup> John 19:33-36, Psalm 34:20

<sup>293</sup> Exodus 12:14

annual feast, so must Christians memorialize Jesus's death in communion until He returns<sup>294</sup>.

Today in many churches, each person receives a piece of unleavened bread and a small cup of wine or grape juice. These symbols are swallowed with a word of blessing and the ceremony is over. Every denomination has a different name for holy communion, which originates from the Last Supper of Jesus.

The Roman Catholic Church and Protestant Churches speak of the mass or the eucharist, which means "thanksgiving." The Orthodox Churches talk of the "divine liturgy" or use the term synaxis, which represents a "union" community gathering. Each denomination celebrates it in various forms.

However, it does not matter what it is called or how it is celebrated as long as people recognize the reconciliation with God and the reconciliation with each other in believing that Christ has risen from the dead. Holy Communion was instituted on the night of the Last Supper, in which Jesus is betrayed and handed over to the world's powers, those who condemn and execute Him.

Holy Communion can be taken as often as the need arises because it is nowhere prescribing how often the Holy Communion should be celebrated. After all, there are no instructions on how often communion should be served, though there are instructions for who can take communion. Some denominations open it to anyone who is in the church, other denominations will require a person to be a member of the church and others requirement will be that a person must first be baptized. No Scripture also indicates that a Christian can abstain from holy communion, but no Christian should abstain from this participation unless a Christian is living in wilful, unrepentant sin.

When Paul gave instructions to the Corinthian church in 1 Corinthians 11:17-34, no one was singled out. Thus, it includes children mature enough to be able to discern precisely what holy communion is about. The warning Paul gives for those who take holy communion, they should be able to examine themselves because anyone who takes part in the holy communion without discerning the body can eat and drink judgment on themselves<sup>295</sup> and in the case of a child, judgment upon the parents also. When it comes to children, the critical issue is if the child is knowledgeable enough to be able to examine themselves, if they cannot then they cannot partake.

The Last Supper was not a meal to quench hunger but in the material continuity of the Passover. Both serve the strong recollection of divine preservation in great danger and deliverance from threat. According to Michael Welker, a professor of systematic theology at the University of Heidelberg, Germany<sup>296</sup>, the holy communion celebrates deliverance not only from the 'outside' but also from the 'inside'<sup>297</sup>. The events of the disciples sleeping on the Mount of Olives and Peter's

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<sup>294</sup> 1 Corinthians 11:26

<sup>295</sup> 1 Corinthians 11:28-29

<sup>296</sup> Welker, Michael. (2000) What Happens in Holy Communion? United States of America: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing.

<sup>297</sup> Welker, Michael. (2000) What Happens in Holy Communion? United States of America: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing. pp.50-51

denial of Jesus are threats from the inside. The biggest internal threat was the betrayal of Judas Iscariot, who ate at the same table as Jesus. The focus point of the holy communion is through prayer to thank God the Father that the bread and blood of Jesus Christ by the action of the Holy Spirit is communion with other believers who eat the flesh of Jesus Christ and drink His blood. Giving thanks and glory to God is a blessing to God<sup>298</sup>.

What holy communion is not<sup>299</sup> is that it is not a religious opportunity to render or refuse moral or judicial recognition to other people because at the Last Supper, Jesus did not exclude Judas Iscariot, although Jesus knew that it would be him who would betray Him later. Therefore no one nor the community, pastor, or priest has the right to exclude anyone from the holy communion based on religious, moral, or other defects, crimes, and failures. It is only Jesus Christ who can judge.

Paul states in 1 Corinthians 11:27-29, 31-34 that those who are unworthy to take part in the holy communion will make themselves “guilty of the body and blood of the Lord.”<sup>300</sup> Thus, everyone should examine himself to see if he is worth partaking in.

The goal and significance are to regularly renew your faith in Jesus Christ because doing so brings healing as you remember what He accomplished on the cross during holy communion<sup>301</sup>. Keep in mind Paul's statement that sins are forgiven by the shed blood of Jesus<sup>302</sup>.

Not only is holy communion a crucial point of obedience but also baptism with the Holy Spirit. Baptism does not make or save a believer, it confirms that a person is saved, and it is done in the presence of family members or in front of the church and echoes an outward expression of an inward faith in Jesus, a new life in Jesus Christ<sup>303</sup>.

### 3.6.2. A Biblical Analysis of Baptism

The Greek word for baptism<sup>304</sup>, baptisma, literally means ‘to submerge’ or to be completely submerged, which does not indicate being sprinkled as it is the custom of some denomination churches believe in doing. Jesus “went up straightway out of the water.”<sup>305</sup> This explains that Jesus was entirely under the water.

When people are submerged (an act called tevelah) in the water, it symbolizes their death. While under the water, it represents their burial, up out of the water symbolizes their new life – being resurrected in Christ to eternal life. These symbols cannot save people when they place their faith in Jesus Christ and confess Him with their mouth will they be saved<sup>306</sup>.

<sup>298</sup> Daniel 3:28, Romans 1:25, Luke 1:68

<sup>299</sup> Welker, Michael. (2000) What Happens in Holy Communion? United States of America: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing, p.73

<sup>300</sup> 1 Corinthians 11:27

<sup>301</sup> Luke 22:20

<sup>302</sup> Colossians 1:14, Hebrews 13:12

<sup>303</sup> 2 Corinthians 5:17

<sup>304</sup> Baptism: <https://www.whatchristianswanttoknow.com/does-baptism-save-you-a-biblical-analysis/>

<sup>305</sup> Matthew 3:16

<sup>306</sup> Romans 10:9

Anyone can be saved without being baptized, as evidenced by the fact that the thief who died next to Jesus on the cross believed that Jesus was the Messiah. Many people from the Old Testament who received the Kingdom of Heaven did not undergo baptism, including Abraham, David, Moses, Ruth, and many others.

Baptizing is unnecessary to be saved, being baptized makes the saving complete. No mention is made in Scripture that one “must also be baptized” if one wants to be saved. When one believes in Jesus Christ, he is saved. Satan and his demons also believe but they do not obey nor place their trust in Him. Baptism is a symbol of the forgiveness of sins in much the same way that Pilate tried to show his innocence by washing his hands with water in Matthew 27:24. Jesus told Nicodemus:

**“Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God.”**

**John 3:5.**

Here Jesus is not talking about water baptism<sup>307</sup>, water is used in a figurative sense of salvation in cleansing by the Word of God - being born again. Thus, people were baptized in the Holy Spirit. The water of the Word can also not save people, only the blood of Jesus can save people and wash their souls. Some people will say, ‘Well, you know I was baptized in water on this date.’ These people after the water baptism, will carry on as usual and think that they are saved because of the misinterpretation of this Scripture, which is not the situation.

Different types of baptism can be found in the Bible<sup>308</sup>.

- 3.6.2.1. The baptism of Moses, as well as the baptisms in the sea and the cloud (1 Corinthians 10:1-4). Through the sea, Moses led the Israelites to a new, free existence.
- 3.6.2.2. John's immersion baptism (Matthew 3:6–11; Acts 19:1–5). This is a literal immersion into the water. Believers herald the arrival of the Messiah, and this is a spiritual repentance in their hearts.
- 3.6.2.3. The baptism of Christ in water (John 3:22, John 4:1-2, Acts 10:37-38). Jesus was physically baptized in the Jordan River by John the baptized. Jesus was anointed by the Holy Spirit, and it was a public submission to the will of God. Jesus was the fulfilment of the law, and He showed obedience to the will of God.
- 3.6.2.4. Baptism in suffering or baptism of the cross (Luke 12:50, Mark 10:35-39). People cannot take on the sins of the world as Jesus did, but they can, through spiritual death on a spiritual cross, enter a new spiritual life.
- 3.6.2.5. Water baptism for believers (Matthew 28:19; Acts 2:38–42). This

<sup>307</sup> Dake's Annotated Reference Bible. 1999. p.166

<sup>308</sup> Types of Baptism: Dake's Annotated Reference Bible. 1999. p.4

baptism is an act of obedience to demonstrate commitment to Christ and to gain salvation. One is baptized after being saved.

- 3.6.2.6. Incorporation into the body of Christ through baptism (see 1 Corinthians 12:13, Romans 6:3–7, and Galatians 3:27). This is a salvific spiritual baptism. People are therefore indwelt by the Spirit, who also saves their souls and unites them with the body of Christ.
- 3.6.2.7. The baptism of fire or in the Holy Spirit (Matthew 3:11-12, 20:22-23, Acts 1:5). Jesus will baptize people with “the Holy Ghost and with fire.” Jesus will judge the world and those who are judged by Jesus on the last day will be thrown into the lake of fire<sup>309</sup>. This baptism takes place before the water baptism.

Obedience to God is the key to being in His Will and demonstrates our faith and trust in God. When God created mankind, He gave them free will to make their own choices for good or evil that affect their destiny.

### 3.7. Divine Grace and Human Will

The Bible testifies to the need for acquired freedom. People possess natural freedom, but their voluntary preferences serve sin until they obtain freedom from sin’s power. Free will is essential because it allows people to rise to incredible heights of creative, intellectual, entrepreneurial, and social brilliance that would not be possible without individual choice. Still, people risk the possibility of evil that comes with freedom. Some people argue that man’s free will is a source of evil because, through the exercise of free will, people have broken their relationship with God. There are different types of wills - free will, God’s will, and the will of Satan with his demons.

#### 3.7.1. The Free Will of Man

One of the key reasons that man is limiting God is through our free will and freedom of choice and not submitting to the will of God. Scripture reveals that man has free will and that whatever decision he makes has consequences and affects those around them.

**“All things are lawful for me, but all things are not expedient: all things are lawful for me, but all things edify not. Let no man seek his own, but every man another’s wealth.”**

**1 Corinthians 10:23-24.**

Many people question whether God exists and why He permits horrible things to continue to happen to good people. The reason for this is free will. If people do God's will, they can live in paradise. Adam and Eve are punished after giving in to the serpent's temptations in the Garden of Eden. There is no question that God is in charge of the Garden. Even if they had wanted to, they were unable to enter the garden again because it was now protected by higher beings.

God can interfere with free will, for He turns the hearts and minds of ordinary

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<sup>309</sup> Revelation 20:15



individuals, nations, and kings to treat Israel with generosity, even when they are enemies. Every firstborn among the Egyptians had just died while none of the Israelite's sons had died.

Still, the Egyptians gave silver, jewellery, clothing, and gold to the Israelites who were responsible for such a devastation. This would not have been a natural response if God did not give harmony in the hearts of the Egyptians toward Israel<sup>310</sup>.

God rules over the heart of pagan leaders and unbelievers so that they become His judgment, rod, and hammer<sup>311</sup> so that they can discipline the ones who acted sinfully against God. God directs what occurs in the world not by holding power over the decisions of the human heart but also by giving success or not to the decisions He permits<sup>312</sup>. Paul claims in Ephesians 1:11 that God directs “all things” to persevere His predestined people<sup>313</sup>. Therefore, Paul believes that “all things” include free will. For Paul to say that “worketh all things after the counsel of his own will” the trillions of man’s decisions that figure most of what takes place in the world were excluded from “all things.”

Although God interferes with free will, people are not drawn along in life against their will, but God ratifies them by their voluntary choices and actions for good and evil. Therefore, God has overriding priority over people’s volition, defining the condition and extent of their choices<sup>314</sup>.

Only a righteous and sovereign God can enable the genuine freedom of sinners to choose according to their will and hold them morally culpable for all their actions. People are blessed or cursed depending on what choice they make.

David is an excellent illustration of someone who exercises free will. Valuable lessons can be learned from him. David chose to focus on God<sup>315</sup> and act on God’s faithfulness to champion the cause of those who trust God and be a worshipper of God, he serves God by surrendering his free will to God. Just like David, everyone is destined for greatness if you use your free will to serve God because in Philippians 2:13 is the promise: “For it is God which worketh in you both to will and to do of his good pleasure.” God is greater than any temptation or stronghold because He created man to be free.

Through the grace and power of God, free will becomes ‘free’ when people choose salvation<sup>316</sup>. It is the Holy Spirit who works in and through a man’s will to regenerate that person<sup>317</sup> and give a man a new nature<sup>318</sup>. The unbeliever will not accept the Holy Spirit<sup>319</sup>. The Spirit comes to people like a fire, either to be blown into full flame and given the freedom to achieve His will or to be smothered and

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<sup>310</sup> Exodus 12:36

<sup>311</sup> Jeremiah 51:20-23

<sup>312</sup> Proverbs 16:9

<sup>313</sup> Piper, John. (2020) Providence. Illinois: Crossway. p.407

<sup>314</sup> Psalms 139:5

<sup>315</sup> Evens, Jimmy. (2020) I am David. United States of America: Gateway Press. p.271

<sup>316</sup> John 15:16

<sup>317</sup> John 1:12-13

<sup>318</sup> Ephesians 4:24

<sup>319</sup> 1 Corinthians 2:14

extinguished by the water of human fear, control, and inconsistent theology.

People cannot blame their unrighteous actions on God, He never tempts people with evil nor does He entice people to sin<sup>320</sup>. God tests people<sup>321</sup>. God is faithful and does not allow us to be tempted beyond our ability; instead, He “make a way to escape, that ye may be able to bear it.”<sup>322</sup>

The theme found from Genesis to Revelation is the quest for freedom. The Old Testament records how Israel lost their physical freedom repeatedly as numerous empires overtook them. The leading cause of the loss of physical freedom was often tied to spiritual disobedience by worshipping false gods. Today, many people live in spiritual slavery without realizing it because of their disobedience by worshipping something but not God. Freedom comes like everything else with a price.

To the world, man’s perspective about freedom is not always exact, it means doing your own thing and looking after number one first<sup>323</sup>. This viewpoint is a license and a justification to throw off the moral restraints of God in the quest for selfish aims<sup>324</sup>. Paul expresses his concern:

**“For, brethren, ye have been called unto liberty; only use not liberty for an occasion to the flesh, but by love serve one another.”**

**Galatians 5:13.**

Freedom is not to be abused or used for an occasion to sin. The extent of true freedom starts when our wants align with God’s will within boundaries. When people embrace God’s freedom and respect His boundaries, it will intensify their relationship with God.

#### 3.7.1.1. Biblical Boundaries and God’s Law

Living without boundaries is to bleed around sharks – Lisa Ann Mccoy<sup>325</sup>. Through setting boundaries for the seas and oceans<sup>326</sup>, God protects man and establishes divine order.

**“When he gave to the sea his decree, that the waters should not pass his commandment: when he appointed the foundations of the earth.”**

**Proverbs 8:29.**

Boundaries, for example, signs, walls, fences, and hedges in the physical world, are very easy to see<sup>327</sup> but boundaries in the spiritual world are just as real and often harder to see. In the spiritual world

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<sup>320</sup> James 1:13

<sup>321</sup> 1 Corinthians 10:13

<sup>322</sup> 1 Corinthians 10:13

<sup>323</sup> Freedom: <https://bible.org/seriespage/6-personal-freedom>

<sup>324</sup> Romans 1:18, John 3:19-21

<sup>325</sup> Lisa Ann Mccoy: [https://web.facebook.com/2belisa?\\_rdc=1&\\_rdr](https://web.facebook.com/2belisa?_rdc=1&_rdr)

<sup>326</sup> Jeremiah 5:22

<sup>327</sup> Cloud, Dr Henry & Townsend, Dr John. (1992) Boundaries. South Africa: Novus Holdings. pp.35-36

boundaries define your soul<sup>328</sup>. People must deal with what is in their souls so that boundaries can help them to determine who they are in Jesus Christ. Scripture is clear about what their parameters are and how to protect them. What confuses people sometimes are their family or other past relationships which are not being dealt with.

God also limits what He will allow in His Kingdom by confronting sin and allowing consequences for behaviour. God differentiates Himself from others because He is vibrant when He says that He is love and not darkness<sup>329</sup>. For people, God did not set limits to make them behave good or evil, but He sets standards for people for truthful behaviour and separates Himself when they misbehave<sup>330</sup>. Some Christians do not want to set boundaries because they fear it would signal disobedience or rebellion. This is a myth because of this belief many people will remain imprisoned in endless activities of no sincere spiritual and emotional value. Thus, the absence of boundaries is often a sign of disobedience. Sometimes a person would say yes to God or anyone else when he really meant no, just to comply and sound obedient. This is the same as lying. Scripture is clear about this:

**“Every man according as he purposeth in his heart, so let him give; not grudgingly or of necessity: for God loveth a cheerful giver.”**

## **2 Corinthians 9:7.**

Without boundaries, people will be exposed to temptations that could easily be avoided and not respecting others' personal boundaries will hurt them. Any belief that does not recognize God's Law should be rejected and can be found in 1 John 4:1-3.

Because of the rebellion of Satan, God had to put order, boundaries, and the law on the earth, without this, there is rebellion. God restores through His Word and His Word is the law. Obeying is a source of blessing, prosperity, and a healthy lifestyle within the boundaries of God's law. The Law was given to Moses to capture sin.

Even though the Gentiles did not receive the written law of Moses, they received the spiritual law which is impressed upon both Jews and Gentiles which flows forth out of a pure heart toward all men<sup>331</sup>. Luther describes the Law<sup>332</sup>. When Christ died on the cross, Christians were freed from slavery to sin and were no longer under the law.

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<sup>328</sup> Proverbs 4:23

<sup>329</sup> 1 John 1:6, 4:16

<sup>330</sup> Cloud, Dr Henry & Townsend, Dr John. (1992) Boundaries. South Africa: Novus Holdings. p.54

<sup>331</sup> Watson, Philips. (1947) Let God Be God: An Interpretation at the Theology of Martin Luther. Oregon: Wipf and Stock Publishers. p.107

<sup>332</sup> Watson, Philips. (1947) Let God Be God: An Interpretation at the Theology of Martin Luther. Oregon: Wipf and Stock Publishers. p.153

**“For sin shall not have dominion over you: for ye are not under the law, but under grace.”**

**Romans 6:14.**

Under grace demands the exact severe obedience to God but gives forgiveness for sin and the power to obey<sup>333</sup>. The purpose of the law is to serve as the guardian until Jesus comes. Under the law refers to being under the punishment of the law. Some people believe that grace means they can continue in a sinful lifestyle. Paul scorns this idea:

**“What then? Shall we sin, because we are not under the law, but under grace? God forbid. Know ye not, that to whom ye yield yourselves servants to obey, his servants ye are to whom ye obey; whether of sin unto death, or of obedience unto righteousness.”**

**Romans 6:15-16.**

The Israelites were tired of waiting for Moses<sup>334</sup> return while he was on Mount Sinai receiving the Law from God. Aaron fashioned the golden calf as a god for Israel to worship. On that day, the sons of Levi slaughtered around three thousand individuals who worshiped the golden calf at God's direction.

God did not tolerate idolatry or immorality in the Old Testament. Today many people worldwide worship false gods and God tolerates them by not striking them down as He did with the Israelites in the Old Testament.

God is not more indulgent or forgiving today than He was in the Old Testament since God's character does not alter<sup>335</sup>. The more people "grow in grace, and in knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ<sup>336</sup>," the closer they are to eternal life through Jesus Christ<sup>337</sup>.

In the Old Testament, God had not yet revealed to the Israelites His plan and will. The plan and will of God were revealed to the world through prophetic revelation, therefore the tolerance of God towards sinners decreased and man is now more accountable for their sins.

Thus, today man is more accountable to God than ever before and by virtue of His revelation to people, God is less lenient toward sinners. Sinners today have no excuse for their disobedience<sup>338</sup> because through Jesus Christ, people have more access to God. When some people read the Bible, they see a book of rules, philosophy of life and principles for the wise and others see mythology and stories about the nature of

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<sup>333</sup> Dake's Annotated Reference Bible. 1999. p.288

<sup>334</sup> Exodus 32:1-4

<sup>335</sup> Hebrews 13:8, James 1:17

<sup>336</sup> 2 Peter 3:18

<sup>337</sup> Romans 5:21

<sup>338</sup> John 15:22, 2 Corinthians 4:3-6

humanity and its existence<sup>339</sup>. Christians see the Bible as a living book about a relationship with God, who is the Creator and Jesus Christ as our Redeemer.

When people sin, they step out of the fences and boundaries, violate the laws and regulations set by God and break away from the bonds and relationship with God. People must remain in the will of God; then they will remain within the bounty of His purpose for their lives.

### 3.7.2. Understand the Will of God for Humanity

God's will for anyone is to draw close to Him, to know Him as a Person and to love and serve Him with one's whole heart<sup>340</sup>. Jesus did not put any limitations on God when He said that His purpose on earth in life was to do "the will of Him that sent me."<sup>341</sup> God wants a perfect kingdom where He can dwell and delight among His creations. Therefore, it is His will that people be saved.

Christians must be able to identify their own personal list of God's directives in their life. The spiritual position and eternal destiny are the two things a person can know with certainty if a person is born again in Christ. The future of a person is hidden from him until it happens because of free will.

In the Old Testament, God revealed His will through direct revelation with His prophets. Amos, Isaiah, and Jeremiah were oracles of God<sup>342</sup>. If people want to know the future details of God's will for them, they will become afraid to renew their minds. Then this is not transformation and obedience but rather divination. Still, God is the only one with knowledge of the future and He will share it with us in all good times<sup>343</sup>. Not even Satan has foreknowledge of the future, he only knows what God chooses to reveal about the future. What Satan is very aware of is that his eternal destiny is Hell because God had revealed it.

**"The secret things belong unto the LORD our God: but those things which are revealed belong unto us and to our children for ever, that we may do all the word of this law."**

### **Deuteronomy 29:29.**

God's will is what He commands people to do<sup>344</sup>. For this reason, not everyone will enter the kingdom of heaven because 1 Thessalonians 5:18 is particular about will and command. Many people will not obey<sup>345</sup>.

Jesus spoke of the will of God in Gethsemane when He was praying,<sup>346</sup> "O my Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me: nevertheless not as I will, but as thou wilt." The will of God refers to the sovereign plan of God, for Jesus must

<sup>339</sup> Cloud, Dr Henry & Townsend, Dr John. (1992) Boundaries. South Africa: Novus Holdings. p.103

<sup>340</sup> Matthew 22:37, James 4:8

<sup>341</sup> John 6:38

<sup>342</sup> 2 Peter 1:21

<sup>343</sup> Isaiah 46:9-10

<sup>344</sup> Matthew 7:21

<sup>345</sup> 1 John 2:17

<sup>346</sup> Matthew 26:39

go through the pain and die on the cross for man's sins.

Charles R. Swindoll, an evangelical Christian pastor, author, and educator, believes that a Christian preacher today is not a prophet and God does not speak through prophets anymore because he cannot derive the message from God as a direct and original revelation<sup>347</sup>. Swindoll also believes that the word prophet is used loosely today because 'the prophet' can discern the signs of the times, who sees the hand of God in history, then he seeks to interpret the significance of social and political trends. For Swindoll, the Bible is an inexhaustible source of truth because the Bible will never contradict God's plan or will against His nature and thus is the Bible God's final revelation until Jesus comes again.

The author of this dissertation disputes with Swindoll that God no longer speaks through prophets. A prophet receives a word from God, whether it is a vocal directive, a vision, or a dream, and then delivers that message to the individual or group of individuals. God still sends prophets to guide or warn people today. The term 'prophet' is derived from the Hebrew word nabi or nabiyy, which means to burst forth, like a fountain, or to utter, pronounce, or pour forth an announcement<sup>348</sup>. Hozeh and ro'eh, both meaning seer, are other synonyms for prophets. These phrases signify that the person is getting a direct message from God.

A prophecy originates not in the human will<sup>349</sup> but in God's will for people. Thus today, there are still true prophets. In the New Testament, there are many warnings against the false prophets to come – Matthew 7:15, 2 Peter 2:1 and Revelation 19:20.

God conveys His will into a person's spirit by the inner voice of the Holy Spirit through prayer and Bible study. Searching the Scriptures does not imply opening the Bible and accepting the first verse that comes to mind as the solution.

Listen to the inner voice because an open door can be misleading and a temptation from Satan. Study the Word of God and it will be less confusing what the will of God is. Some of the requirements of the will of God for every believer are:

- 3.7.2.1. Your parent must be obeyed – Ephesians 6:1.
- 3.7.2.2. Marry a Christian – 1 Corinthians 6:15.
- 3.7.2.3. Christ must be proclaimed – Acts 1:8.
- 3.7.2.4. To have a spirit of gratitude - Philippians 4:6.
- 3.7.2.5. Proper values must be set – Colossians 3:2.
- 3.7.2.6. To have a joyful attitude – 1 Thessalonians 5:16.

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<sup>347</sup> Swindoll, Charles R. (1999) *The Mystery of God's Will: What Does He Want From Me?* United States of America: Thomas Nelson

<sup>348</sup> Prophet: <https://www.christianity.com/wiki/bible/what-does-the-bible-warn-about-false-prophets.html>

<sup>349</sup> 2 Peter 1:21

- 3.7.2.7. Pray regularly – 1 Thessalonians 5:17.
- 3.7.2.8. Meditate on the Scriptures – Psalm 1:2.
- 3.7.2.9. People must be accepted without prejudice – James 2:1-10.
- 3.7.2.10. Gather for worship – Hebrews 10:25.
- 3.7.2.11. Labour at an occupation – 1 Thessalonians 4:11.

God's will for everybody is to be healthy and prosperous in everything they do. Without a renewed mind, Satan will use any opportunity to step in and plant a tare in the field<sup>350</sup> or a Judas in your circle of friends. Besides God's will, there are other wills than people in the universe. In Matthew 25:41 and Revelation 12:9, it is written that Satan and his demons also have choices; therefore, hell was prepared for them and not for man. Fortunately, God gave providence over the will of Satan.

### 3.7.3. Hell as Providence Over Satan's Delegated World Rule

Since Satan was cast out of heaven, he has been pursuing war against God, His angels, and His people. John describes in detail the war Satan wages against God in Revelation Chapters 12-16. Despite the fearful events described here, God and His people will be victorious. In Isaiah 14:13-14, Satan expresses his will:

- 3.7.3.1. "I will ascent into heaven,"
- 3.7.3.2. "I will exalt my throne above the stars of God:"
- 3.7.3.3. "I will sit also upon the mount of the congregation in the sides of the north:" (heaven is in the north part of the universe pointing from the earth)<sup>351</sup>
- 3.7.3.4. "I will ascend above the heights of the clouds;"
- 3.7.3.5. "I will be like the most High."

Satan's sinful nature, his rebellion, his disobedience, his self-sufficiency, his pride, his self-exaltation, his pride, and arrogance are revealed in this Scriptures. Fortunately, Satan's power is limited because he can only do what God allows. Although Satan is called the prince of this world in John 12:31 and "god of this world" in 2 Corinthians 4:4, the 'p' of prince and the 'g' of god, is spelled with small letters.

At the beginning of God's creation, no mention was made of the creation of hell. When God created hell is not known, but hell was prepared for Satan because of his fall<sup>352</sup>. Many people still believe that hell does not exist and say, 'A good God could not send people to hell.' Jesus talks more about hell than He talks about heaven or another person in the Bible. There are about one hundred and sixty-two

<sup>350</sup> Matthew 13:38

<sup>351</sup> Dake's Annotated Reference Bible. 1999. p.1153

<sup>352</sup> Matthew 25:41, Revelation 20:10

references about hell in the New Testament alone and Jesus spoke about seventy times about hell. He describes it in detail:

- 3.7.3.6. It is a place of eternal torment – Luke 16:28.
- 3.7.3.7. A place with unquenchable fire – Mark 9:43.
- 3.7.3.8. A place where the worm does not die – Mark 9:48.
- 3.7.3.9. A place where people will grind their teeth in regret – Matthew 13:42.
- 3.7.3.10. It is a place from which there is no return, even to warn loved ones - Luke 16:19-31.
- 3.7.3.11. He calls hell the outer darkness – Matthew 25:30.
- 3.7.3.12. A place of everlasting punishment – Matthew 25:46.
- 3.7.3.13. Comparing hell to Gehenna (a valley west and south of Jerusalem where children were sacrificed) which was a trash dump outside of Jerusalem where rubbish was burned, and maggots abounded – Matthew 10:28.

Jesus went to hell for three days and three nights<sup>353</sup> after He had died on the cross. He descended into hell<sup>354</sup> to get the keys of Hades and Death<sup>355</sup>.

Jesus went to Hades, also called Sheol, which is ‘the place of the dead’ or ‘the place of departed souls.’<sup>356</sup> Hell is in “the lower part of the earth” according to Ephesians 4:9, which corresponds with Numbers 16:32-33; therefore, hell is real as it can be seen, smelled, felt, heard and a person can breathe it.

Bill Wiese<sup>357</sup>, a Protestant Christian, wrote a book about his experience of twenty-three minutes in hell on November 22, 1998, at 03:00 in the morning. The very first thing he noticed was that it was not a nightmare, and the temperature was hot, far beyond any possibility of sustaining life. According to Wiese, he was shown hell to bring back a message of warning that hell is a real place that does exist and that God desires that no one go there.

His experience started in a prison cell naked, where he was tortured until his flesh hung from his body like ribbons by enormous beasts, unlike he had ever seen before and absolute evil. When he could leave the cell, he found himself next to a giant pit with raging flames of fire that seemed like a mouth swallowing the dead. The screams from the condemned souls were deafening and relentless. Finally, a bright light invaded a tunnel where he found himself later in and was saved by Jesus. Then in the presence of Jesus, Wiese felt His infinite power, love, and peace.

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<sup>353</sup> Matthew 12:40

<sup>354</sup> Ephesians 4:9

<sup>355</sup> Revelation 1:18

<sup>356</sup> Hades: <https://www.gotquestions.org/did-Jesus-go-to-hell.html>

<sup>357</sup> Wiese, Bill (2017) 23 Minutes In Hell. Florida: Charisma House. pp.1-44



Given the quantity of evil and pain Satan causes in the world, people inevitably still ask, ‘Why does God permit Satan to do this?’. The biggest hindrances in our lives are to limit God with our wrong beliefs, bloodline and generation curses, pride, unbelieve, strongholds, declarations, and statements, thinking and fear.

### 3.8. Conclusion

An unlimited God who is an omnipresent, omnipotent, omnibenevolent and omniscient God can be limited by His own people<sup>358</sup> because they did not remember His Hand<sup>359</sup> with their small thinking. Therefore, they did not receive blessings and deliverance.

Only God knows everything and is omniscient. No single individual, not even Satan, can claim that they have full knowledge and understanding of the future or the mysteries of God because God does not reveal all His secret plans to anyone. It is God and God alone who is the revealer of this knowledge, and He imparts this knowledge as the Spirit wills and not as we will. This knowledge cannot be learned at university or any other institution nor can it be found in library books or on websites. God has a pattern for sanctifying His servants from Genesis to Revelation because God is a consuming fire<sup>360</sup> representing His judgment. Fire tries and removes impurities and purifies precious metals.

The struggle for our souls is no less crucial than the battle fought by David. David was poor in spirit, he had no fear, only fear of God. Therefore, he could conquer Goliath and just as he did conquer Goliath, people must defeat the giants in their lives.

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<sup>358</sup> Psalm 78:41

<sup>359</sup> Psalm 78:42

<sup>360</sup> Hebrews 12:29



## 4. Chapter 3: Real People, Real Limitations: Losing the Battle Against Their Giants

### 4.1. Introduction

Theologically no one can limit God but through unbelief, people limit God. Goliath must fall in our lives to inherit the Kingdom of God. Giants can come in many ways in a person's life, they can manifest as little things starting as babies and growing with them as they get older. The giant in front of you is never more prominent than God inside of you. A look into the lives of real people today with real limitations can be illustrated as God's Generals.

From the beginning, man was created to reign over the creation of God in His image<sup>361</sup>. Unfortunately, not many people can handle authority and power because most people are entrusted with power but those who have unaddressed and unattended disputes in their souls bring harm to themselves and those under their care. This is illustrated throughout the entire narrative of Scripture. Sometimes the power is used for self-promotion or personal advantage and in the end does not bring the greater good for which it was intended, neither to the person nor the people and the kingdom entrusted to the person's care.

Morgan Snyder, in his book *Becoming a King: The Path to Restoring a Man's Heart*, provides outstanding instances of people today that exemplify the aforementioned. Bill Cosby, a hero, and famous family man for a generation, was accused and convicted<sup>362</sup> of sexual assault by at least fifty women. Cosby caused incalculable harm because the schism between his private and public lives cost him and many others nearly everything.

A cancer survivor, the founder of the Live Strong Foundation and seventh time Tour de France champion, Lance Armstrong<sup>363</sup> who gave hope to millions, chose to lie not to his own kids but also to the world. Armstrong lied about his reliance on performance enhancement drugs to make every tour championship title possible. His extensive drug use is one of the utmost indignities in professional sports history because the seven world titles were revoked after the revealing of his drug misuse. This was the beginning of the unravelling of his immense influence<sup>364</sup>.

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<sup>361</sup> Genesis 1:26-28, Psalms 8:3-8

<sup>362</sup> Bill Cosby: <https://www.news24.com/channel/gossip/news/bill-cosby-found-guilty-of-sexually-assaulting-teen-at-playboy-mansion-20220622-2>

<sup>363</sup> Lance Armstrong: <https://www.britannica.com/biography/Lance-Armstrong>

<sup>364</sup> Biography of Lance Armstrong: <https://www.biography.com/athlete/lance-armstrong>

Harvey Weinstein<sup>365</sup>, a Hollywood mogul, has been accused of sexual assault by over eighty workers and actresses. He was sacked from the studio he co-founded in October 2017.

Al Franken<sup>366</sup>, Senator of Minnesota and host of Saturday Night Live (an American television show), was forced to quit by the Democratic Party. He was accused of sexual harassment and misbehaviour by eight women. Franken's fall was one of the most abrupt in modern political history since he was the most famous figure in the Senate. Before entering, he was a well-known star, former writer, and performer on the American television show. Since the charges were recorded, Franken was unable to rebut them<sup>367</sup>.

Religion and churches have not escaped these tragic of losing battles.

The Catholic Church is confronting its most serious predicament in five hundred years, as the horrifying report in the year 2018 revealed from Chile, Australia, Germany, and the United States thousands of cases of child molestation by priests<sup>368</sup>. A grand jury report documented one thousand children were abused by three hundred priests in the state of Pennsylvania over seven decades.

The Houston Chronicle released a database in February 2019 detailing two hundred and twenty Southern Baptist Church leaders who were convicted with more than seven hundred victims<sup>369</sup>.

But then Scripture repletes similar cases. For one, God sent the angel of death to kill the first-born sons of the Egyptians when Pharaoh refused to let the Israelites migrate. King Herod repeats this horror in his jealousy and fear of a rival king. There is an impact of David's power upon the lives of Uriah and Bathsheba. Then there is the cowardice of Pontius Pilate when he refused to stand up to the crowd to save the life of Jesus.

Even though the characters change, the storyline remains the same: broken, unfinished, inexperienced people breaking the lives of others with their power.

#### **4.2. God's Generals Who Lost Their Battle Against Their Giants**

In the Old Testament, it was the patriarchs, priests, kings, and prophets, while in the New Testament, it was the apostles that were the great leaders. Hebrews 11 captured many of them and is called "God's Hall of Faith"<sup>370</sup>. These Bible characters of great faith could also be God's Generals then. The term "God's Generals" became popular through Robert Liardon, the author of the bestselling series with this title<sup>371</sup>.

Liardon records extraordinary testimonies of pioneering people of today who have in the past two centuries, laid the foundation for Spirit filled church outreach. God's Generals are

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<sup>365</sup> Harvey Weinstein: <https://www.nbcnews.com/storyline/sexual-misconduct/hollywood-mogul-harvey-weinstein-fired-amid-sexual-harassment-allegations-n808881>

<sup>366</sup> Al Franken: <https://www.newyorker.com/magazine/2019/07/29/the-case-of-al-franken>

<sup>367</sup> Al Franken: <https://www.newyorker.com/magazine/2019/07/29/the-case-of-al-franken>

<sup>368</sup> Crisis Of the Catholic Church Today: <https://www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/world/2018-10-11/catholic-churchs-biggest-crisis-reformation>

<sup>369</sup> The Houston Chronicle Report: <https://www.cbs19.tv/article/news/houston-chronicle-identifies-southern-baptist-church-staff-volunteers-convicted-of-sex-crimes-4-east-texans-on-list/501-3dd4ba3d-86b4-455b-a111-b2a862b3e711>

<sup>370</sup> Hall of Faith: <https://godtv.com/gods-generals/>

<sup>371</sup> Hall of Faith: <https://godtv.com/gods-generals/>

those who accomplished greatness for God's Kingdom in the fivefold ministry as prophets, apostles, evangelists, pastors, and teachers.

These people referred to as God's Generals were empowered by the Holy Spirit to bring international restoration and took ownership of the invitation from God to pursue His plan. They are like roaring lions with the Word of God but some of them lost their battle against a giant in their lives.

One of God's Generals, Liardon<sup>372</sup> is a public speaker, spiritual leader, best-selling author of over fifty books, church historian, humanitarian, and one of America's foremost experts on the dynamic healing ministries of the last two centuries. His publications have been translated into more than fifty languages, and he has served in over 122 countries. Not only do they have offices in South Africa, England, and the Philippines, but they also have 73 missionaries all over the world.

In December 2001, Liardon lost a battle against his Goliath because he had to step down from his Irvine based Ministry after admitting to a short term inappropriate sexual relationship<sup>373</sup>. Although Liardon lost one battle, the research he has done does not discredit the anointing that had rested upon him at first and the research that was done by him on the lives of real people today.

Another General of God was William Branham<sup>374</sup>. He was a miracle worker. Sometimes he preaches to congregations of twenty thousand people. Branham's ministry was characterized by remarkable manifestations of healing and operated in the gift of the word of knowledge. Many people testify and witness that he never once made a mistake once under the anointing of the Holy Spirit. He could describe an illness 100 percent.

According to a church historian, David Harrel, Branham's services remain a legend unparalleled in the history of the charismatic movement<sup>375</sup>. Casting out demons was also one of Branham's gifts. The furthestmost famous supernatural manifestation associated with Branham is a photograph taken of him on the night of January 24, 1950. The photograph that develops successfully is of a light appearing above his head.

A professional document examiner in Houston examined the photograph and determined that the negative given for review had not been modified and was not a composite or double exposed negative<sup>376</sup>. Branham's Goliath defeated him. He was illiterate in both intellectual and theological terms. Thus, he could not preach or teach. Still, he started to teach as he saw himself as Elijah, but his teaching was unbalanced and false doctrine. Kenneth Erwin Hagin, an American world-renowned minister and an American prophetess and reverent Anna Morehead Schrader, prophesied the death of Branham about a year and a half before he died if he did not stop his teachings.<sup>377</sup> His teachings confused people and the fruit of it was not good. Soon after the prophecies, he did die in a car accident, some would say it was God Himself who took his servant Branham before he did too much harm to the

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<sup>372</sup> Robert Liardon:

[https://www.google.com/search?gs\\_ssp=eJzj4tLP1TcwLcvJy6oyYPTiK8pPSi0qUcjJTCxKyc8DAIKDCZk&q=robert+liardon&rlz=1C1GIGM\\_enZA698ZA699&oq=r&aqs=chrome.3.69i59j69i57j69i59j46i39j69i60l4.4124j0j7&sourceid=chrome&ie=UTF-8](https://www.google.com/search?gs_ssp=eJzj4tLP1TcwLcvJy6oyYPTiK8pPSi0qUcjJTCxKyc8DAIKDCZk&q=robert+liardon&rlz=1C1GIGM_enZA698ZA699&oq=r&aqs=chrome.3.69i59j69i57j69i59j46i39j69i60l4.4124j0j7&sourceid=chrome&ie=UTF-8)

<sup>373</sup> Liardon's Relationship: <https://www.latimes.com/archives/la-xpm-2001-dec-22-me-17193-story.html>

<sup>374</sup> William Branham: <https://www.newlifepublishing.co.uk/articles/faith/william-branham-the-prophet-of-controversy/>

<sup>375</sup> William Branham: <https://www.newlifepublishing.co.uk/articles/faith/william-branham-the-prophet-of-controversy/>

<sup>376</sup> William Branham: <https://www.newlifepublishing.co.uk/articles/faith/william-branham-the-prophet-of-controversy/>

<sup>377</sup> Death of William Branham: <https://provetheclaims.wixsite.com/home/kenneth-hagin-s-prophecy>

kingdom.

Maria Woodworth-Etter is another General who emerged on the battlefields as a real person with real limitations who faced her giants like a roaring lion<sup>378</sup>. Her limitations were from the outside, not inner desires - by explanation, it was people who disrupted her meetings. She was a national phenomenon as a campaigner for the Holy Spirit. Several denominations recognized her ability to stir dead churches and cities up. No other minister had ever been successful in a town Devil's Den in America.

Etter knew the key to spiritual warfare; therefore, she preached and sang for three days. On the fourth day through her intercession and spiritual authority, the demonic principality that ruled over this town was shattered down. Still, on the same day, people started to cry and repented to God.

It was the greatest manifestation of the presence of God in a town since Pentecost was recorded<sup>379</sup>. After Etter had studied the Bible at a later stage of her life, she began preaching God's divine will in healing. She had incredible spiritual authority over diseases, sin, and demons. With every spiritually filled ministry comes persecution. Etter also experienced it with an unfaithful husband she divorced after twenty-six years of a very stormy marriage. After less than a year, the husband who she divorced started to smear her character and ministry<sup>380</sup>. The divorced husband died not long after that slandering. This indicates how strong the anointing was upon her life.

But Etter's greatest trials were the Hoodlums or gangs who started to harass her meetings. She even received death threats. Still, Etter refused to leave Oakland until she felt God's presence had manifested. After Etter had remarried, she disappeared from public ministry and remained silent for seven years. The reason is not known for this absence and silence. But when she emerged again, she was just as powerful as before<sup>381</sup>.

During Etter's ministry, she was arrested four times. Three of the citations never made it to court. She was once arrested and taken to court. The trial was based on the charges that she practiced medicine without a license and hypnotized people into trances. This, while hundreds were healed - the sick, crippled, blind, and deaf mutes were healed<sup>382</sup>.

At some point in a person's life, they must face a giant. The giants come in different forms, but they all have something in common - it is to steal people's peace, joy and anointing on their lives if they do not realize that God is stronger than any giant. When David faced Goliath, he met a giant that many feared. David saw the size of God while every other soldier in Israel's army saw the size of the giant. The five stones that David used to defeat his giant were always:

#### 4.2.1. Fervent prayer and repentance.

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<sup>378</sup> Liardon, Robert. (1996) *God's Generals Volume 1: Why They Succeeded and Why Some Fail*. New Kensington: Whitaker House.

<sup>379</sup> Mother Of Pentecost: <https://www.newlifepublishing.co.uk/articles/maria-woodworth-etter-the-mother-of-pentecost/>

<sup>380</sup> Liardon, Robert. (1996) *God's Generals Volume 1: Why They Succeeded and Why Some Fail*. New Kensington: Whitaker House.

<sup>381</sup> Liardon, Robert. (1996) *God's Generals Volume 1: Why They Succeeded and Why Some Fail*. New Kensington: Whitaker House.

<sup>382</sup> Liardon, Robert. (1996) *God's Generals Volume 1: Why They Succeeded and Why Some Fail*. New Kensington: Whitaker House.

- 4.2.2. The Word of God.
- 4.2.3. Gratitude - God wants us to thank Him in everything.
- 4.2.4. Praise and worship.
- 4.2.5. Obedience.

David dealt with many giants not just Goliath. One such giant was his children. The weakness and failure to discipline his children had tremendous consequences. For one, David deliberately closed his eyes to his children deserving discipline. David never dealt with Amnon, his son for raping Tamar, his sister and David's daughter. Then, Absalom, David's son, murdered Amnon, his brother. Absalom hated David for never punishing Amnon and his hatred for his father led to a rebellion many years later that drove David out of his kingdom by a revengeful oppressor king who took the throne over Israel. Giants must fall.

People must not see themselves as David but instead as Jesus. Just as David was a warrior, Jesus is also a warrior fighting battles for us<sup>383</sup>. God did not just want victory to come in the story of David and Goliath, but the trust and faith David had in God. Developing trust and faith does not come overnight, it comes with building a relationship with God. David already had a relationship with God. Therefore, fear was not an option for him.

God has the ultimate power and builds up our faith and trust which is the antidote for fear<sup>384</sup>. Seeing and hearing God in and through His Word states that Jesus is enough to defeat any giant. A chain breaker for fear can be found in:

**“So then faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God.”**

**Romans 10:17.**

Other sleeping giants in people's lives can be fear, bloodline and generation curses, strongholds, declarations, and statements. The tongue is a huge source of limitations in people's life, freely or not, because it is a powerful weapon<sup>385</sup>. The greatest enemy of Israel was themselves in many ways. Many of the Israelites could not enter the Promised Land. They saw themselves as grasshoppers:

**“And there we saw the giants, the sons of Anak, which come of the giants: and we were in our own sight as grasshoppers and so we were in their sight.”**

**Numbers 13:33.**

#### 4.2.6. Fear Caused by Wrong Beliefs Create Giants

Two types of fear can be found throughout the Bible. First, there is the fear of earthly troubles and then the fear of God. The worldly fear brings death, and the fear of God offers eternal life. Fearing God is the beginning of wisdom.

<sup>383</sup> Exodus 14:14, 2 Chronicles 20:15-17, Romans 12:19

<sup>384</sup> Giglio, Louie. (2017) Goliath Must Fall. Nashville, Tennessee: W Publishing Group. pp.51-58

<sup>385</sup> Proverbs 18:2

**“The fear of the LORD is the beginning of knowledge: but fools despise wisdom and instruction.”**

### **Proverbs 1:7.**

The sons of Anak were real giants. Their bodies were great in stature and their countenance so completely different from other men that they were astonished at the sight of terrible to the hearing. Because of their fear and weakness, the Israelites accused God of deceiving them<sup>386</sup>.

‘Fear is an emotion caused by the belief that something or someone poses a threat’<sup>387</sup> but God provides<sup>388</sup>, through the Holy Spirit, for people to overcome any trouble that Satan uses as a weapon to doubt everything God says. Some people fear that somehow God’s love is not enough and insufficient for their needs on earth and that can become a driving force behind rejecting the Bible.

Humanists<sup>389</sup>, to give one simple example, reject the claim that the Bible is the Word of God<sup>390</sup>. They believe the Bible was written merely by people in an ignorant, superstitious, and cruel age because they live in an unenlightened era. According to them, the Bible contains many errors and harmful teaching with numerous contradictions.

Another reason they believe the Bible should not be considered the Word of God is the harm it causes in people's lives, because some people use Scripture to justify beating children, chopping off body parts, pulling out eyes, driving out demons, foregoing life's pleasures, and refusing medical treatment. Finally, humanists believe it contradicts science<sup>391</sup>. A Christian's vulnerability is ignorance if he 'talks the talk but does not do the walk'<sup>392</sup>. Ignorance can be classified into three types:

- 4.2.6.1. In prayer. Not just adequate time has to be set aside for prayer, it must also be quality time. Prayer time must be a consistent habit. Persistence must also be a virtue, and if not, doubts will begin to take over.
- 4.2.6.2. In worship. Praise seems to be the best divergent means when it comes to shifting grounds from self to God. The presence of God will literally fill people and the place when people start worshipping.
- 4.2.6.3. In Charity. Start talking and working towards the benefit of others regardless of the other person’s response.

Christians must believe that God is the ultimate author of the Bible, as declared in Proverbs 30:5-6, 2 Timothy 3:16, John 7:16-19, Romans 15:4 and Revelation 1:1-

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<sup>386</sup> Numbers 14:3

<sup>387</sup> Fear: <https://www.worldchangers.org/Bible-Study/Articles/Fear-The-Enemy-to-Our-Faith-1>

<sup>388</sup> Romans 8:15, 2 Timothy 1:7

<sup>389</sup> Humanists:

[https://www.google.com/search?q=definition+of+humanists&rlz=1C1GIGM\\_enZA698ZA699&oq=&aqs=chrome.1.35i39i362l8.142495j0j7&sourceid=chrome&ie=UTF-8](https://www.google.com/search?q=definition+of+humanists&rlz=1C1GIGM_enZA698ZA699&oq=&aqs=chrome.1.35i39i362l8.142495j0j7&sourceid=chrome&ie=UTF-8)

<sup>390</sup> Rejecting The Bible: <https://americanhumanist.org/what-is-humanism/reasons-humanists-reject-bible/>

<sup>391</sup> Rejecting The Bible: <https://americanhumanist.org/what-is-humanism/reasons-humanists-reject-bible/>

<sup>392</sup> The Ignorance of Christians: <https://www.rhemabiblechurch.net/index.php/articles/teachings/118-the-ignorant-christian>

2. The best test for the Bible to be God's Word comes from personal experience and an intimate relationship with God the Father, Jesus the Son, and the guidance of the Holy Spirit. Above all, Christians must believe and understand that no prophecy of Scripture came about from the prophet's own interpretation of things.

**“Knowing this first, that no prophecy of the scripture is of any private interpretation. For the prophecy came not in old time by the will of man: but holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost.”**

**2 Peter 1:20-21.**

“For God hath not given us the spirit of fear; but of power, and of love, and of a sound mind”<sup>393</sup> “to tread on serpents and scorpions, and over all the power of the enemy.”<sup>394</sup> The serpents and scorpions also refer to the powers of the demons primarily and to tread upon means to have absolute power over all the power of Satan but God also promises immunity from any harm of wild beasts and from poisons in Psalms 91, Mark 16:18 and Acts 28:5.

Power over demons should not be the cause of delight but rather a sonship in heaven. For man, it is a natural tendency to have glory in exercising power, whether it is a characteristic or considered. This all ascends from pride, and it often leads to losing a battle against a giant. Other sleeping giants are bloodlines and generation curses. Not everyone is aware of the skeletons in the closet of their families. These skeletons have an impact on the lives of people.

#### 4.2.7. Bloodline and Generational Curses

Although this is a subject on its own, it is a fundamental limitation that needs to be addressed. God gave His blessing and dominion to Adam and Eve over the earth. But they sinned and sin brings curses. So did God give Abraham great promises for His seed but Esau, the son of Isaac, married into the Hittites with two wives. The Hittites were descendants of the Canaanites and there was a generational curse that had not been broken. With this marriage, Esau brought that generational curse into his family<sup>395</sup>. Scripture is clear about not marrying a non-Christian:

**“Be ye not unequally yoked together with unbelievers: for what fellowship hath righteousness with unrighteousness? and what communion hath light with darkness?”**

**2 Corinthians 6:14.**

Many families today still live in spiritual darkness because they cannot see the light of God's Word. No matter what you tell them. Even amid a crisis that would bring most families to their knees, a family who is blind to spiritual substances will be oblivious to understanding. For them, it is almost like there is an invisible

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393 2 Timothy 1:7

394 Luke 10:19

395 Hichey, Marily. (2000) Breaking Generational Curses: Overcoming the Legacy Of Sin In Your Family. Denver, Colorado: Harrison House, Inc.



wall that perpetuates their dwelling in darkness<sup>396</sup>.

Children often suffer for the sins of the fathers unto the third and fourth generations<sup>397</sup>. Thus, iniquities are passed from generation to generation through the bloodline. The effect of sin is not only on those who commit it but also on the generation to come and the cause of a curse is iniquity. The result of all sin is destruction and death. The curse will continue down the bloodline until it is stopped by repentance and deliverance.

According to John Eckhardt<sup>398</sup>, an apostle and overseer of Crusades Ministries in Chicago, Illinois, a curse is God's "recompense"<sup>399</sup> in the life of a person and his or her descendent because of sin. The curse creates heartache and grants demonic spirits legal admission into a family, allowing them to carry out and continue their evil schemes<sup>400</sup>.

Eckhardt also describes a curse as a shadow that follows a person; it is a dark cloud that covers an individual, family, or nation of people<sup>401</sup>. Curses open the door for demonic spirits to enter and function. Before some curses can be broken, they need to be identified by name because some demons will attempt to use those unidentified curses as a legal right to stay. People have the authority to break a curse in the name of Jesus<sup>402</sup>. Once a curse is broken, Satan has no legal ground anymore.

When demons are cast out, they usually leave through the mouth or the nose, some of the common manifestations are vomiting, crying, spitting, coughing, screaming, sighing, roaring, yawning, exhaling, and belching. Sometimes people can shake or tremble when they receive deliverance. There are hindrances to receiving deliverance: curses, sin, ungodly soul ties, fear, occultism, pride, passivity, unbelief, lack of desire, unforgiveness, lack of knowledge and embarrassment.

Symptoms of curses which most have their root in idolatry and iniquity:

- 4.2.7.1. Chronic financial problems and poverty.
- 4.2.7.2. Serious marital problems.
- 4.2.7.3. Divorces and multiple marriages.
- 4.2.7.4. Chronic arguing and fighting in families.
- 4.2.7.5. Premature death in the family with a history of suicides, deaths by drowning, car accidents, fires, floods, heart attacks, strokes, homicides, and cancer.

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<sup>396</sup> Matthew 13:11

<sup>397</sup> Exodus 20:5-6, Lametations 5:7

<sup>398</sup> John Eckhardt: <https://www.audible.com/author/John-Eckhardt/B001JP1YK0>

<sup>399</sup> Lametation 3:64

<sup>400</sup> Eckhardt, John. (1999) Identifying & Breaking Curses. United States of America: Whitaker House. p.9

<sup>401</sup> Eckhardt, John. (1999) Identifying & Breaking Curses. United States of America: Whitaker House. p.12

<sup>402</sup> Galatians 3:13, Matthew 16:19

- 4.2.7.6. History of mental problems in the family.
- 4.2.7.7. Alcoholism and drug addiction.
- 4.2.7.8. Immorality, adultery, sexual abuse, and perversion.
- 4.2.7.9. Child abuse.
- 4.2.7.10. Depression, confusion, fear, indecision, and panic attacks.

Nothing could be worse than being cut off from the merciful presence of God. At the cross, all the sins of man were laid upon Christ. Christ, as any human being, was in anguish when He was about to die a brutal death on a Roman cross:

**“And about the ninth hour Jesus cried with a loud voice, saying Eli, Eli, lama sabachthani? that is to say, My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?”**

**Matthew 27:46.**

What made His anguish so awful is that He carried the curse of sin for all humankind.

**“Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us: for it is written, Cursed is every one that hangeth on a tree: That the blessing of Abraham might come on the Gentiles through Jesus Christ; that we might receive the promise of the Spirit through faith.”**

**Galatians 3:13-14.**

Thus, the cross was a curse and a blessing. God never made a covenant with just a person but with the person's descendants also<sup>403</sup>. The hidden causes of defeat in families have their roots in stubborn and seeming impasses. If the Word of God is applied to personal lives, people will establish a tradition of blessing for their present and future generations in abundance because there are two sides to this coin:

**“... 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.”**

**Exodus 20:5.**

**“Know therefore that the LORD thy God, he is God, the faithful God, which keepeth covenant and mercy with them that love him and keep his commandments to a thousand generations.”**

**Deuteronomy 7:9.**

The keywords in these two verses are “hate” and “love”. There is more abundance in “love”. Making declarations and statements without scriptural backings is simply an effort in futility. Blessings and curses are invisible forces with spiritual

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<sup>403</sup> Genesis 22:17-18, Matthew 1:17

power transmitted by words<sup>404</sup>. People can speak positive words of blessings over someone or negative words of curses that cause despair, destruction, and discouragement in a person's life. People must be careful not to curse themselves with statements, for example:

4.2.7.11. No one cares.

4.2.7.12. I am better off dead.

4.2.7.13. I am stupid.

4.2.7.14. It happened to my parents and now it is happening to me.

4.2.7.15. I never can seem to get ahead.

4.2.7.16. Nothing ever seems to work out for me.

People are not personally guilty of their ancestors' sins<sup>405</sup> but they do live with the consequences of the sins of their ancestors. In the Old Testament, when people repented, they first confessed their sins and then the sins of their ancestors<sup>406</sup>. Today people still have the same responsibility to admit their own sins and the sins of their ancestors. The author Dr Mark Virkler<sup>407</sup> is a minister, an author and the president of the Christian Leadership University, Orlando; he gave an excellent example of suggested prayer in this regard:

I confess and repent of the sin of my ancestors, my parents, and my own sin of \_\_\_\_\_ and of my anger and resentment against You, God for allowing this to happen in my life.

I forgive and release my ancestors for passing on to me this sin and for the resulting curses of \_\_\_\_\_. I ask You to forgive me and I receive Your forgiveness. I forgive myself for participating in this sin.

I place the Cross of Christ between my ancestors and myself, as a baby in my mother's womb. I command the sin of \_\_\_\_\_ and all accompanying curses to be halted at the Cross of Jesus Christ and for freedom and release to flow down from the Cross of Christ to that bay in the womb<sup>408</sup>.

Satan and his envoys ride into people's lives in areas where sin has given them a place to reside because what begins as a foothold can quickly become a stronghold.

**“Neither give place to the devil.”**

**Ephesians 4:27.**

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<sup>404</sup> Proverbs 18:21

<sup>405</sup> Jeremiah 31:29-30, Ezekiel 18:2-4

<sup>406</sup> Nehemiah 1:6, 9:2, Jeremiah 14:20

<sup>407</sup> Dr Mark Virkler: <https://isomonline.org/teams/dr-mark-virkler/>

<sup>408</sup> Prayer To Break Strongholds: [https://ocinternational.org/wp-content/uploads/Dealing\\_with\\_Generational\\_Strongholds1.pdf](https://ocinternational.org/wp-content/uploads/Dealing_with_Generational_Strongholds1.pdf).

#### 4.2.8. A Biblical View of Spiritual Strongman and Strongholds

##### 4.2.8.1. In the Natural World

A stronghold in the Old Testament was a strong city or structure to seek refuge from<sup>409</sup>. Thus, it is a defensive structure, for example, a castle or a fortress. Some of these strongholds have very high walls around it with trenches or ditches on the outside around the walls. These walls were the city's assurance of protection because it kept unwelcome inhabitants and invaders out.

All the entrants were screened and those who owed taxes were not allowed in until they had paid. Those considered a threat to the city's safety and health were kept out. People inside the strongholds were safe and isolated from the rest of the world. As in the natural, so one can draw a parallel in the spiritual. In the same manner some people construct "walls" around them when they are offended and hurt to safeguard their hearts and prevent any future wounds.

They then also filter out anyone they think owes them something until these people pay their debts in full to them. Hence, inside these "walls," people cannot receive the Word of God and can become the bait of Satan.

**"A brother offended is harder to be won than a strong city: and their contentions are like the bars of a castle."**

**Proverbs 18:19.**

A person hurt or offended is harder to win than a fortified city because the tools of Satan bring people into captivity or have a stronghold over a person, for example an offense<sup>410</sup>. When people quarrel, they do not realize they are spewing out bitterness. When a person is bitter and deceived, he believes he is right even though he is not because people believe with all their hearts that they have been wronged<sup>411</sup>. These people limit themselves rather than trust God and make God their stronghold.

It is righteous for God to avenge His servants. Therefore, it is unrighteous for God's servants to avenge themselves.

**"Dearly beloved, avenge not yourselves, but rather give place unto wrath: for it is written. Vengeance is mine; I will repay, saith the Lord."**

**Romans 12:19.**

Saul was a man who avenged himself by chasing David, a man of honour for fourteen years and murdered the priests and their families.

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409 Bevere, John. (1976) The Bait of Satan. Florida: Charisma House. p.16

410 2 Timothy 2:25-26

411 Bevere, John. (1976) The Bait of Satan. Florida: Charisma House. p.7

But when David stood over the sleeping Saul, he did not take the chance and kill Saul, he trusted God and remained a man after God's heart. It is more important to trust God for avenges.

Every person should follow the example of David and not let hope die in one's heart, especially when one is betrayed. Just as offense and unforgiveness, bitterness is a root. If roots are nursed, watered, protected, fed, and given attention – they increase in deepness and strength. If not dealt with rapidly, roots are hard to pull up. The power of the offense will continue to develop. People are therefore urged not to let the sun go down on their wrath<sup>412</sup>.

Now instead of the fruit of righteousness is produced, people will see a harvest of anger, resentment, jealousy, hatred, strife, and discord. Jesus called these evil fruits. Instead, a pure heart is like pure gold – soft, tender, and pliable. Hebrews 3:13 states that hearts are hardened through the deceitfulness of sin! If people do not deal with an offense, it will generate more fruit of sin, such as bitterness given in the example above, but also anger and resentment.

This added substance hardens people's hearts just as alloys harden gold. This reduces or removes tenderness, creating a loss of sensitivity. People are hindered in their ability to hear God's voice. People's accuracy in seeing is darkened. This is a perfect setting for deception.

#### 4.2.8.2. In the Spiritual Real

Every baby is born subject to Satan's law of sin and death<sup>413</sup>. A person's internal mindsets and motivations are formed the moment they are conceived<sup>414</sup>. The mindsets and motivations formed by demonic influence become strongholds built upon Satan's accusations, doubts and lies, which include ungodly expectations and inner vows. The more of these that exist within a person, the stronger the stronghold.

Tearing down these strongholds requires that a person must be born again and be filled with the Holy Spirit; this can happen by becoming subject to God's law of the Spirit of life. Unfortunately, when a person goes to secular counsellors, they will not receive counsel regarding sin issues. Thus, when Satan's accusations, doubts and lies are not exposed within a person and cast down, these accusations, doubts and lies become the foundation for erecting and maintaining the stronghold.

A person living under condemnation with bitterness, rage, defensiveness, and insecurities<sup>415</sup> will be bound by the threefold chain of rejection, bitterness, and pride. Any Christian who becomes a citizen of God's Kingdom via faith in Jesus Christ is inherently at odds with Satan's Kingdom.

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<sup>412</sup> Ephesians 4:26

<sup>413</sup> Psalm 51:5, 58:3, Romans 5:12

<sup>414</sup> Connell, Karen E. (2020) Threefold Cord Manual. Independently Published. pp.217-218

<sup>415</sup> Connell, Karen E. (2020) Threefold Cord Manual. Independently Published. pp.217-218

The reality is evil spirits and demons do exist and evil spirits can be the cause that people are spiritually and physically blind, deaf, and mute<sup>416</sup>. Jesus clearly stated that Satan's kingdom is divided against itself and cannot stand.

**“If Satan also be divided against himself, how shall his kingdom stand? because ye say that I cast out devils through Beelzebub. And if I by Beelzebub cast out devils, by whom do your sons cast them out? therefore shall they be your judges.”**

**Luke 11:18-19.**

Jesus Christ presents the kingdom of God and demons present the kingdom of Satan. Paul also acknowledges spiritual warfare.

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

**Ephesians 6:12.**

Paul begins with a collection of wicked spirits known as "principalities"<sup>417</sup>. This word is derived from the Greek word *archai* and is used to symbolize ancient periods. It is also used to describe people who possess the highest and most prestigious positions of rank and authority. By employing the word *archai*, Paul implies that powerful wicked spirits at the very pinnacle of Satan's domain have maintained their lofty positions of power and authority since the beginning.

Below the principalities is a group of evil spirits referred to as "powers"<sup>418</sup>. This word is taken from the Greek word *exousia*; it describes delegated authority. These demon spirits, second in command, received delegated authority from Satan to carry out all kinds of evil in whatever way they desired to do it.

Next, "the rulers of the darkness of this world"<sup>419</sup> is a compound word of *kosmokrateros* from the words *kosmos* and *kratos*. The word *kosmos* describes order or arrangement and the word *kratos* describes raw power. Thus, the compounded word *kosmokrateros* means raw power that has been harnessed and put into some kind of order.

The phrase "spiritual wickedness in high places"<sup>420</sup> alludes to the conclusion. The phrase "wickedness" is derived from the Greek word *poneros* and relates to something ugly, evil, malevolent, vicious, impious, and malignant. This exemplifies Satan's dark domain's objective. The three primary leaders of the Spirit World's Principalities

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<sup>416</sup> Matthew 12:22

<sup>417</sup> Hierarchy Of Satan's Kingdom: <https://renner.org/article/the-rank-and-file-of-satans-kingdom/>

<sup>418</sup> Hierarchy Of Satan's Kingdom: <https://renner.org/article/the-rank-and-file-of-satans-kingdom/>

<sup>419</sup> Hierarchy Of Satan's Kingdom: <https://renner.org/article/the-rank-and-file-of-satans-kingdom/>

<sup>420</sup> Hierarchy Of Satan's Kingdom: <https://renner.org/article/the-rank-and-file-of-satans-kingdom/>

and Powers were Michael the Archangel<sup>421</sup>, Gabriel<sup>422</sup>, and Lucifer. Angels are also formidable beings<sup>423</sup> with great strength and beauty<sup>424</sup>. However, like demons, they are not omniscient.

Michael the Archangel is the head of the battalion of angels and fought the dragon when there was war in heaven<sup>425</sup>. The Bible does not specify in depth what is the rank of the angel Gabriel, though he can be seen as an angel of higher rank, a messenger, and the herald of visions<sup>426</sup>. What Gabriel is called to do is more important than his title. He appeared to Mary in Luke 1:26, 29-30, to Zachariah the father of John the Baptist in Luke 1:11 and to Daniel in Daniel 9:21.

The Kingdom of God<sup>427</sup> is the Government of God and can be seen as His hierarchy. The church is the Body of Jesus Christ<sup>428</sup>. Before Jesus ascended to all heavens, He gave the saints to perfect the work for the ministry of the edifying of the Body; apostles, prophets, evangelists, pastors, and teachers<sup>429</sup>.

Then there are the angels, whose purpose is to intervene and intercede on behalf of humans. They protect the righteous (Matthew 4:6, Luke 4:10) because they dwell in the heavens (Matthew 28:2, John 1:51), act as God's warriors (Matthew 26:53) and worship God (Luke 2:13). In the parable of the rich man and Lazarus, they behave as psychopomps<sup>430</sup> which is an entity who assists souls. The three Angelic Ranks are Seraphim (Isaiah 6:2-3) which are the closest to God, Cherubim and Thrones.

A demon is often referred to as a strongman, while a stronghold is the house of thoughts that the demons built in minds over time. Because strongholds are spiritual, the battle to fight them in the spiritual realm must be fought with spiritual weapons<sup>431</sup>. Strongholds can be formed through trauma, betrayal, rejection, abandonment, abuse, accidents, ungodly soul ties, bullying and angry family members. Strongholds can also establish through generational iniquity<sup>432</sup>.

A good example is when past generations of families have worshipped idols, it has opened a door for strongholds to be passed down the bloodline. Strongholds can develop when becoming involved in the occult or spiritism in any form that can open doors to spiritual strongholds.

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<sup>421</sup> Daniel 10:13, 21, 12:1, Jude 1:9, Revelation 12:7

<sup>422</sup> Daniel 8:16, 9:21. Luke 1:19, 26

<sup>423</sup> 2 Thessalonians 1:7

<sup>424</sup> Luke 9:26

<sup>425</sup> Revelation 12:7

<sup>426</sup> Daniel 8:16

<sup>427</sup> Romans 14:17

<sup>428</sup> Ephesians 5:23, Colossians 1:24

<sup>429</sup> Ephesians 4:11

<sup>430</sup> Psychopomp: <https://www.urbandictionary.com/define.php?term=Psychopomp>

<sup>431</sup> Ephesians 6:11-17

<sup>432</sup> Exodus 20:5-6

This includes séances, witchcraft, black magic, Wicca, Ouija, levitation, palmistry, handwriting analysis, automatic handwriting, ESP<sup>433</sup>, hypnosis, horoscopes, astrology, fortune telling, seeking after spirits of the dead, new age meditation, yoga, divination<sup>434</sup>, mantras<sup>435</sup>, blood sacrifices and any other form of Satan's worship.

People must watch what they allow into their lives because physical objects can have spiritual connections<sup>436</sup>. Items in a person's house that focus on evil, violence, witchcraft, idolatry, perversion, violent evil video games and any other sinful things are an invitation to demonic attacks. Even holding on to possessions from the past that stir negative memories indicates that a person does not want to let go of the past<sup>437</sup>.

The high-ranking principality spirit is the strongman spirit who sits on thrones in the demon spirit realm and rules over the evil demonic spirits on the earth<sup>438</sup>. These spirits rule over some geographical regions, for example, the churches. Lesser evil spirits will follow as manifestations of the strongman.

Jesus said unless the strongman is bound, no one can enter his house and plunder his vessels<sup>439</sup>. Thus, before plundering the stronghold, the strongman must first be bound. Jesus gave humankind the keys to bind and loose.

**“Verily I say unto you, Whatsoever ye shall bind on earth shall be bound in heaven: and whatsoever ye shall loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven.”**

**Matthew 18:18.**

When a demonic spirit finds an open door in the lives of people, it takes up residence in that place and becomes the strongman in the mind of a person. Thus, “Neither gives place to the devil.”<sup>440</sup> Sixteen strongman spirits can be identified in the Bible:

4.2.8.2.1. The spirit of Death – Revelation 6:8.

4.2.8.2.2. The spirit of the Antichrist – 1 John 4:3.

4.2.8.2.3. The spirit of Fear – 2 Timothy 1:7.

4.2.8.2.4. The spirit of Bondage – Romans 8:15.

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<sup>433</sup> ESP: Extrasensory perception: perception or communication outside of normal sensory capability, as in telepathy and clairvoyance.

<sup>434</sup> Deuteronomy 18:10, 1 Samuel 15:23

<sup>435</sup> Mantras: Is a sound, word or phrase that is repeated by someone who is praying or meditating.

<sup>436</sup> Greenwood, Rebecca. (2015) Defeating Strongholds of The Mind. Lake Mary, Florida: Charisma House. pp.188-190

<sup>437</sup> Joshua 7:12-13

<sup>438</sup> The Strongman Spirit: <https://royalgirlz.com/what-is-a-strongman-spirit/>

<sup>439</sup> Mark 3:27

<sup>440</sup> Ephesians 4:27



- 4.2.8.2.5. The spirit of Seducing – 1 Timothy 4:1.
- 4.2.8.2.6. The spirit of Dumb and Deaf – Mark 9:25.
- 4.2.8.2.7. The spirit of Infirmary – Luke 13:11.
- 4.2.8.2.8. The spirit of Whoredoms – Hosea 5:4.
- 4.2.8.2.9. The spirit of Heaviness – Isaiah 61:3.
- 4.2.8.2.10. The spirit of Haughtiness – Proverbs 16:18.
- 4.2.8.2.11. The spirit of Perversion – Isaiah 19:14.
- 4.2.8.2.12. The spirit of Lying – 2 Chronicles 18:22.
- 4.2.8.2.13. The spirit of Jealousy – Numbers 5:14.
- 4.2.8.2.14. The spirit of Familiarity – Leviticus 19:31.
- 4.2.8.2.15. The spirit of Divination – Acts 16:16.
- 4.2.8.2.16. The spirit of Error – 1 John 4:6.

The kingdom of Satan must not be underestimated because it is highly organized, yet humankind need not fear him either. One must keep in mind that one third of the angels fell from grace when Lucifer sinned. The Bible undoubtedly teaches that there is a hierarchy in the heavenly armies.

If one third of the angels fell away, that indicates that the demonic forces kept their level of authority as was with the original creation. A high incidence of participation in the occult can be found in colleges and universities<sup>441</sup>. Most of the pledges and oaths taken at the time of induction are occult customs, directly opening the students to the door of demons because they pledge faithfulness and loyalty to the spirit of a deceased founder of the organization or and to demon spirits.

The Hippocratic Oath<sup>442</sup>, which all medical professionals must take upon admission to the practice of medicine, is an excellent example. Hippocrates was a Greek physician who flourished between 460 and 375 B.C. He was renowned as the "Father of Medicine" because he developed the fundamentals of clinical medicine as it is practiced today, and as a result, he composed this oath.

The oath reads: "I swear by Apollo the physician and Aesculapius and Health, and All-heal, and all the gods and goddesses, that, according to my ability and judgment, I will keep this Oath and this stipulation – to reckon him who taught me this Art equally dear to me as my parents, to

<sup>441</sup> Brown, M.D. Rebecca. (1987) Prepare for War. New Kensington: Whiteaker House. p. 121

<sup>442</sup> The Hippocratic Oath: <https://www.britannica.com/topic/Hippocratic-oath>

share my substance with him, and relieve his necessities if required; to look upon his offspring in the same footing as my own brothers, and to teach them this Art...’’<sup>443</sup>

Apollo and Aesculapius were Greek and Roman gods<sup>444</sup>. Apollo was the god who made men aware of their own guilt and purified them of it. He also presided over religious laws and the constitutions of cities. Aesculapius was the son of Apollo and the god of medicine. Hippocrates used the emblem of Caduceus<sup>445</sup> when writing his books. The Caduceus emblem is the traditional symbol with a staff twisted by two serpents, sometimes surmounted by wings on the sides.

This emblem is associated with Hermes, the deity of healing, or Mercury, the messenger of the gods and the intermediary between the realms of the dead and the living, who is associated with thieves, messengers, and merchants<sup>446</sup> in Greek and Roman mythology. Mercury once used his rod to try to break up a battle between two serpents.

The serpents then twined themselves around the rod facing each other. The snake is a symbol of destruction and evil. Yes, Moses used one, not two, bronze serpent erected on a pole to cure the people bitten by serpents in Numbers 21:8-9. When serpents shed their skins, it represents longevity and immortality.

The serpent’s ability to transform from a passive stage to one of rapid activity symbolized the power of covalence from an illness. Satan and his demons are identified with serpents<sup>447</sup>. Hence, the serpent is a powerful symbol of healing itself, but this is not a coincidence that Hippocrates used the Caduceus emblem with the words of the pledge.



*Figure 1: The Caduceus Symbol*

<sup>443</sup> The Hippocratic Oath: <https://www.britannica.com/topic/Hippocratic-oath>

<sup>444</sup> Apollo and Aesculapius Gods: <https://www.britannica.com/topic/Hippocratic-oath>

<sup>445</sup> Caduceus Emblem: <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC4439707/>

<sup>446</sup> The Hippocratic Oath: <https://www.britannica.com/topic/Hippocratic-oath>

<sup>447</sup> Revelation 12:9

The World Health Organization and many other health services over the world are still using this symbol. According to these services, it symbolizes an administrative emblem, implying neutral and non-combatant status ignoring this door wide open for demons to prey upon in medical care facilities. The use of this symbol is very ironic as how can Satan and his demons used to represent a healing purpose.

Although the Hippocrates Oath has undergone several revisions<sup>448</sup>, most notably in 1948, the Caduceus emblem is still there and the same. The angels are ministering spirits to people who are heirs of salvation<sup>449</sup> and executioners of God's Wrath on the wicked<sup>450</sup>.

Angels are commissioned to supply the physical needs of God's people<sup>451</sup> while demons operate in deceiving people. A Christian can become demonically oppressed, but the demon cannot take over the oppressed person's will, however, such a person does suffer from mild to severe harassment from evil spirits resulting in the opening of some doors to Satan's influence.

There is no doubt that many are under the control of Satan<sup>452</sup>. There are different spirits that cause different kinds of problems in a person's life, some affecting the person physically while others mentally and some give people special occult powers or abilities.

However, the Scriptures teach that if people resist Satan, he will flee<sup>453</sup>. Satan and his demons can assume visible form as he did when he appeared as a serpent in the Garden of Eden or can cause a visible reaction or manifestation in people:

- 4.2.8.2.17. Demons can generate powerful illusions and mimic the power of God – Exodus 7:11-12.
- 4.2.8.2.18. Demons have been known to force animals to destroy themselves – Luke 8:30-33.
- 4.2.8.2.19. Demons can cause a person to act in a self-destructive way or with bizarre behaviour – Luke 8:27-29.
- 4.2.8.2.20. Demons can cause convulsions and seizures – Mark 9:17-20.
- 4.2.8.2.21. Demons can cause blindness and muteness – Matthew 12:22.

Every ruler in his kingdom has a particular area of responsibility and

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<sup>448</sup> Revised Hippocrates Oath: <https://www.jmir.org/2022/9/e39177>

<sup>449</sup> Hebrews 1:14

<sup>450</sup> 2 Thessalonians 1:7-8

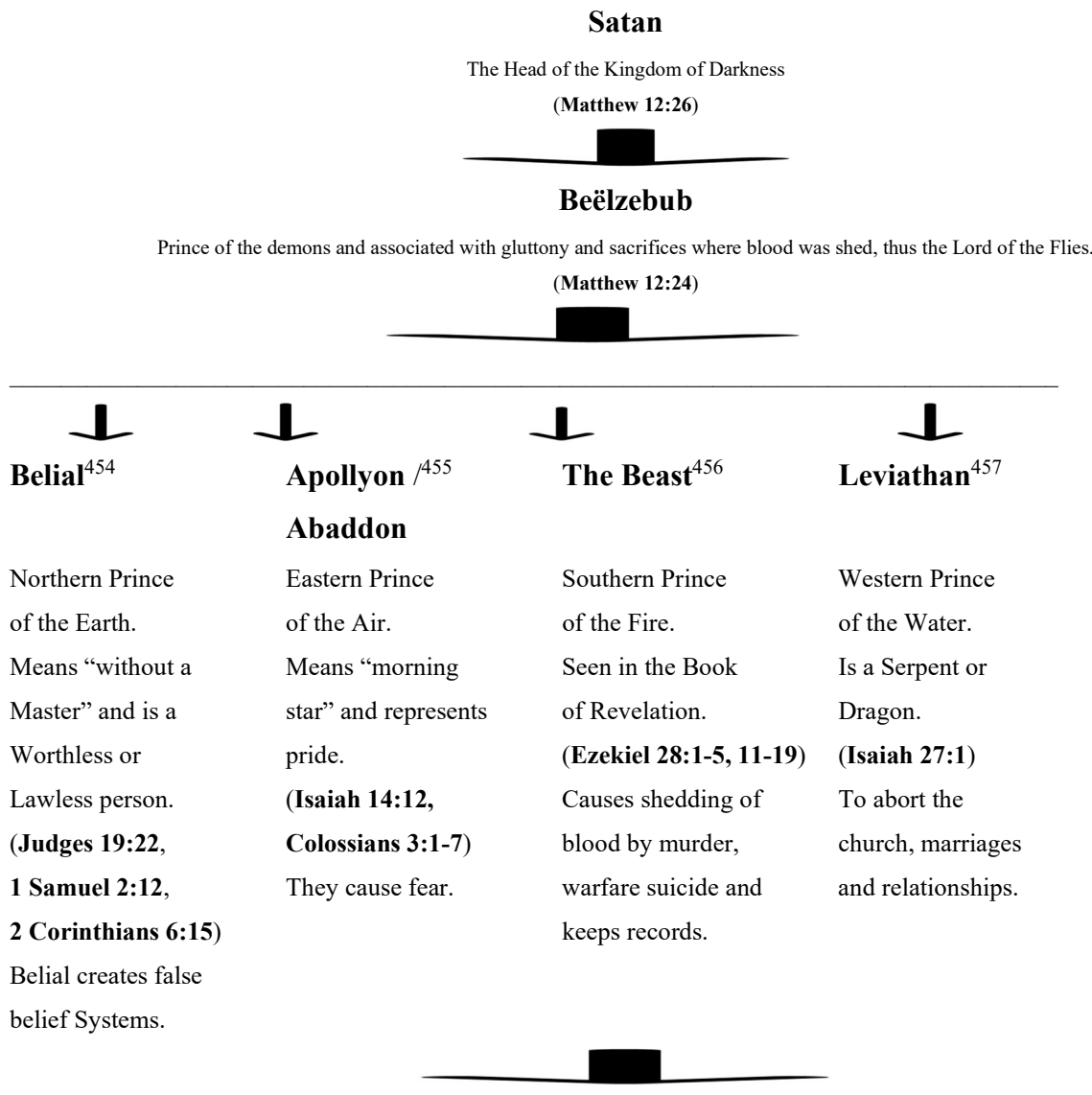
<sup>451</sup> Matthew 4:11, 1 Kings 19:5-8

<sup>452</sup> 2 Timothy 2:26

<sup>453</sup> James 4:7

under each of those rulers are sub rulers who are responsible for sub areas. God does not rule His people and not like this. The subject of the hierarchy of the kingdom of Satan is a study on its own; and is recommended for further studies.

Satan's army of demons is large because he is not omnipresent. Revelation 9:13-19 provides insight into an example of a horde of two hordes of two hundred million demonic mounted troops that kill a third of mankind. Below following is a concise description in a diagram form of this hierarchy:

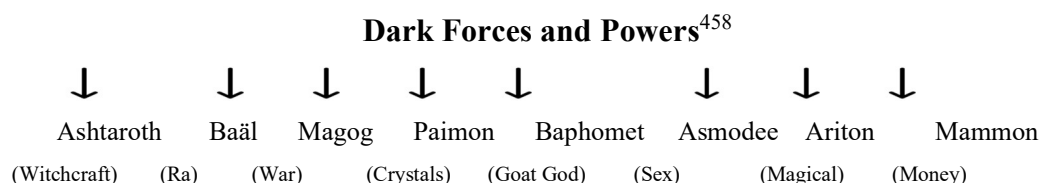


<sup>454</sup> Belial: <https://blackwitchcoven.com/demons/belial/>

<sup>455</sup> Dr Brand, Connie M.J. (2006) Exoteric and Esoteric Evidence Pertaining to The Structures and Strategies to Destruct Christianity Involving the Theodicy of Darkness. Lynnwood Ridge, Pretoria: Un-Published. pp.1511-23

<sup>456</sup> Mac Gregor-Mathers, S.L. (1725) The Book of The Sacred Magic of Abra-Melin the Mage. London: Cranford Press. pp.261-262

<sup>457</sup> Dr Brand, Connie M.J. (2006) Exoteric and Esoteric Evidence Pertaining to The Structures and Strategies to Destruct Christianity Involving the Theodicy of Darkness. Lynnwood Ridge, Pretoria: Un-Published. p.1532



*Figure 2: The Hierarchy of the Kingdom of Satan*

One can know for certain that many today seem to be fascinated with demons. The Bible does present demons as being real, while the Bible is in fact, the soundest and most trustworthy Book to turn to when pursuing knowledge of the spiritual realm.

Scripture has not revealed whether one specific angel is allocated to watch over a person, but one can be assured that divine protection and comfort are available. It is clear from Psalm 34:7, 78:25, 91:11-12, Acts 12:15 and Matthew 18:10 that angels are assigned to guard and protect Christians. Therefore, Christians can be assured that Satan will mimic God by assigning demons to counteract the angel's assignments. It is time for the people to answer their call to maturity as sons and daughters, arising out of the limitations of earthly genealogy to engage in a heavenly genealogy in Christ who is as described:

**“Without father, without mother, without descent, having neither beginning of days, nor end of life; but made like unto the Son of God; abideth a priest continually.”**

**Hebrews 7:3.**

#### **4.3. The Exposition of Man Not Limiting God**

According to the Bible Enoch and Elijah are the only two people God took to heaven without dying. Genesis 5:24 tells us: “And Enoch walked with God: and he was not; for God took him.” 2 Kings 2:11 tells us: “...there appeared a chariot of fire, and horses of fire, and parted them both asunder; and Elijah went up by a whirlwind into heaven.” They are still the only ones in recorded history today that have not died. Even Jesus Christ died on the cross. Enoch is the most unlikely Biblical hero. The Bible devotes six verses to his life, mainly in the form of prosaic genealogy in Genesis 5:18-19 and 21-24. Paul explained about Enoch:

**“By faith Enoch was translated that he should not see death, and was not found, because God had translated him: for before his translation he had this testimony, that he pleased God. But without faith it is impossible to please him: for he that cometh to God must believe that he is, and that he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him.”**

**Hebrews 11:5-6.**

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<sup>458</sup> Dr Brand, Connie M.J. (2006) Exoteric and Esoteric Evidence Pertaining to The Structures and Strategies to Destruct Christianity Involving the Theodicy of Darkness. Lynnwood Ridge, Pretoria: Un-Published. p.1532

There is very little known about Enoch. His father was Jared, descended from Seth, through whom the knowledge of God was preserved, rather than Cain, as reported in Genesis 4:17. Enoch was Methuselah's<sup>459</sup> father and Noah's great grandfather. Because of his confidence in God and hence his lack of constraints, Enoch boldly delivered God's word to a hostile world. The phrase "walked with God" is used by Enoch<sup>460</sup> and Noah<sup>461</sup>. The biblical name Enoch means "dedicated" or "experienced," and it is derived from the Hebrew name Hanokh<sup>462</sup>.

Although the Book of Enoch is not contained in the Bible, it does not mean it is not authentic. Recent discoveries of copies of this Book among the Dead Sea Scrolls found at Qumran caves prove that this Book existed before the time of Jesus Christ<sup>463</sup>. Jesus also studied this Book because He alludes to its content and doctrine. Enoch is replete with statements of the coming kingdom and other holy themes from this Book.

Hence, Jesus used phrases or ideas from this Book, as there are over a hundred observations in the New Testament that find precedence in the Book of Enoch. Therefore, the Book of Enoch supports Biblical end time prophecies as some of the prophecies apply to those written in the books of Daniel and Revelation.

The name Elijah<sup>464</sup> means "Yahweh is my God." In several Bible translations, his name is written Elias. During the reigns of Kings Ahab, Ahaziah, and Jehoram in the Northern Kingdom of Israel, Elijah, the son of Savah, was one of God's most potent prophets and miracle workers. Along with another prophet, he joins Jesus on the Mount of Transfiguration<sup>465</sup>.

The most significant of Enoch was that he "walked with God"<sup>466</sup> and "pleased God."<sup>467</sup> This means that he knew and experienced the nearness, fellowship, and closeness of God.

The author of this dissertation believes, thus, the reason for Enoch's love for God and intimacy with God, he was chosen to see the mysteries of the universe and the future of humankind expressed in the Book of Revelation.

Enoch saw hell, the place with flaming fire and darkness<sup>468</sup>. God showed him the storehouse of all the winds and the firm foundations of the earth of all the winds and the strong foundations of the earth. He saw heaven. God discussed with him the end of the world, angels, prophecies, the Nephilim, and punishments for the wicked. It is parallel in the Book of Daniel and the Book of Revelation. Even the solar calendar was laid out as the astronomical movements. The amount of mystical information along with the analogy shown to him was unrivalled.

The significance of Elijah is that he had complete faith in God<sup>469</sup> and was active,

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<sup>459</sup> Genesis 5:18:21

<sup>460</sup> Genesis 5:24

<sup>461</sup> Genesis 6:9

<sup>462</sup> Enoch: <https://www.ancestry.com/name-origin?surname=enoch>

<sup>463</sup> Lumpkin, Joseph B. (2011) *The Books of Enoch*. United States of America: Fifth Estate Publishers. pp.13-15

<sup>464</sup> Elijah: <https://www.britannica.com/biography/Elijah-Hebrew-prophet>

<sup>465</sup> Mathew 17:3-12, Mark 9:4, 13, Luke 9:30-33

<sup>466</sup> Genesis 5:22, 24

<sup>467</sup> Hebrews 11:5

<sup>468</sup> Lumpkin, Joseph B. (2011) *The Books of Enoch*. United States of America: Fifth Estate Publishers.

<sup>469</sup> James 5:17-18

courageous and had a burning zeal for God<sup>470</sup>. Because of the zealous and unshakeable faith, he had, God allowed him to perform miraculous events such as:

- 4.3.1. Causing rain to cease in Israel for three and a half years – 1 Kings 17:1.
- 4.3.2. Multiplying a widow's grain and oil – 1 Kings 17:8-16.
- 4.3.3. Raising that widow's son from the dead – 1 Kings 17:17-24.
- 4.3.4. Calling fire from heaven on top of Mount Carmel – 1 Kings 18:38.
- 4.3.5. Elijah defeated four hundred and fifty prophets of Baal – 1 Kings 18:19-38.
- 4.3.6. Elijah outran King Ahab's chariot – 1 Kings 18:46.
- 4.3.7. Causing it to rain again after three and a half years of drought – 1 Kings 18:44-46.
- 4.3.8. Fasting from food for 40 days while walking to Mount Horeb – 1 Kings 19:8.
- 4.3.9. Prophecies that Ahab's sons would all be destroyed – 1 Kings 21:21.
- 4.3.10. Prophecy that Jezebel would be eaten by dogs – 1 Kings 21:23.
- 4.3.11. Prophecy that Ahaziah would die of his illness – 2 Kings 1:16-17.
- 4.3.12. Calling fire from heaven to destroy one hundred and two soldiers – 2 Kings 1:10-12.
- 4.3.13. Parting the Jordan River while accompanied by Elisha - 2 Kings 2:8, 14.
- 4.3.14. Promising that Elisha would receive a double portion of his spirit – 2 Kings 2:9.
- 4.3.15. Prophecy that Jehoram would die a horrible death - 2 Chronicles 21:15.

After displaying the powers of God, he received a message from Queen Jezebel that she was going to do the thing he had done to the prophets of Baal. Elijah was defeated in his mind and felt afraid, hopeless, and alone. He begged God to end his life. Still, he was not doubting the power of God, only what God's plan was. When God whispered to Elijah His plan, he had the most powerful experience where he learned that God is not in the storm, the earthquake, or the lightning but in "a still small voice."<sup>471</sup> After this experience his worldly fear was replaced by a Godly fear that helped him live a life that pleased God.

People who answered their call to maturity as sons and daughters will arise out of the limitations of earthly genealogy to engage in a heavenly genealogy in Christ. To be strong and courageous means trusting in God as your trustworthy source of strength. Joshua is another excellent illustration of someone who did not have all the answers for the battles and challenges, but he trusted God and acted in faith. Because he followed God's strange instructions for the battle of Jericho, the walls fell without them breaking it down

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<sup>470</sup> 1 Kings 19:10

<sup>471</sup> 1 Kings 19:12

themselves.

Joshua also showed tremendous courage despite the considerable responsibility assigned to him. Therefore, he prospered. Although he was not perfect, he proved that a life of obedience without limitations to God bears excellent rewards. There were times that Joshua was besieged by other voices not from God, yet he chose to follow God faithfully. Nothing will change if man's self-centred anti-God nature remains driven by its resident carnality.

**“Because the carnal mind is enmity against God: for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be.”**

**Romans 8:7.**

An individual must sincerely desire to improve his behaviour before God and not follow the masses eagerly throwing themselves into the abyss reserved for those who do not want to please God, one can choose prosperity, abundance, and eternal life. God's very existence is questioned by some materialistic minded people, but God answers those encounters with a grave judgment of His own. Romans 1:18-20 states clearly that humankind is without excuse because God has made His presence known to humanity. The evidence of His presence and overall governance are presented in the reflection on creation.

The churches today should be leading the way in glorifying God, but instead, some churches have become little more than social clubs containing friendly people but not remaining steadfast and determined to glorify God through the righteousness that Jesus displayed and taught<sup>472</sup>. The reason for this statement is the behaviours in religious groups are not significantly different from those witnessed in the irreligious world.

The Bible pictures countless righteous persons encountering hostile reactions to their virtuous efforts while taking stands against worldly corruption and decadence and it happens even today. This is because most sinners despise people who do not participate in their sinful activities. King Solomon writes:

**“An unjust man is an abomination to the just: and he that is upright in the way is abomination to the wicked.”**

**Proverbs 29:27.**

Thus, Christians who endeavour to display Christian virtues in the workplace and community suffer ridicule while losing out on opportunities for promotion, advancement, and invitations to other social occasions. It is not always easy to establish or maintain excellent character in such a hostile environment daily.

Every Christian must stand firm as Jesus stood firm when Satan led Him up to a high place and showed Him all the kingdoms on the earth<sup>473</sup>. It would be so easy for Jesus to accept the offer, then He would not have gone through all the agony, pain, and humiliation. But Jesus knew it was not God's plan for Him. God never promised that this life would be easy and without suffering<sup>474</sup>. Sometimes when life is not easy, people want to negotiate with

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<sup>472</sup> Ritenbaugh, John, W. (2019) Forerunner, Volume 28, Number 2. United States of America: Church of the Great God. p.4

<sup>473</sup> Luke 4:6

<sup>474</sup> 2 Corinthians 12:8-10, Romans 8:18, John 16:33



God.

#### 4.3.16. People Negotiating with God and Prosperity

Sometimes people are tempted to negotiate with God, even those who do not believe in God. Everyone knows they need God's help to overcome what is before them. It is how they seek those matters. Bargaining with God is a sign of fear or pride.

Satan sought to negotiate with Jesus because he is now the fictitious world's ruler when he led Jesus to the high mountain and showed Him all the kingdoms of the world<sup>475</sup>. Since only God has the power to achieve this, Satan was incorrect in thinking that he had it<sup>476</sup>. In Genesis 12:1-2, God declared Abraham and his offspring to be the true heirs of the earth. When he led Jesus to the pinnacle of the temple<sup>477</sup>, Satan tried to bargain with and entice Him once again, but Jesus rebuffed him and said, "Thou shalt not tempt the Lord thy God."<sup>478</sup>

In the case of Jephthah<sup>479</sup>, he thought God's favour required him to barter with Him. Most people try to negotiate with God, offering Him things they do not possess. Jephthah was a mighty warrior but was rejected by his family because of the circumstances surrounding his birth. The mother of Jephthah then took him to live in another nation where the people worship false gods. These false gods required human sacrifice to carry their favour. Thus, Jephthah's twisted view of God led him to believe that God's favour resulted from remuneration rather than relationship.

Hence, when the leaders of Gilead asked Jephthah to lead their army into war against the Ammonites, Jephthah vowed that if God gave him the victory, he would sacrifice whatsoever came out of this house to meet him afterward. He made this vow to gain the favour of his family again. The battle was won and upon his return, he was greeted by his daughter, his only child. The daughter was willing to fulfil her part of the vow. What Jephthah did not understand, haggling is about limiting God without prosperity. Wanting God's favour will flow from the relationship with Him in humble submission to His will. Thus, God's blessing is not based on what we can offer Him.

**“Humble yourselves therefore under the mighty hand of God, that he may exalt you in due time: Casting all your care upon him; for he careth for you.”**

**1 Peter 5:6-7.**

People will prosper and receive abundantly. Through Scripture, there are many cases where prayer influenced God's decision:

4.3.16.1. When Abraham was informed that his nephew Lot's hometowns Sodom and Gomorrah would be destroyed, he kept bargaining with God

<sup>475</sup> John 12:31, 2 Corinthians 4:4, Ephesians 2:2, Revelation 13:2

<sup>476</sup> Daniel 2:20, 4:17, 25, 32, 5:23

<sup>477</sup> Luke 4:9-11

<sup>478</sup> Luke 4:12

<sup>479</sup> Judges 11:30-31

until the number went from fifty righteous people to ten. This negotiation between Abraham and God saved Lot's family – Genesis 18:23-33.

- 4.3.16.2. Jacob feared for his life with his father-in-law behind him and Esau with four hundred men before him. He was physically exhausted, alone in the desert and divested of all his worldly possessions. That night he wrestled with God through the night until daybreak at which point the angelic stranger disabled him with a limp for the rest of his life. Jacob did not want to let go until he was blessed. He had “seen God face to face,”<sup>480</sup> and his life was preserved. Esau also forgave him – Genesis 32:3-6.
- 4.3.16.3. Moses went up the mountain to receive the Ten Commandments created by God's own finger. It took a long time for Moses to come down from the mountain and this made the Israelites anxious and doubt God. They then pushed Aaron to construct a golden calf to worship. This made God very angry, He wanted to destroy the Israelites, but Moses pleaded with God to spare the Israelites and to remember Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. This argument compelled God to spare the Israelites – Exodus 32:11-14, Psalms 106:23.
- 4.3.16.4. Hannah bargains with God to give her a son. She will give him back to God after he is nursed. Samuel was born and as promised, she brought him back to serve permanently in the temple<sup>481</sup>. God was with Samuel, and he was a great prophet in the kingdoms of Saul and David. Samuel was the last judge of Israel and the first prophet after Moses.
- 4.3.16.5. King Hezekiah fell dangerously ill because of a dispute between him and Isaiah, each of whom required that the other should pay him the first visit. Isaiah was ordered to visit the sick king and warn him that he must get his affairs in order because he was going to die. Hezekiah then reminded God of his obedience and wept bitterly while pleading with God to add years to his life. God not only healed him but added fifteen years to his life – 2 Kings 20:6.

The lesson learned from these remarkable lives is that people's lives are never meant to be easy. Pray without the need to control the outcome, instead pray with faith to accept God's will. Prosperity is the result of obedience and poverty is the result of rebellion. Prominent people for example Moses's life were also not easy with the Israelites unbelieve and rejecting God so many times.

Another challenge for Moses was when God gave him precise instructions on designing His Tabernacle<sup>482</sup> to be built because God needed a specific place to dwell. God did not dwell in the people's hearts<sup>483</sup> until after the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ. The challenge for Moses then must have been the timeframe to build the tabernacle within seven days after all the materials were

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<sup>480</sup> Genesis 32:30

<sup>481</sup> 1 Samuel 1:11-28

<sup>482</sup> Exodus 25:9

<sup>483</sup> Exodus 25:8

gathered, which must have been another challenge. Still, Israel did according to all God commanded Moses under his leadership.

God does not tolerate sin; hence His law is unalterable. In Eden's Garden, the first law was delivered. Adam was forbidden from eating from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil<sup>484</sup> by God. The law of God is His mandate. Everyone who violates the law commits sin<sup>485</sup>. The purpose of the Ten Commandments was to make man's wickedness clear. God never intended for the law to make a person righteous<sup>486</sup>. God's laws are still in force even though Jesus came to fulfill them. Even if people are under Grace today, the law of God is still valuable.

**“There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit. For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus hath made me free from the law of sin and death. For what the law could not do, in that it was weak through the flesh, God sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin, condemned sin in the flesh: That the righteousness of the law might be fulfilled in us, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit.”**

**Romans 8:1-4.**

If you want to prosper, clear your mindset that limits God to bless you. God wants His people to prosper<sup>487</sup>. Jesus came to give people abundant life in John 10:10. It is also God's will for Christians to prosper financially, to be in good health and for their souls to prosper as declared in 3 John 1:2. The laws of prosperity will work for all who meet the Biblical requirements because it is clearly revealed in Scripture. This is God's promise.

**“If ye be willing and obedient, ye shall eat the good of the land.”**

**Isaiah 1:19.**

Some people have the wrong impression of being prosperous and prosperity because it is not all about wealth and money. People must recognize that God is the source because He is the owner of everything and thus the provider of everything<sup>488</sup>. Therefore, it is God who gives the power to get wealthy. It is what people do with riches and wealth and how they allow it to affect their lives.

**“But they that will be rich fall into temptation and a snare and into many foolish and hurtful lusts, which drown men in destruction and perdition. For the love of money is the root of all evil: which while some coveted after, they have erred from the faith, and pierced themselves through with many sorrows.”**

**1 Timothy 6:9-10.**

Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, and Joseph all had success thanks to God. Everyone who

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<sup>484</sup> Genesis 2:16-17

<sup>485</sup> 1 John 3:4

<sup>486</sup> Romans 3:19-20, Galatians 3:24

<sup>487</sup> 2 Corinthians 8:9

<sup>488</sup> Genesis 1:1, Psalm 24:1

looks will be able to see when someone is experiencing God's favour and blessings. In Matthew 19:21, Jesus stated that it would be difficult for the wealthy to enter the kingdom of God if they relied on their wealth and power.

Samson, one of Israel's judges, Saul, Jonah, and other individuals from the Old Testament who limited God in various ways did not prosper. Saul initially constrained God in the New Testament before becoming Paul. Because of the anointing of God on his life to win souls for the kingdom of God, Paul was a magnificently wealthy man in the sense that the abundance of heaven was continually poured out in his life. Being the hand and voice of YHVH, walking in the power of the Holy Spirit as the remedy, speaking God's Word, and establishing resurrection life in God for the restoration of humanity as it is in Heaven, is the goal of kings and priests.

#### 4.4. YHVH and The Sacred Secret

Names have great significance. A name stands for something or reveals something about a person's character. God changed the names of several people in the Bible to establish a new identity and purpose that God wanted them to represent. God has many names to describe His character and nature. Each name is also a declaration of His commitment to His people.

The personal name of God is YHVH<sup>489</sup> and His most frequent title. It is composed of the four Hebrew letters Yod, Hey, Vav and Hey and is therefore referred to as the Tetragrammaton which means "the four letters". The historical pronunciation of YHVH is unknown because ancient Hebrew did not use vowel markings. Hence, to avoid violating the Third Commandment, "Thou shalt not take the name of the LORD thy God in vain,"<sup>490</sup> Jewish tradition avoids the matter by replacing the word Adonai in its place with the meaning my Lord.

The term abracadabra<sup>491</sup> crossed over into English usage and is a form of occultism. This term is used by people performing magical tricks who at first observed rabbis performing healing and used this word as a sort of enchantment. The term translated from Hebrew means: I will create as I speak. The numerical value of abracadabra adds up to twenty-six, which is the numerical value for YHVH. The ancient Jews believed that healing came when you invoked the name of God.

In Numbers 12:13, Moses cried out in prayer to God: "Heal her now, O God, I beseech thee." There is nothing wrong in repeating your prayer, it is not going to motivate God, but it is the discipline to focus and concentrate on God to bring body and soul into alignment with the Holy Spirit. YHVH is the source and foundation<sup>492</sup> of faith and trusts<sup>493</sup> in Him.

YHVH planned that the human priesthood and kingship of His chosen people Israel would be the human line through which His Son would enter the world as the Priest and King of Israel and finally as the everlasting King of all nations.

<sup>489</sup> YHVH: <https://www.hebrew4christians.com/Meditations/Adonai/adonai.html>

<sup>490</sup> Exodus 20:7

<sup>491</sup> Abracadabra: <https://www.chaimbentorah.com/2018/06/hebrew-word-study-abracadabra/>

<sup>492</sup> Isaiah 28:16

<sup>493</sup> Isaiah 26:4

God's plans cannot be nullified by man<sup>494</sup> and no goals of man will ever be fulfilled unless they are part of God's plan. The spread of the gospel is often hindered or advanced by the actions of priests, kings, and rulers in authority.

**“I exhort therefore, that, first of all, supplications, prayers, intercessions, and giving of thanks, be made for all men; For kings, and for all that are in authority; that we may lead a quiet and peaceable life in all godliness and honesty. For this is good and acceptable in the sight of God our Saviour.”**

**1 Timothy 2:1-3.**

In 1 Peter 2:9 and Revelation 1:6, God calls His people to be kings and priests. Therefore, it is necessary to understand kingship and priesthood.

#### 4.4.1. The Office of Kings and Priests

God did not need to create nations to establish monarchs or priests because He is the rightful owner of the earth<sup>495</sup>. The surrounding nations all had their own monarchs, so the Israelites desired one to rule and judge them<sup>496</sup>. Israel's desire for an earthly monarch indicated that they did not recognize God as their heavenly king. This proves that Israel had lost interest in obeying God since other nations were worshipping idols and Israel wanted to follow suit. God complies with their request and issues a solemn warning, saying that the king who would rule over them will assert his rights<sup>497</sup>.

Kings symbolized God's authority and governance, they were also judged as providers and protectors. Kingship means responsibility. Kingship in human societies usually involves the exercise of supreme authority<sup>498</sup>. Kings establish laws and ensure that the laws are executed. Kings sometimes are subject to certain limits imposed on them by tradition and custom, but they can bypass these and impose their will, even in Christian communities, similar practices occur as the leaders appointed for service exercise it in self-serving manner by bending the Christian principles to suit their own purposes.

Authority and power carry a deadly potential to corrupt even a well-intentioned leader. Self-serving kings and leaders are usually remembered as examples not to be followed because they cause scandals while turning many away from the path of faith. Christian kings and leaders live on in peoples' minds of what it means to be truly kind and human because they will bring the faithful closer to God. Christians must claim Jesus Christ as their king implies imitating His kingship through a life of other-centred service.

Revelation 1:6 is a prophecy about kingship still to be fulfilled because a king must pass judgments that may involve grave consequences. All Christians today cannot reign as true kings with Jesus Christ, they will become kings and priests of

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<sup>494</sup> Job 42:2

<sup>495</sup> Psalms 24:1

<sup>496</sup> 1 Samuel 8:5

<sup>497</sup> 1 Samuel 8:9

<sup>498</sup> Kingship in Human Societies: <https://www.scross.co.za/2021/11/divine-kingship-versus-human-kingship-christ-the-king/>

God with the second coming of Jesus Christ<sup>499</sup>. What is possible today for Christians is to take up their priesthood.

The priesthood is the highest office of man's earthly responsibility. Jesus Christ is and will remain the High Priest for reconciliation and redemption. The role of a priest is to administrate the revelation of the glory of God by standing as a priest and looking into the glory of YHVH. The priestly role within the Order of Melchizedek means they are transformed, conformed, and engaged with the genetics and the genealogy they inherited in Jesus Christ when they are born again.

**“For in him we live, and move, and have our being; as certain also of your own poets have said, For we are also his offspring.”**

**Acts 17:28.**

People taking up their priesthood must return to the beginning to terminate sin at its conception<sup>500</sup>. A priest must have a pure heart because it is essential as a priest and oracle, out of their hearts must flow the subjects of life<sup>501</sup> and therefore must speak life, favour, and most important victory<sup>502</sup>. In the Old Testament, Aaron and his sons undergo a priestly ordination when Moses sprinkles blood on them<sup>503</sup>. When Jesus bled out on the cross, His blood was sprinkled on all of God's children to become priests. When God made a covenant with Israel on Sinai, He told them He wanted them to be a “kingdom of priests.”<sup>504</sup>

**“And ye shall be unto me a kingdom of priests and an holy nation. These are the words which thou shalt speak unto the children of Israel.”**

**Exodus 19:6.**

The kingdom is not just a territory, it can be any place that God is reigning<sup>505</sup> in. Priests are representatives of God. In the Old Testament, all the nations had priests who served their various deities, and this concept was very familiar to the Israelites because every god of stone and wood was represented by a priesthood. The priests of the false god's primary mission were to put their gods on display. To be priests of God is to live holy lives that demonstrate and display God through them.

In Exodus 19:6, God called the whole nation of Israel to be priests to characterize Him. Although He distinctly established the Aaronic priesthood, God wanted everyone to become priests in His kingdom. This command did not apply only to the Old Testament period because it was repeated in 1 Peter 2:9-12. Jesus also says in Revelation 1:5-6 that He has made us to be kings and priests to serve His Father.

The role of priests includes reconciliation and mediation; therefore, as priests, we

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<sup>499</sup> Revelation 1:7

<sup>500</sup> Clayton, Ian. (2017) The Order of Melchizedek. United Kingdom: Son of Thunder Publications Ltd.

<sup>501</sup> Proverbs 4:23

<sup>502</sup> Psalms 34:12-13

<sup>503</sup> Exodus 29:1-37

<sup>504</sup> Revelation 5:10

<sup>505</sup> Luke 17:21

re-present God to people but the most vital role to fulfil is ministering to people helping them to understand the Bible, listening to someone and praying for them. Unfortunately, not everyone can and may minister to God.

#### 4.4.1.1. Ministering to God and The Sons of Zadok

There is a vast distinction between ministering to God and ministering to the people. The Levitical priests who “gone away far from me, when Israel went astray, which went astray away from me after their idols;”<sup>506</sup> may not minister to God, those Levitical priests who “kept the charge of my sanctuary” and the sons of Zadok, may minister to God<sup>507</sup>. The sons of Zadok ministered to God through their sacrifices and their leadership, all the while walking in holiness. Their holiness was conveyed from their lives as they offered peace and sin offerings and their prayers were blended with their anointed, sweet-smelling savour at the altar of incense.

In the Old Testament, the priests' main responsibility was to offer the required sacrifices in accordance with the law. The Israelites were not permitted to make their own offerings in place of those of their choosing. Read Leviticus 21 to find the priests' law.

Throughout the reigns of King David and King Solomon, Zadok served as Israel's high priest. He was an Aaronian descendant<sup>508</sup> as the son of Ahitub. During Absalom's rebellion, Zadok generally stood by David. In Hebrew, Zadok means righteous or just<sup>509</sup>. Israel understood that Zadok's kids behaved differently from Eli's sons, who was likewise a pious high priest and judge of Israel but was cursed as a result of his offspring.

The sons of Eli represent every aspect of the clergy defined as abominable<sup>510</sup> because they deprived the people by taking more than they were allowed to take as priests and slept with servant girls of the temple<sup>511</sup>. They represent the flesh religion, while the sons of Zadok represent spiritual heritage based on intimacy with God as they enter the presence of God during their duties.

David declares to minister to God begins with clean hands and pure hearts in Psalms 24:4. Every Christian should become sons of Zadok. Being a son of Zadok is a spiritual family matter. Through Jesus Christ, Christians gain their family position<sup>512</sup>. Religious priests can minister to people hence Jesus said in Mark 2:27: “The sabbath was made for man, and not man for the sabbath:” This gives a clear picture that man was made to commune with God and minister to Him. In the beginning God sought to communicate directly with His people, but Israel sought

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<sup>506</sup> Ezekiel 44:10

<sup>507</sup> Ezekiel 44:15

<sup>508</sup> 2 Samuel 8:17-18

<sup>509</sup> Zadok: <https://www.sheknows.com/baby-names/name/zadok/>

<sup>510</sup> 1 Samuel 2:12

<sup>511</sup> 1 Samuel 2:22

<sup>512</sup> Oliver, Dr C.R. (2000) Sons of Zadok. Texas: Zadok Publishers Inc. pp.120-121

an intermediary to represent them and first was Moses.

When religious priests started to interpret the Word of God to people in such a way as to compromise it, priests like the sons of Eli brought in a system of “anything goes”<sup>513</sup>. Sadly, there is a grave similarity between the tabernacle of Eli and his sons and some of the modern society’s churches today.

The sons of Zadok would never be chosen to serve in the Eli system because their priesthood would stand as judgment to all they stand for as they will be accused of “not fitting in for the way things are done to suit everyone because anything goes.” God draws a definite line of division between the sons of Eli’s system and the sons of Zadok in the Book of Ezekiel.

In the Old Testament when God calls His meeting, it was to be in the tabernacle which was a tent of meeting<sup>514</sup> or the Temple in Jerusalem. Ezekiel was a prophet during the Babylonian captivity between 592 and 576 B.C. His vision of the spiritual temple is before the building of the second temple. Thus, his vision supersedes all the other considerations. This needs to be mentioned because God had no intentions of occupying a second tabernacle nor a temple with His glory ever for a meeting with His people because His Spirit will remain among the people<sup>515</sup>. This is prophetic after the second coming of Jesus Christ<sup>516</sup>.

**“And I will set my tabernacle among you: and my soul shall not abhor you. And I will walk among you, and will be your God, and ye shall be my people.”**

**Leviticus 26:11-12.**

Still, God did not encourage the rebuilding of the Temple, nor did He fail to hear and answer the prayers of people then and now. God wanted to reveal to Ezekiel the principle that whatever man could touch; man could corrupt. In the Old Testament, Israel had corrupted themselves spiritually to such a point that God had to destroy the tabernacle and the Temple. God wants Israel to realize that simply raising a temple will not really guarantee God’s presence.

In sum, a priest in the Old Testament reconciled the people to God through sacrifices and prayers offered on their behalf. Today, God’s children (the reborn, spirit filled Christians) are now a nation of priests, standing as mediators between God and the world. The Bible teaches that people are to be living sacrifices for God. This means they offer themselves in service to God and the building of His Kingdom. One can raise the question of how technology will have an influence on the priesthood in society today?

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<sup>513</sup> Oliver, Dr C.R. (2000) Sons of Zadok. Texas: Zadok Publishers Inc. p.69

<sup>514</sup> Numbers 1:1

<sup>515</sup> Ephesians 2:18

<sup>516</sup> Haggai 2:9, Revelation 11:19.



An example of this might be the development of a Christian website concerned with sex and marriage. In the face of an onslaught of pornography and cybersex, such a site could provide healing for those who either have been addicted to cyberporn or have suffered the consequences of such sin. It could provide Christian resources for dealing with marriage, divorce, and sex. Rather than hiding from talking about sex, it could provide real help and guidelines for sex as God intended it to be.

However, technologies are not impartial. Humans who reside "east of Eden" and are made in God's image build machines. The technologies will be a "deposed royalty" (to use Pascal's phrase), bearing the scars of both our glory and our sins<sup>517</sup>. Because cyberporn was initially created by humans, who by nature are immoral.

Christians need to understand how the Internet influences the messages it spreads, where it benefits them and where it doesn't, and how to distinguish between the two. Always consider whether the media is suitable for your Christian message. What degree of truth can be shared in a chat room?

Internet and social media ministry to God's people can be a powerful platform for sharing the gospel. Whereas the enemy intended for it to be used for evil, it can be used for good<sup>518</sup>. The message or the channel are not the issue. The human heart's inherent depravity is the issue. If the tongue were a bucket that delves deep into the well that is the heart, it would bring up either good or terrible things.

**“A good man out of the good treasure of the heart bringeth forth good things; and an evil man out of the evil treasure bringeth forth evil things.”**

**Matthew 12:35.**

#### 4.4.1.2. The Limitations of The Digital Era

The digital era is categorized by technology which increases the speed and extent of knowledge turnover within society and the economy<sup>519</sup>.

The expansion of an evolutionary system in which knowledge turnover is not only very extreme but also increasingly out of the control of humanity makes it a time in which lives become more challenging to manage and make time for the church.

In several ways, the digital era has been good for Christianity for example it has magnified the voice of those preaching the gospel. The impact of the digital era on Christianity can be argued both negatively and positively. Positively it has stretched the voice of those preaching

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<sup>517</sup> Groothuis, Douglas. (1998) Deposed Royalty: Pascal's Anthropological Argument. *Jets* 41/2 (June 1998) pp. 297-313

<sup>518</sup> Genesis 50:20

<sup>519</sup> Digital Era: <https://www.igi-global.com/chapter/digital-era/29024>

the gospel. Thus, if it is used within limits, it will be a blessing, but when people get addicted to it, it can be a curse.

Since April 2017, when the YouVersion Bible App was released, it has been downloaded more than 268 million times, making 1492 versions of the Bible freely available to anyone on their smartphones in more than one thousand languages<sup>520</sup>. Christians living in this digital age must ensure that this transformation is used for spreading the Gospel.

The negative effects of the digital age include decreased closeness and communication as well as depression and other mental health problems like obesity, cyberbullying, and lack of sleep. The allure of the virtual world and virtual connections has led to the dissolution of thousands of marriages across the globe.

The technology of the digital world has much to offer but it has a dark side with significant limitations on the lives of humanity. From the occult to crime and violence and every evil that could be imagined is just a click away. Paul quotes not to think about the things that are tragic, scandalous, gruesome, and despicable but instead on the things that are good, lovely, and wholesome:

**“Finally, brethren, whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are honest, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good report; if there be any virtue, and if there be any praise, think on these things.”**

**Philippians 4:8.**

People do many things to distract them from their connection with God, especially in this advanced digital era today. People may not necessarily worship these things, but they preoccupy and prevent them from utilizing their time responsibly. This is when people make excuses for reading the Bible and praying.

One's identity and status might be one of the biggest idols worshiped today, along with physical appearances. Hence, the actual limitations are idolatry. Not everyone reading the Bible understand the real meaning of the second commandment and how it is still very relevant today, then unintentionally people might be offending God<sup>521</sup>. The second commandment:

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<sup>520</sup> YouVersion Bible App: <https://www.meritandgrace.com/a-digital-kingdom-for-a-digital-world/>

<sup>521</sup> The Real Meaning Of The 2<sup>nd</sup> Commandment: [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5vqY\\_PDFco&t=23s](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5vqY_PDFco&t=23s)

**“Thou shalt not make unto thee any graven image, or any likeness of any thing that is in heaven above, or that is in the earth beneath, or that is in the water under the earth: 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; And shewing mercy unto thousands of them that love me, and keep my commandments.”**

**Exodus 20:4-6.**

Most people interpret the second commandment as not carving little wooden idols, thus, not serving other gods as the Israelites did in ancient times when they melded little “teraphim” which were little household gods about the palm size of one’s hand. The purpose of the teraphim was to look at, rely on it, trust it, gain confidence from it and depend on it. It represented different gods over that area for success.

For example, a god of harvest, a god of the sun and a god of the soil<sup>522</sup>. If people do not keep this commandment, the chastening can be read in Leviticus 26:16-39, but if people keep this commandment, there are many blessings as set out in Leviticus 26:4-13.

Today the household idols are Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, and YouTube. An idol can be described as anything the people depend upon to meet the deep needs of the heart, love, security, worth or significance.

It can also be anything or someone that consumes your words, time, thoughts, energy, or money other than God. Some people argue that if they do not want something more than God, then the love of earthly possession is okay, it is not. Paul is very clear about this:

**“Mortify therefore your members which are upon the earth; fornication, uncleanness, inordinate affection, evil concupiscence and covetousness, which is idolatry: For which things’ sake the wrath of God cometh on the children of disobedience.”**

**Colossians 3:5-6.**

Today people put their trust and dependency in something that is not God. Anything that can influence one to such a degree that it is affecting one’s identity in God because people rely on the value they receive from the things that they put online. For people, it is not essential anymore to fit God into their lives or what will happen to their children. This affects their children in the third and fourth generations. When a parent is in idolatry, that parent is automatically teaching and putting that idol inside their children.

The abuse of digital devices through social media, online video gaming, online pornography, cyberbullying and associated risks and harms become addictive which is the modern teraphim. The greatest challenge in history is this series of addictive powers and growing seductions of

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<sup>522</sup> The Real Meaning of the 2<sup>nd</sup> Commandment: [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5vqY\\_PDFfco&t=23s](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5vqY_PDFfco&t=23s)

digital gadgets that are subtly changing the mental health of millions of people. This is the greatest abomination most people are scarcely unaware of and much less do they understand the issues involved<sup>523</sup>.

Evils of the online environment have become a part of the digital society and people found themselves in an era defined by the omnipresence of the internet that puts limitations on their religious lives. With the internet came more limitations because the internet is a space characterized by virtuality, self-obsession, isolation, anonymity, and objectification which is the perfect breeding ground for new unheard of and unprecedented manifestations of evil<sup>524</sup>. All this is a rapid and fundamental transformation of the nature of social life without God<sup>525</sup>.

The negative limitation of the digital era is an abomination still, it is not part of the plan of God because there are many blessings as set out in Leviticus 26:4-13 if people keep God's sabbaths and commandments. God is a covenant keeping God. Everything produces after its kind and the seed is in itself. It works that way in everything. The law of seedtime and harvest is also the covenant of seed and harvest.

**“Be not deceived; God is not mocked: for whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap. For he that soweth to his flesh shall of the flesh reap corruption; but he that soweth to the Spirit shall of the Spirit reap life everlasting.**

**Galatians 6:7-8.**

#### **4.5. Conclusion**

Most people want to be heirs of the Kingdom of Heaven. God wants us to be poor in spirit. Many scholars explore poor in spirit, the spirit of poverty, but they do not explore the limitations thereof. Then, most authors and pastors concentrate and explore not to limit God but not much on the poverty of the spirit.

God wants to reveal His will to people, but to receive that understanding, people must remove their limits. Do not limit what you think God can do through you. Do not evaluate yourself on just your carnal or visible qualities. You are a new person in the spirit and can do all things through Christ<sup>526</sup>. One of the great ways God exposes His will to you is through your desires<sup>527</sup>. God wants people to prosper:

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

**3 John 1:2.**

David overcame the limitations of the Law and found a door into God's presence through

<sup>523</sup> Brand, Dr Anke; De Beer, Eldred. (2022) The Digital Dilemma. Bloomington: WestBow Press. p.49

<sup>524</sup> Brand, Dr Anke; De Beer, Eldred. (2022) The Digital Dilemma. Bloomington: WestBow Press. p.276

<sup>525</sup> Brand, Dr Anke; De Beer, Eldred. (2022) The Digital Dilemma. Bloomington: WestBow Press. p.276

<sup>526</sup> Philippians 4:13

<sup>527</sup> Psalms 37:4

praise and worship. He accessed the grace of God even before Jesus fulfilled the Law. The apostolic anointing not only took David into the presence of God but fast forwarded him into the future, where he enjoyed the benefits of the New Covenant hundreds of years before it was established.

Through his apostolic mandate, he firmly formulated the pattern for worship, establishing the Kingdom of God in Israel and opening the way for the King of kings to be born in Jerusalem.



## 5. Chapter 4: The Covenantal Foundation That Governs the Principles of Blessing and Curse and Seedtime and Harvest

### 5.1. Introduction

The concept of "seedtime and harvest" is a Biblical principle that is referenced in many passages in the Bible, particularly in the Old and New Testaments. The idea is that when a farmer plant seeds in the ground, he must be patient and wait for the crops to grow, but eventually, he will reap a harvest. This principle is often used to teach about the importance of patience and perseverance, as well as the idea that one's actions have consequences, both positive and negative. The most famous verse is from Galatians 6:9: "And let us not be weary in well doing: for in due season we shall reap, if we faint not."

Against the background, the principle of Mark 4:14-20 on the parable of the sower will be expounded in breaking a poverty mentality and instead enjoying the seedtime and harvest. To the author of this dissertation, this is the most essential parable Jesus ever told.

When the principle it teaches is understood and applied, it will affect every part of one's life spiritual, physical, mental, and financial. Jesus instructs people not to worry about what they will eat or wear as the life of a Christian should not be consumed with worries because then they will never have abundance.

**"No man can serve two masters: for either he will hate the one, and love the other; or else he will hold to the one, and despise the other. Ye cannot serve God and mammon. Therefore I say unto you, Take no thought for your life, what ye shall eat, or what ye shall drink; nor yet for your body, what ye shall put on. Is not the life more than meat, and the body than raiment? Behold the fowls of the air: for they sow not, neither do they reap, nor gather into barns; yet your heavenly Father feedeth them. Are ye not much better than they? Which of your by taking thought can add one cubit unto his stature? And why take ye thought for raiment? Consider the lilies of the field, how they grow; they toil not, neither do they spin: And yet I say unto you, That even Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these. Wherefore, if God so clothe the grass of the field, which to day is, and to morrow is cast into the oven, shall he not much more clothe you, O ye of little faith?"**

**Matthew 6:24-30.**

God knows everyone's situation; therefore, do not try and work the things of God out in your natural mind. Even though you are in a unique situation, God has a unique solution

for you. When one refers to Elijah and Enoch's abovementioned example, the harvest is that they both escaped death because of their seed of faith.

**“As thou knowest not what is the way of the spirit, nor how the bones do grow in the womb of her that is with child: even so thou knowest not the works of God who maketh all. In the morning sow thy seed, and in the evening withhold not thine hand: for thou knowest not whether shall prosper, either this or that, or whether they both shall be alike good.”**

**Ecclesiastes 11:5-6.**

Everything starts with the seed. The seed is a certainty. Before anything can happen, it needs to be planted. Seedtime and harvest are God's method; the law of seedtime and harvest in Genesis is one of God's fixed laws.

**“And God said, Let the earth bring forth grass, the herb yielding seed, and the fruit tree yielding fruit after his kind, whose seed is in itself, upon the earth: and it was so. And the earth brought forth grass, and herb yielding seed after his kind, and the tree yielding fruit, whose seed was in itself, after his kind: and God saw that it was good.”**

**Genesis 1:11-12.**

In the beginning, God said there would be seedtime and harvest if the earth remains.

**“While the earth remaineth, seedtime and harvest, and cold and heat, and summer and winter, and day and night shall not cease.”**

**Genesis 8:22.**

## **5.2. The Blessing and Curse of The Law of Seedtime and Harvest**

Seedtime is a time of sowing seeds. The harvest is the time of reaping what was sown. The seedtime and harvest encompass God's provision in one's life. The harvest one reaps reveals the seed that one has planted. People could expect a harvest of corruption if they planted a corrupt seed into the natural realm. But if people sow the good seed of spiritual life, they will reap the fruits of the Spirit. In this instance, the seed represented is the Word of God, portraying the reception of it and the ground is our hearts. Fruit bearing depends upon the kind of soil and proper care in cultivation.

The principle of seedtime and harvest can also be applied to one's finances and prosperity in several ways. As stated previously, one should understand that their financial success is often the result of the actions one takes today. In other words, if people want to see financial prosperity in the future, they need to plant the seed of good Biblical financial habits today.

This same principle of seedtime and harvest also teaches people that their financial blessings are not just for themselves but to be shared with others. 2 Corinthians 9:10 clearly states that God will give seed for sowing and seed for bread (meaning seed for us and for others). When people are blessed financially, they have an opportunity to be a blessing to others by giving generously to those in need and by supporting causes that align with their values. Sometimes Christians pray and believe in God's intervention in their lives and

endure frustration with the results. This is because they are missing the seeds of conception and not seeking the Kingdom of God, that is when “all these things shall be added unto you.”<sup>528</sup>

People have idealistic expectations about how quickly they will see financial results or any results for that matter. They may think that by sowing a “financial seed,” they will see a quick and substantial return on their investment.

However, the principle of seedtime and harvest teaches that good things take time, and that people must be patient and persistent in their efforts. Some Christians are impatient because they put God’s Word in their hearts for a day or two. When they do not see immediate fruit according to their own expectations, they dig up the seed through their actions and words. Proverbs 18:21 states, “Death and life are in the power of the tongue: and they that love it shall eat the fruit thereof.” This verse teaches that words have the power to create or destroy, to bring life or death. Also, Matthew 12:34, it can be read, “for out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh.” This verse emphasizes that words reflect the condition of hearts.

If people planted the ordinary seed of a plant in their garden and dug it up each morning to see if anything was happening to it, it would die and never produce fruit. People must have faith that the seed is developing and growing into what God has created it to be and do.

**“But thou shalt remember the LORD thy God: for it is he that giveth thee power to get wealth, that he may establish his covenant which he sware unto thy fathers, as it is this day.”**

#### **Deuteronomy 8:18.**

This verse must be interpreted that God gives us the power to create wealth rather than giving money directly. He provides the ability to acquire resources to find opportunities and to have the wisdom to make good decisions. It is important to understand that this power is not just limited to financial wealth, but also includes other forms of prosperity such as good health, a loving family and meaningful work.

It also implies that God’s blessing is not limited to a specific group of people but is available to all who seek it and are obedient to His commands. Therefore, God’s promise of power to get wealth can be seen as an opportunity for all who put their trust in Him to live a prosperous life.

It is important to also note that this verse is a reminder that the wealth and prosperity people have is a gift from God and that they should be grateful and use it responsibly. It is not meant to be an excuse for greed or selfishness but rather a call to be faithful stewards of the blessings they have been given.

Unfortunately, nearly all systems people create can be cheated or manipulated and beaten, but they cannot change, cheat, or manipulate seedtime and harvest. God’s Kingdom functions on laws that govern the fruit producing process of a seed. God’s Word is an incorruptible seed. This law of seedtime and harvest functions in every area of one’s life, this includes the “gifts of healing.”<sup>529</sup>

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<sup>528</sup> Matthew 6:33

<sup>529</sup> 1 Corinthians 12:9



In every chapter of one's life, one plants the seeds of failure or success for the next chapter of one's life. People must learn to speak God's promises out of their mouths as a seed so that it can produce a harvest of blessing and healing as Jesus told the parable of the growing seed. The parable of the sower told by Jesus in Matthew 13:3-9 and 18-23 is to teach how important the state of the heart is to receive the Word of God and how the salvation of people is proved by their actions and choices after receiving the seed. What is in one's heart defiles the man<sup>530</sup>.

While people celebrate a harvest season just once a year, they experience the spirit of harvest all the time<sup>531</sup>. People must be careful in thinking that they can mock God or limit Him by digging a pit for someone because "Whoso diggeth a pit shall fall therein: and he that rolleth a stone, it will return upon him."<sup>532</sup>

People must also not think they can steal from someone to make their lives rich because "whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap."<sup>533</sup> Ecclesiastes 11:1 echoes this also "Cast thy bread upon the waters: for thou shalt find it after many days."

Jonathan Shuttlesworth<sup>534</sup>, an evangelist and the founder of Revival Today, claims that sickness, disease, and self-doubt are among of Satan's preferred ways to damage people. The mission of Revival Today is to reach out to the suffering and lost with the Good News of Jesus Christ. People restrict God by having this affliction, disease, and self-doubt<sup>535</sup>.

All ailments and diseases have already been given to Jesus Christ. People are aware of God's power to heal. They continue to doubt Him. Leprosy said:

**"And, behold, there came a leper and worshipped him, saying, Lord, if thou wilt, thou canst make me clean. And Jesus put forth his hand, and touched him, saying, I will; be thou clean. And immediately his leprosy was cleansed."**

**Matthew 8:2-3.**

But before Jesus healed the leper, Peter corrected him. Jesus does not have favourites. This is written in:

**"Then Peter opened his mouth, and said, Of a truth I perceive that God is no respecter of persons."**

**Acts 10:34.**

Christians have not yet learned that apart from one's own sin and having to live with their own consequences, Satan can also be responsible for their problems because he can enter through "open doors", he does not by chance enter someone's life because his very intention is "to steal, and to kill, and to destroy."<sup>536</sup>

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<sup>530</sup> Mark 7:20

<sup>531</sup> 1 Corinthians 9:10-11, Galatians 6:7-10

<sup>532</sup> Proverbs 26:27

<sup>533</sup> Galatians 6:7

<sup>534</sup> Shuttlesworth, Jonathan. (2019) Dominion Over Sickness & Disease. United States of America: Rise UP Publishers

<sup>535</sup> Job 2:7,

<sup>536</sup> John 10:10

### 5.2.1. Open Doorways for Satanic Power

According to the Bible, Satan has been given power by God to act as a tempter and deceiver, but his goal is to oppose God and lead people away from the truth.

One of the ways Satan has the power to steal, kill and destroy is through deception. He can deceive people into believing that they can have whatever they want without any consequences, or that they can be like God, or that they do not need God at all. He also deceives people with greed, selfishness, lies and deceit.

One can see in the Biblical account of Ananias and Sapphira in Acts Chapter 5 where their seed of corruption resulted in their death. Because of their sin, Ananias and Sapphira opened themselves to be filled with spirits of greed, lying and deceit. Both died. This is the curse of one who does not give to the church as the Body of Christ to prosper.

Haggai warned the returning exiles from Babylon in Haggai 1:5 to “Consider your ways” which people today can take at heart very seriously because Satan also has the power to steal by taking away the blessings God intended for us. This was clearly demonstrated in the parable of the sower. He can cause people to lose faith and become discouraged or to fall into occult practices and other destructive habits that keep them from experiencing the fullness of life God has for them. Christians need to be aware of possible doorways in their lives<sup>537</sup>. God warns the Israelites of the inflow of satanic power and demon manifestations.

**“Regard not them that are familiar spirits, neither seek after wizards, to be defiled by them: I am the LORD your God.”**

**Leviticus 19:31.**

The door for demons to enter may be opened by oneself through the sin of oversight and authority<sup>538</sup>. A few occultic doorways, such as consulting one's horoscope, the curiosity of visiting a fortune teller, palm reader and tea leaf reader, are not harmless things to do. These harmless occult activities can sometimes be found at school and church festivals. Innocent young children go to these people for “something fun to do.” None of these things consider to be something fun to do and harmless because many of these children are unable to accept Jesus as their Saviour in their future life.

Satan also has the power to kill, both physically and spiritually. He can cause people to live in fear or to give up life, to put all their trust in medicine for healing or to commit suicide. Satan also can cause people to die spiritually by leading them away from God and His love. Then, the judgment for sin is crop failure physically and spiritually<sup>539</sup>. However, it is important to remember that Satan's power is limited, and it is always subject to God's authority. Satan can only do what God allows him to do and God's ultimate plan for people is to have eternal life with Him. Satan is defeated through the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ and those who accept Jesus Christ as their Lord and Saviour are given the power

<sup>537</sup> Brown, M.D. Rebecca. (1987) Prepare for War. New Kensington: Whiteaker House. pp.114-115

<sup>538</sup> Hammond, Frank, and Ida Mae. (1990) Pigs in The Parlor. Kirkwood: Impact Christian Books. pp. 37-39

<sup>539</sup> Micah 6:13-15

to overcome Satan and his tactics through the power of the Holy Spirit.

The phrase "open doors" in the Bible refers to chances or circumstances that Satan can take advantage of to enter our lives and steal the advantages God has planned for His people.

In the previous section, it was shown that the concept of "seed" can refer to the blessings God has given people, such as time, talents, resources, and relationships. Satan can use "open doors" to steal seed by creating opportunities for sin and temptation or by exploiting the weaknesses and vulnerabilities of people. For example, Satan may tempt people with the desire for wealth, fame or power and cause them to neglect their responsibilities and relationships to pursue these things. He may also use fear, doubt, or resentment to keep people from using their talents and resources to serve God and others.

In Deuteronomy 27:15-26 are the twelve curses pronounced upon Israel for breaking the Law and in Deuteronomy 28:15-68 are the curses set out of disobedience to the Word of God. In Deuteronomy 28:2-13 are the blessings for the one who "walk in his ways"<sup>540</sup>, then one's crops will be physically and spiritually blessed.

Another technique Satan can steal seed is by causing division and conflict in people's relationships. He can use jealousy, envy, and bitterness to create strife and discord among friends, family and even the church.

**"And Jesus knew their thoughts, and said unto them, Every kingdom divided against itself is brought to desolation; and every city or house divided against itself shall not stand:"**

**Matthew 12:25.**

One way to close the doors to Satan is by being aware of his tactics and actively resisting him through prayer, the study of the Word of God and by the power of the Holy Spirit. One should also seek to build a strong relationship with God and to follow his commands and principles.

Another way is to be mindful of our thoughts and actions and to take responsibility for one's own choices. People should strive to live a life of integrity, to forgive others and to seek reconciliation. It is also important to surround yourself with accountability and support from other believers so that they can encourage one another and hold each other accountable to live according to God's will.

Another doorway Christians do not consider harmful is getting involved in "white witchcraft" ceremonies "for lack of knowledge."<sup>541</sup> White witchcraft ceremonies include the rehearsing of certain scripture verses while using a combination of salt, oil, and candles<sup>542</sup>. Salt is used in a multitude of occultic ceremonies. Salt, oil, and candles are nowhere used in any Biblical practices, for example, anointing, baptizing, or whatsoever purpose for the "good." Salt, oil, and candles,

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<sup>540</sup> Deuteronomy 28:9

<sup>541</sup> Hosea 4:6

<sup>542</sup> Brown, M.D. Rebecca. (1987) Prepare for War. New Kensington: Whiteaker House. pp. 121-122

when used in Scripture, were used metaphorically to indicate stability, loyalty, durability, fidelity, value, purification, and usefulness.

Christians also become involved in the “releasing of spirits” because they are taught in many churches to pray to bind any evil spirits present in the name of Jesus, there is nothing wrong with this as it is Scriptural and can be read in Matthew 12:29 and Matthew 18:18. It is when Christians pray “I release spirits of revelation, peace and love.” Revelation is a gift from only the Holy Spirit, not any other spirits. Love and peace are the fruits of the Holy Spirit<sup>543</sup>. Therefore, spirits of peace and love are false spirits meaning demons. White witches release these spirits that are demons all the time. No prayers must also be prayed of sending witchcraft back unto the sender because Jesus said:

**“Bless them that curse you, and pray for them which despitefully use you.”**

**Luke 6:28.**

Christians must rather rebuke the devourer<sup>544</sup> and become laborers to plant the seed and bring in the harvest. Abraham’s harvest because of the covenant with God was that God made him a great nation, blessed those who blessed him and cursed those who cursed him. Most important is that all people on the earth would be blessed through Abraham and circumcision is to be the everlasting sign of this eternal covenant. Abraham was the first to pay tithes and it was to Melchizedek<sup>545</sup>, Melchizedek, who was the priest of the highest God, as is written in Genesis 14:18. Abraham also understands that God will be faithful to His promises if he listens and obeys God even when his faith is weak.

#### 5.2.2. The Seed of Abraham

Before Abram was renamed, God appeared to him and spoke to him about his future seed and his descendants to become “a great nation.”<sup>546</sup> Paul explains in the New Testament that all believers through Jesus Christ are Abraham’s seed and therefore are God’s heirs of the Kingdom. Thus, the Old Testament covenant with Abraham is fulfilled through Jesus Christ. Being a child through the covenant means that children are heirs of ancient patriarchs who made a covenant with God and whose future generations God promised to bless. God sees people as either His children or they are the children of Satan.

In Genesis 3:15, it was already prophesied that the Seed would crush and destroy the head of Satan. In Genesis 22:18, God promises Abraham that “in thy seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed; because thou hast obeyed my voice.” This means that every ethnic group on the earth would be blessed. Thus, the promised blessing associated with the seed of Abraham does not relate to the biological decedents of Abraham. The blessing of Abraham is upon those who belong to Jesus Christ by means of being born again. Therefore, if someone is truly born again, that one is the seed of Abraham.

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<sup>543</sup> Galatians 5:22-23

<sup>544</sup> Malachi 3:11

<sup>545</sup> Genesis 14:18-20

<sup>546</sup> Genesis 12:2

**“Not as though the word of God hath taken none effect, for they are not all Israel, which are of Israel: Neither, because they are the seed of Abraham, are they all children: but, In Isaac shall they seed be called.”**

**Romans 9:6-7.**

Therefore, as Christians, our identity must come from our spiritual identity as the seed of Abraham and not from our human character or our posterity. Hence, the true seed of Abraham does not have its roots planted in this world. Jesus teaches that people are like trees that produce good or bad fruit<sup>547</sup>, the fruit in these teaching represent the character of a person. Jesus also taught that the axe must be laid on the root of a tree that produces bad fruit<sup>548</sup>. Good fruit is spiritually and valuable to God. Christians will find prosperity when producing good “the fruit of thy body.”<sup>549</sup>

The significance of the promise of God to Abraham is that God did not promise him a son or a descendant but a seed in whom all nations will be blessed. Thus, this seed did not primarily refer to Isaac as the son of Abraham but to the Seed Jesus Christ as the Body of Christ and this Seed has the meaning of a vessel of life for multiplication and reproduction.

In Genesis 15:4, God promised Abraham an heir “This shall come forth out of thine own bowels shall be thine heir.” But he and Sarah became impatient and with their impatience, they limited God when Sarah told Abraham to take her Egyptian handmaid Hagar to conceive a child.

The child was named Ishmael and his descendants would emulate the lifestyle of the “wild man” leading a free and noble existence in the desert<sup>550</sup>. This illustrates that Ishmael was born of the flesh<sup>551</sup> and was the son of an enslaved person, while Isaac was born free, and freedom is a blessing in the life of a Christian<sup>552</sup>.

Then, fourteen years later, Isaac was conceived with his wife, Sarah. Isaac represents all people born of faith are indeed children of Abraham and thus heirs of the covenant. Therefore, Isaac represents the second birth of the Spirit. The old nature is not able to produce the fruit of the Spirit. Ishmael was an obedient son until Isaac was born, then the “flesh” began to oppose the “Spirit” – the old nature needs the law, but the new nature does not need the law.

God frequently chose to accept the second child over the first. As He accepted the offering of Abel, the second born, yet rejected Cain, the firstborn in Egypt, God condemned all the firstborns. Ishmael was born first because, as Paul argues, the natural precedes the spiritual:

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<sup>547</sup> Matthew 7:17-20

<sup>548</sup> Matthew 3:10

<sup>549</sup> Deuteronomy 28:4

<sup>550</sup> Genesis 16:12

<sup>551</sup> Galatians 4:28-29

<sup>552</sup> Galatians 4:31

**“Howbeit that was not first which is spiritual, but that which is natural; and afterward that which is spiritual. The first man is of the earth, earthy: the second man is the Lord from heaven.”**

### **1 Corinthians 15:46-47.**

Because of the multiplication and reproduction, He is the fruit of the earth<sup>553</sup> for the divine life in humanity. Jesus was born a man from a virgin woman with flesh and blood as the fruit of the earth. The earth was the source of Jesus's humanity, just as eternity was the source of His divinity<sup>554</sup>. God needs humanity, not descendants, for His multiplication and reproduction.

In order to lift the curse of the law and free humanity from its grip, Jesus, the seed of Abraham, came to earth in the form of a man. Jesus was abandoned by God when He was being punished for the sins of humanity on the cross. Through the resurrection of Jesus Christ, those who are Abraham's offspring by faith receive the divine blessing for all of time.

Before God called Abraham, he was a sinful heathen who grew up in an idolatrous and unbelieving society<sup>555</sup>. Giving up the old life is one of the greatest obstacles to coming to Christ, this seems to be not an obstacle or challenge for Abraham when God called him.

When God called Abraham to leave his father's household to travel to a new land, he was already an old man, still, he obeyed, not knowing God's voice, or seeing Him, but he trusted God to keep His promises even not knowing what was lying ahead of him. Abraham, in Genesis 22, passed a very significant trial of obedience when he was prepared to sacrifice his long-awaited son as God commanded him. Because of Abraham's faith and obedience, he was called the “father of faith.”<sup>556</sup>

If God had called upon any other before Abraham, it could be a possibility but only Abraham answered. The Bible does not provide an answer to why God called Abraham specifically and not someone else. Only God knows why Abraham was His sovereign choice. Because Christians are the seed of Abraham, all are blessed and can prosper without limiting God.

All Christians can bear fruit in every season that will increase in each season and bring forth the fruit of the Spirit. The fig tree is an excellent example to learn from.

#### **5.2.3. Lessons to Learn from The Fig Tree**

The fig tree parable can be found in Luke 13:6–9, where Jesus narrates a tale about a fig tree that had been barren for three years. The gardener, who stands in for Jesus, begs for the tree to be given one more year to grow fruit as the owner of the vineyard, who represents God, orders the tree to be chopped down. The story serves as a reminder that people should make appropriate use of their time to

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<sup>553</sup> Fruit Of the Earth: <https://agodman.com/christ-is-the-fruit-of-the-earth-for-the-multiplication-and-reproduction-of-the-divine-life-in-humanity/>

<sup>554</sup> John 1:14

<sup>555</sup> Joshua 24:2

<sup>556</sup> Romans 4:16

please God.

One way to apply this parable to the lives of people is to think about the various seasons of their lives, both the good and the difficult ones and to consider how they can bear fruit in each one of them. For example, during a season of abundance, people can use their resources and talents to serve others and to advance God's Kingdom. During a season of hardship, then they can use their struggles as an opportunity to grow in faith and to rely on God more.

Another way to apply this parable is to understand that God is patient with people and gives them time to bear fruit. God gives people time to reflect on their lives, to repent and to make changes, to seek His guidance and to bear fruit.

The parable also shows that the relationship with God is not based on performance but on His love and grace. The fact that the tree was given one more year to bear fruit illustrates that God is not quick to give up on people and is willing to give people another chance. It is also important to remember that the fruit that God is looking for is not just external accomplishments but also the fruit of the Spirit, which includes love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control<sup>557</sup>.

These are the things that God wants to see in people's lives and that will bring Him glory<sup>558</sup> because no person can bear fruit by oneself if one does not stay rooted in God<sup>559</sup>. There is a reference to a tree from the very beginning of Genesis. Thus, from the beginning God wanted people to produce not just excellent but godly fruit. Trees for God were the one element mentioned in the Bible "that is pleasant to the sight, and good for food."<sup>560</sup>

The Tree of Life and the Tree of Knowledge of Good and Evil were parameters for the metaphors in the Bible. The Tree of Life in the Garden of Eden symbolizes a source of ongoing physical life through Jesus Christ. If Adam had "put forth his hand, and take also of the tree of life, and eat, and live for ever."<sup>561</sup> The Tree of Knowledge of Good and Evil symbolizes death<sup>562</sup>. Once Adam and Eve sinned, they were banned from the Garden, separated from this Tree, separated from God, and became subject to physical death because they were created to live forever. Revelation 2:7 is the unfulfilled prophecy that the saints will eat in the next life "of the tree of life, which is in the midst of the paradise of God." Revelation 22:2 confirms that the Tree of Life will "bare twelve manner of fruits and yielded her fruit every month: and the leaves of the tree were for the healing of the nations."

The significance of the fig tree is the lessons that Christians can learn from it:

5.2.3.1. God is willing to forgive and is patient.

5.2.3.2. Stay rooted in Jesus Christ.

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<sup>557</sup> Galatians 5:22-23

<sup>558</sup> John 15:8

<sup>559</sup> John 15:4

<sup>560</sup> Genesis 2:9

<sup>561</sup> Genesis 3:22

<sup>562</sup> Genesis 2:17

### 5.2.3.3. Jesus does not tolerate false appearances and hypocrisy.

The fig tree that Jesus cursed appeared to be fruitful, which made it misleading. Jesus addressed hypocrisy through this parable because He saw it so frequently, and hypocrisy is fundamentally wrong. He therefore provided a striking illustration of it in the form of a fig tree. The fig tree's fruiting season had not yet arrived<sup>563</sup>. Jesus nonetheless curses it. At first look, it may seem a bit harsh for Jesus to curse the fig tree, even though He was hungry and aware that the season for figs had passed.

The reason for Jesus to curse the fig tree was that it appeared more advanced and fruitful than those around it. Jesus warns Christians to be careful they do not give the world appearance of having the fruit of the Spirit, of living a fruitful life, but, upon closer inspection, they are no different than the worldly people.

God expects the Christian tree to bear fruit in every season, even in the “old age; they shall be fat and flourishing;”<sup>564</sup>. This means there is no “down season” or setbacks. The psalm writer describes the blessings of the righteous clearly that one’s leaves will not wither:

**“And he shall be like a tree planted by the rivers of water, that bringeth forth his fruit in his season; his leaf also shall not wither; and whatsoever he doeth shall prosper.”**

### Psalm 1:3.

Shuttlesworth’s explanation of the abovementioned verse is that nothing is permitted to keep anyone from bearing fruit every season<sup>565</sup>. Thus, with every attack of Satan, a plot of the government or a plan by man, nothing will keep one poor or take away their prosperity. This scripture also includes physical vibrancy. If the body begins to wither, people cannot produce fruit nor enjoy the prosperity thereof. Therefore, if Christians do not wither<sup>566</sup>, they will produce fruit every day because of their inheritance. Fill the church with the fruit of the Spirit and prosperity will follow. Christians who have deep roots in the soil of God’s Word are steadily nourished by its life-giving streams and will enjoy the blessings of prosperity.

### 5.2.4. Prosperity and A Blessing

God’s blessings and material prosperity are the same thing in the minds of many people. To have a good marriage, a successful career, a beautiful home and gifted children, this type of thinking is expected but not necessarily biblical evidence. Prosperity may be a gift from God, but it is not a sign of God’s blessing. A blessing is reserved for those who are poor enough in spirit and in situations to crave truthfully and intensely for the coming of the Kingdom of God.

In the Old Testament, some of the circumstances blessings evidently refer to

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<sup>563</sup> Mark 11:13

<sup>564</sup> Psalms 92:14

<sup>565</sup> Shutlesworth, Jonathan D. (2017) Financial Overflow. Oakdale: Revival Today Publishing. pp.69-72

<sup>566</sup> Jeremiah 17:8



physical prosperity. For example, in Genesis 24:35, Abraham's servant tells Laban: "And the LORD hath blessed my master greatly; and he is become great: and he hath given him flocks, and herds, and silver, and gold, and menservants, and maidservants, and camels, and asses."

Another good example is after Job's trial, God healed him and restored all that he had possessed abundantly after the trial.

**"So the LORD blessed the latter end of Job more than his beginning: for he had fourteen thousand sheep, and six thousand camels, and a thousand yoke of oxen, and a thousand she asses."**

**Job 42:12.**

Israel had two big temptations not to receive prosperity, namely pride with self-exaltation and the tendency to forget God as the cause of blessings and turning to reliance upon self and personal ability but Israel received blessings<sup>567</sup> from God when they obeyed His law:

5.2.4.1. Eat enough and their houses were filled with good things.

5.2.4.2. Herds and flocks multiplied.

5.2.4.3. Silver and gold multiplied.

5.2.4.4. Blessings of every kind multiplied.

In Psalms 37:11 and Psalms 132:15, there is still the promise of earthly good, but it is a promise with a particular concern for the people who are physically poor. Ezekiel, Daniel, David, and Ester are people who experience God's blessing as His faithful servants in the most challenging circumstances. Material prosperity or possessions were not described as blessings in the New Testament. In the New Testament, the focus is on the poor in spirit.

**"And he lifted up his eyes on his disciples, and said, Blessed be ye poor: for yours is the kingdom of God. Blessed are ye that hunger now: for ye shall be filled. Blessed are ye that weep now: for ye shall laugh. Blessed are ye, when men shall hate you, and when they shall separate you from their company, and shall reproach you, and cast out your name as evil, for the Son of man's sake. Rejoice ye in that day, and leap for joy: for; behold, your reward is great in heaven: for in the like manner did their fathers unto the prophets."**

**Luke 6:20-23.**

Paul warns in 1 Timothy 6:10 that the love of money is the root of all kinds of evil and James spread the message in James 1:9-11 that the humble brother should take pride "of low degree" and that the rich man will disappear away as quickly as grass.

Blessing in the New Testament illustrates people who rejoice and therefore, will

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<sup>567</sup> Deuteronomy 8:13

enjoy spiritual blessing in the coming of Jesus Christ as they put their faith in Him. Thus, in the Old Testament, the believer received God's blessing by being part of the covenant with Israel. Inheriting the land of Palestine was the foundation of God's favour and blessing at that time. In the New Testament, people receive God's blessing by being part of the church because they are citizens of the Kingdom of God. The New Testament consistently warns people that they should not be too attached to the things of this world.

The parables of the rich fool in Luke 12:16-21 and the rich man and Lazarus in Luke 16:19-31 illustrate that present possessions will soon pass away and that the status of people in the world will come to be precisely the opposite of what it is now. The one who walks with God will receive the following blessings:

- 5.2.4.5. One will have mercy – Deuteronomy 5:10.
- 5.2.4.6. One's days may be prolonged – Deuteronomy 5:16, 33, 6:2.
- 5.2.4.7. It will be well with one – Deuteronomy 5:16, 33, 6:3, 18.
- 5.2.4.8. It will be well with one's children forever – Deuteronomy 5:29, 6:2.
- 5.2.4.9. One will increase mightily and prosper – Deuteronomy 6:3, 6:18.
- 5.2.4.10. One will defeat one's enemies – Deuteronomy 6:19.
- 5.2.4.11. One will have the best good and will be righteous – Deuteronomy 6:24-25.

In Deuteronomy 28:1-14 are the twenty-one blessings for obedience to God's Word and from verses 15-68 are the curses for disobedience. A curse is the opposite, not a cruel punishment from God. The blessings are less than the curses for disobedience, but walking with God results in fullness and abundance, as God's grace is sufficient<sup>568</sup>, the blessings are also sufficient. Paul quotes twice from the Book of Deuteronomy concerning cursing in his letter to the Galatians in Chapter 3 of the Book of Galatians.

God gave a harvest of blessings which are salvation, redemption, healing, deliverance, favour, protection, provision, peace, joy, and spiritual gifts. Harvest is a proverb for joy, but the harvest will be cursed if the seed is still in the barn<sup>569</sup>.

#### 5.2.5. The Biblical Perspective of The Seed in The Barn

It was clearly proven in the previous component that a seed planted will reveal the harvest one reaps. A Biblical explanation was given under point 2 of Chapter 4 regarding the meaning of seed hence will not be repeated in this section. Following Haggai 2:19 will be examined exegetically, with specific emphasis on the seed portion in the barn.

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<sup>568</sup> 2 Corinthians 12:9

<sup>569</sup> Haggai 2:19

**“Is the seed yet in the barn? yea, as yet the vine, and the fig tree, and the pomegranate, and the olive tree, hath not brought forth: from this day will I bless you.”**

### **Haggai 2:19.**

The parallel of seed in the barn was to help the Israelites to realize that they needed to put the resources that God had given them to the best use. The seed is ready to be planted, although it was not the season to plant because it was mid-December, meaning the end of the planting season in Israel. Still, Haggai encourages those who have returned from the Babylonian exile to remain faithful, hopeful, and obedient to the promise of God of a new Jerusalem and for the rebuilding of the new temple in Jerusalem.

Although it was not planting season in Israel then, the “seed” was not supposed to be in the barn, but it should be sown in the fields. The sower will be blessed from the day the seed is planted because the seed is good and already blessed. Satan wants the seed to stay in the barn. Therefore, Christians must exercise their faith and remain obedient, not to keep the seed hidden in barns.

Seed in the barn cannot multiply. An agricultural explanation<sup>570</sup>, one grain of wheat can produce an average of twenty-two seeds per head and five heads per plant. An average seed weighs between 35mg and 45mg, this suggests that there can be 28 571 seeds that can be sown. The resulting crop is overwhelming if only one seed is sown. Thus, said Jesus in Matthew 9:37, “The harvest truly is plenteous, but the labourers are few;”

Unfortunately, the seed cannot grow while it is still in the barn's corn bag. But before the seed can produce any fruit, it must be put in the ground and allowed to wither. In John 12:24, Jesus likens Himself to a grain of wheat. He became the seed that would produce a bountiful harvest when He died.

God has begun His blessings on a specific day<sup>571</sup> many times in the lives of individuals, the same is valid regarding a nation<sup>572</sup>. Haggai was tasked by God to encourage the exiles who returned from Babylon to rebuild the second temple to restore the worship of God at Jerusalem. First, Haggai rebukes Israel for living at ease in ceiled houses while “the LORD’S house should be built.”<sup>573</sup> Thus, God does not want the seed to be safe in the barn. God wants His people to focus on what they are holding and obeying His commands.

Haggai also rebuked Israel for past sins, such as abandoning God to pursue other pursuits, which led in God "smiting you with blasting and mildew and hail in all your labours.”<sup>574</sup> Because Israel disobeyed, the harvests died. But if Israel completes the temple and the foundation of His church, God will bless them with

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<sup>570</sup> One Grain of Wheat:

[https://www.google.com/search?q=how+many+heads+can+one+grain+of+wheat+produce&rlz=1C1GIGM\\_enZA698ZA699&oq=how+many+heads+can+one+grain+of+wheat+produce&aqs=chrome.69i57j33i160.20091j0j7&sourceid=chrome&ie=UTF-8](https://www.google.com/search?q=how+many+heads+can+one+grain+of+wheat+produce&rlz=1C1GIGM_enZA698ZA699&oq=how+many+heads+can+one+grain+of+wheat+produce&aqs=chrome.69i57j33i160.20091j0j7&sourceid=chrome&ie=UTF-8)

<sup>571</sup> Joshua 3:7

<sup>572</sup> Exodus 12:14, Deuteronomy 2:25

<sup>573</sup> Haggai 1:2

<sup>574</sup> Haggai 2:17

an abundant crop "from this day forward."<sup>575</sup>

When Israel faced major obstacles, they did not remember the Covenant of God with them until God made them aware of it through being enslaved and oppressed. Examples are Genesis 6:18, where God entered into a covenant with Noah and He has sustained that covenant till this day; in Genesis 22:17-18, God established a covenant with Abraham that in blessings God will bless Him and of his seed shall all the family of the earth be blessed, also still existing today and lastly David, God established an everlasting covenant that the seed of David should not cease to be rulers in the land of Israel. God kept his promises despite the unimaginable things the seeds of David have done. God had covenanted with Abraham, Noah, and David because they served Him. God's covenant with people includes supernatural strength, even in old age<sup>576</sup>. This is the inheritance of all who served God.

According to Shuttlesworth, people today have an even better covenant based on better promises than what the people had in Old Testament<sup>577</sup>. What made the covenant with Abraham so unique was that it was before the Law, the Ten Commandments written on Mount Sinai and given to Moses.

### 5.3. The Covenantal Foundation

The covenants of God are one of the most significant themes in the Bible because the covenants are fundamental to God's redemptive plan to restore humanity to its divine calling. This was God's plan from the beginning in Genesis till Jesus became flesh and salvation for everyone who accepted Him as their Saviour.

The Hebrew word for covenant<sup>578</sup> is karath, which means to cut. It also refers to the destruction and to passing between pieces of flesh which signifies establishing a covenant, thus a symbolic act of "binding together in agreement" or becoming "one flesh." When a covenant was "cut" between two parties, it meant, "What belongs to me is now yours and what belongs to you is now mine."<sup>579</sup>

There are two types of covenants: a covenant can be horizontal by means of among people, of which the most obvious one is a marriage and then vertical by means of the covenant between God and His people of which the most known covenant is the Old Testament and the New Testament. A covenant can be described as a relationship between two partners who make binding promises to each other and work together to reach a common goal<sup>580</sup>. Covenants are different from contracts because covenants are often accompanied by ceremonies, signatures, and oaths. Many covenant relationships are found throughout the Bible for example, the personal covenant between David and Jonathan in 1 Samuel 23:16-18 and the political covenant between King Solomon and King Hiram in 1 Kings 5:7-10.

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<sup>575</sup> Haggai 2:18

<sup>576</sup> Deuteronomy 34:7

<sup>577</sup> Shuttlesworth, Jonathan. (2019) Dominion Over Sickness & Disease. United States of America: Rise UP Publishers. pp.40-42

<sup>578</sup> Covenant: Connell, Karen E. (2020) Threefold Cord Manual – For Healing and Deliverance. Independently Published. p.377

<sup>579</sup> The Covenant Definition: Connell, Karen E. (2020) Threefold Cord Manual – For Healing and Deliverance. Independently Published. p.377

<sup>580</sup> The Covenant of God: <https://bibleproject.com/blog/covenants-the-backbone-bible/>

A covenant between God and His children is a sacred agreement when God sets specific conditions, and He promises to bless them as they obey these conditions. Making and keeping covenants, qualifies people to receive the blessings God has promised but if people choose not to keep covenants, then they cannot receive the blessings.

The Old Testament and the New Testament are distinct sections of the Bible that contain different teachings and historical contexts. The Old Testament consists of 39 books, while the New Testament consists of 27 books. The Old Testament primarily focuses on the history of Israel, the Jewish people, and their covenant with God, while the New Testament focuses on the life and teachings of Jesus Christ and the establishment of the Christian faith.

The emphasis on salvation is one of the primary contrasts between the Old and New Testaments. In the Old Testament, salvation is predicated on obeying the law and making atonement for sin. The emphasis is on obeying God's laws and fulfilling the covenant God made with Israel. However, in the New Testament, salvation is founded on trust in Jesus Christ and His atonement on the cross for sins. Paul says:

**“Even the righteousness of God which is by faith of Jesus Christ unto all and upon all them that believe: for there is no difference: For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God; Being justified freely by his grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus:”**

**Romans 3:22-24.**

This shift from legalistic obedience to faith in Christ represents a fundamental difference between the Old and New Testament and has significant implications for Christian theology and practice.

#### 5.3.1. Covenants in The Old Testament

The precise number of covenants between God and His people is not known. In Dake's Annotated Reference Bible, fifteen great covenants of Scripture are identified<sup>581</sup>:

- 5.3.1.1. Solaric: Genesis 1:14-18, 8:22, Psalms 89:34-37, Jeremiah 31:35-37, 33:19-26. This covenant promised eternal life and seasons of fruitfulness.
- 5.3.1.2. Edenic: Genesis 1:26-3:24. This covenant was conditional with Adam and Eve upon obedience.
- 5.3.1.3. Adamic: Genesis 3:14-19. God agreed with Adam and Eve after the fall and before the eviction from the garden.
- 5.3.1.4. Cainic: Genesis: 4:11-15. God pledged Cain of vengeance on anyone who found him and killed him.
- 5.3.1.5. Noahic: Genesis 8:20-9:29. This covenant was made with Noah after the flood that the rainbow should be a sign that God would not curse the

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<sup>581</sup> Dake's Annotated Reference Bible, 1999. pp.83-84

earth with water again.

- 5.3.1.6. Abrahamic: Genesis 12:1-3. After the confusion of tongues, God promised Abraham to make him a great nation.
- 5.3.1.7. Hagaric: Genesis 16:7-14. God made a covenant with Hagar concerning her seed through Ishmael.
- 5.3.1.8. Sarahic: Genesis 17:15-19, 18:9-15. God promised Sarah specific blessings to her and Isaac for many generations to come.
- 5.3.1.9. Healing: Exodus 15:26, 23:25. God made a covenant with Israel and all those who chose to come under the covenant of God as given to Moses.
- 5.3.1.10. Mosaic: Exodus 20:1-24:8, 2 Corinthians 3:6-18. God made this covenant with Israel at Sinai after the nation was led out of Egyptian slavery when the Law was written.
- 5.3.1.11. Levitic: Numbers 25:10-14. This promise was given through Moses to Phinehas, the son of Levi for the everlasting priesthood.
- 5.3.1.12. Palestinian: Leviticus 26, Deuteronomy 11:8-32, 27:1-30:20. God made this covenant through Moses with Israel upon the obedience of the nation.
- 5.3.1.13. Salt: Leviticus: 2:13, Numbers 18:19. This covenant illustrates the everlasting friendship between God and His people because of its use concerning the sacrifices they would offer forever.
- 5.3.1.14. Davidic: 2 Samuel 7:1-17. This agreement was made through the prophet Nathan, with David conditioned upon obedience for blessings for a kingdom forever.
- 5.3.1.15. Jesus Christ: Matthew 26:28, 2 Corinthians 3:6-18. This is the new covenant made by Christ and still in force with all the terms, conditions, commands, promises and blessings revealed in all the books of the New Testament.

There are five foundational covenants that God made, and it was with Noah, Abraham, Moses, and David, then He established the new covenant through Jesus. The word covenant is first used in Genesis 6:18 and it was with Noah.

#### 5.3.1.16. The Noahic Covenant

The story of Noah and the flood is found in the Book of Genesis and is one of the most well-known stories in the Bible. God saw the wickedness of humanity and decided to wipe out all life on Earth with a flood. However, God made a covenant with Noah, a righteous man, thus the reason why Noah was chosen by God and his family to save them from the flood. There are two covenants that God made with Noah – one before the flood and one after the great flood.

The first covenant that God made with Noah is found in Genesis 6:18 “But with thee will I establish my covenant; and thou shalt come into the ark, thou and thy sons, and thy wife, and thy sons’ wives with thee.”

This covenant was made before the great flood, and it was a promise that God would save Noah and his family from the destruction that was coming. The second covenant that God made with Noah is found in Genesis 9:8-17. This covenant was made after the great flood, and it was a promise that God would never again destroy all life on Earth with a flood. Despite humanity’s corruption, He will never again flood the Earth<sup>582</sup>. This flood was a judgment from God on the wickedness of humanity. The sign of this covenant is the rainbow that will remind us of God’s promises and His love for humanity<sup>583</sup>.

The historical significance of the Noahic Covenant cannot be overstated because it marks a turning point in human history, representing the end of one era and the beginning of another. Before the flood, humanity had grown increasingly wicked and corrupt, and God had decided to wipe them out and start over with Noah and his family. After the flood, God never promised again to destroy the Earth with a flood, signalling a new era of grace and mercy. The covenant is also significant because it established the principle of God’s sovereignty over creation and humanity’s responsibility to care for it.

The theological significance of the Noahic Covenant is also profound because it represents God’s faithfulness and mercy toward His creation, even in the face of human sinfulness. Despite humanity’s rebellion and wickedness, God made a covenant to preserve and protect His creation, demonstrating His love for humanity. The covenant also establishes the principle of human stewardship over creation, emphasizing the importance of caring for the earth and preserving it for future generations.

Christianity today is still impacted by the Noahic Covenant. Amid hardship, it serves as a reminder of God's constancy and mercy to His people. Additionally, it promotes environmental care and stewardship, two key components of Christian environmentalism.

The covenant also prepares the way for the one between God and humanity that Jesus Christ later fulfilled. Jesus established a new covenant with humanity via His death and resurrection, guaranteeing forgiveness of sins and eternal life to anyone who believes in Him.

After the covenant with Noah, evil continues to ruin the world. The downward spiral of humanity again can be read in Genesis Chapters 9-11, and one wonders how God will restore this world again. This is when God calls Abraham into a covenantal relationship.

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<sup>582</sup> Isaiah 54:9

<sup>583</sup> Genesis 9:12-16

### 5.3.1.17. The Abrahamic Covenant

The Abrahamic Covenant is one of the utmost outstanding significant covenants in the Bible and it is a cornerstone of the Jewish, Christian, and Islamic faiths. This covenant is established in the book of Genesis, where God promises Abraham that he will become a great nation and that his descendant will inherit the land of Canaan. This covenant has been interpreted and applied in different ways throughout history, but its significance remains an important aspect of religious and cultural identity for many people.

One of the important components of the covenant is the concept of blessings, which are broadly classified into four basic categories. The first category is material blessings which include prosperity, wealth, and an abundance of resources. The second category is physical blessings which include good health, longevity, and protection from harm. The third category is relational blessings which include the promise of descendants and the establishment of a covenant relationship with God. Finally, the fourth category is spiritual blessings which include forgiveness of sins, the gift of the Holy Spirit and eternal life.

The Abrahamic Covenant is established in Genesis 12:1-3, where God tells Abraham to leave his home in Ur and go to the land of Canaan, promising to make him a great nation and to bless him. In Genesis 15, God confirms this promise and makes a covenant with Abraham, promising to give him and his descendants the land of Canaan as an eternal possession. God also promises to make Abraham the father of many nations and to bless all the nations of the earth through him.

This covenant is further developed in Genesis 17:5, where God changes Abraham's name from Abram to Abraham and establishes circumcision as a sign of the covenant. This symbol sets Abraham and his descendants apart and demonstrates that their fruitfulness and future lay in the hands of God<sup>584</sup>.

The promise of land is significant for Israel who sees the land as a central aspect of its religious and cultural identity. This land has implications for the relationship between the Jewish people and the Palestinians who also claim the land of Israel as their ancestral home. This is the first part of the covenant; the second part of the covenant involves the descendants of Abraham because he will be the father of many nations. This promise is fulfilled through his son Isaac and his grandson Jacob who become the patriarchs of the twelve tribes of Israel. The promise of descendants is significant for Christians who see Abraham as an important figure in the lineage of Jesus Christ.

For Muslims, Abraham is an important prophet, and the covenant is seen as a promise of guidance and blessings to all believers. Through this covenant, God establishes a special relationship with Abraham and his descendants, promising to be their God and to bless them. Thus, the

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<sup>584</sup> Genesis 17:9-14



seed of Abraham will also be blessed<sup>585</sup> as the “seed” would be Jesus Christ<sup>586</sup>. The promise given to Abraham was not written for his sake only but for all to accept Jesus Christ for their salvation.

**“Now it was not written for his sake alone, that it was imputed to him; But for us also, to whom it shall be imputed, if we believe on him that raised up Jesus our Lord from the dead.”**

#### **Romans 4:23-24.**

This relationship is characterized by faith and obedience as Abraham is praised for his faith in God and his willingness to obey God’s commands without any limitations and understood he had little to offer God but his trust. Abraham showed his obedience to sacrifice the very seed that was the basis for the promise to multiply his “seed.”<sup>587</sup> Although the seed was not sacrificed, a sacrifice is still an essential factor in ratifying this covenant because the God who confirms the covenant by oath is the same God who has provided a sacrifice.

The quick proliferation of Abraham's seed and descendants in Egypt alarms the new Pharaoh, who subsequently enslaves Israel. When they cry out to God for help, He sends Moses to be His instrument of supernatural power, leading the people out of Egypt and into Abraham's promised land.

#### 5.3.1.18. The Mosaic Covenant

The Mosaic Covenant is a significant aspect of the Old Testament, outlining the covenantal relationship between God and His chosen people, Israel. This covenant was established between God and the Israelites through Moses on Mount Sinai after the exodus from Egypt. This Mosaic Covenant forms the foundation for the entire Old Testament and has significant implications for the Christian faith.

The Mosaic Covenant was established in Exodus 20:1-24:8, where God revealed Himself to the Israelites on Mount Sinai. In Exodus 19:5-6, God declared that the Israelites would be His treasured possession, a kingdom of priests and a holy nation. This declaration established the basis for the Mosaic Covenant, outlining the relationship between God and the Israelites.

Although the pattern of this covenant is very similar to other ancient covenants of the time, it is critical to understand that the Mosaic Covenant differs significantly from the Abrahamic Covenant and later biblical covenants because God's promises are conditional on Israel's obedience to the Mosaic Law<sup>588</sup>. God will bless Israel if they are obedient, but if they disobey, then they will be punished and cursed by

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<sup>585</sup> Genesis 22:18

<sup>586</sup> Galatians 3:16

<sup>587</sup> Genesis 22:17

<sup>588</sup> The Mosaic Covenant: <https://www.gotquestions.org/Mosaic-covenant.html>

God. Many of the other covenants found in the Bible are unilateral covenants of promises because in those covenants, God binds Himself to do what He promised, regardless of what the receivers of the promises might do, while the Mosaic Covenant is a bilateral agreement because in this Mosaic Covenant, the obligations of both parties are specific<sup>589</sup>.

God's promises to Abraham were revisited after Israel escaped from Egypt and reached the foot of Mount Sinai. Moses then represented Israel and ascended the mountain to receive the terms of God's covenant with Israel. Israel was instructed to obey all the laws given with the Ten Commandments and if they did not obey, they would be cursed as set out in Deuteronomy 28:15-68. The components of the Mosaic Covenant are found in Exodus Chapters 20-23 and can be divided into two categories: the moral law and the civil law. The moral law, or Ten Commandments, forms the basis for all the law in the Old Testament and includes commands such as "You shall not murder" and "You shall not commit adultery."

The civil law has more specific regulations for daily life in Israel, including laws about property ownership, restitution for damages and rules for the Sabbath. The Mosaic Covenant is significant in the history of Israel as it outlines the terms of their relationship with God. The covenant establishes that God will be their God and they will be His people and that obedience to His commands will bring blessing and prosperity, while disobedience will result in punishment and exile. The covenant also includes promises of land, protection, and prosperity for the nation of Israel.

The Mosaic Covenant is also significant in the theological understanding of salvation history because it is a precursor to the coming of Christ and the establishment of the new covenant. This covenant demonstrates the impossibility of human beings fulfilling the requirements of the law and points towards the need for a saviour. The Ten Commandments, also called the Mosaic Law would reveal Israel's sinfulness and their need for a Saviour.

**"Wherefore the law was our schoolmaster to bring us unto Christ, that we might be justified by faith. But after that faith is come, we are no longer under a schoolmaster."**

**Galatians 3:24-25.**

Some people still get confused by thinking that keeping the law of Moses saved Israel in the Old Testament, but Scripture is clear on this point that salvation has always been by faith and grace alone because the promise of salvation by faith that God made to Abraham remained in effect in Galatians 3:16-18. The sacrificial system introduced through the Mosaic Law did not take away sins<sup>590</sup>, it foretold the bearing of sin

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<sup>589</sup> The Mosaic Covenant: <https://www.gotquestions.org/Mosaic-covenant.html>

<sup>590</sup> Hebrews 10:1-4

by Jesus, who was the perfect sacrifice<sup>591</sup>.

Thus, the Law had no power to give people eternal life. Hence, the Mosaic Covenant also referred to as the Old Covenant<sup>592</sup> was replaced by the New Covenant<sup>593</sup> with Jesus Christ because it fulfils the promises made in Jeremiah 31:31-34. The Mosaic Covenant also provides insight into the character of God because it demonstrates that God is just and a holy God who requires obedience and righteousness from His people.

However, it also reveals God's mercy and grace as He provides a way for forgiveness and reconciliation through the sacrificial system. When Israel entered the promised land, Canaan they started to lose sight of their covenant on Mount Sinai because they demanded a king, desiring to be like the other nations. God warned Israel that it would not turn out well<sup>594</sup>, but still He allowed Saul to become the first human king of Israel. Saul then failed to obey God and was rejected by Him. It was then that David was chosen as king of Israel.

#### 5.3.1.19. The Davidic Covenant

The Davidic Covenant is a significant and pivotal covenant in the Bible, and it forms the foundation of many theological beliefs and interpretations. It is a covenant that God made with David, the second King of Israel and promised that his throne would be established forever. This covenant has been the source of great hope and inspiration for believers throughout the ages and it points to the ultimate fulfilment of God's plan for humanity through the coming of the Messiah.

The Davidic Covenant was made during the reign of King David, who ruled Israel from 1010 BC to 970 BC. David was a man after God's own heart<sup>595</sup> and he had brought the Ark of the Covenant back to Jerusalem and had prepared to build a temple for God. It was during this time that God made a covenant with David, promising to establish his throne forever<sup>596</sup>. This covenant with David is in many ways a continuation of the covenant with Abraham because the seed of Abraham is David and David's seed will be the Son who will sit on His throne forever.

There are a few primary features of this covenant:

5.3.1.19.1. David's bloodline would have a Kingdom.

5.3.1.19.2. A royal dynasty would be established.

5.3.1.19.3. It would be an unlimited and everlasting covenant.

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<sup>591</sup> Hebrews 9:11-28

<sup>592</sup> 2 Corinthians 3:14, Hebrews 8:6, 13

<sup>593</sup> Luke 22:20, 1 Corinthians 11:25, 2 Corinthians 3:6, Hebrews 8:8, 8:13, 9:15, 12:24

<sup>594</sup> 1 Samuel 8:9-18

<sup>595</sup> 1 Samuel 13:14

<sup>596</sup> 2 Samuel 7:12-16, Psalm 45:6-7, Psalm 89:3-4, Revelation 1:5-6

5.3.1.19.4. The spiritual centre of Israel would be Jerusalem.

5.3.1.19.5. The visible sign of this covenant will be the temple.

This covenant with David is significant for several reasons. First, it demonstrates God's faithfulness and love for his people. Despite the sins and failure of the Israelites, God remained committed to his promise to establish a kingdom that would last forever. Second, the covenant shows that God's plan for salvation and redemption was already in motion.

The establishment of an eternal kingdom through David's line foreshadowed the coming Messiah, who would be a descendant of David and would reign forever. Third, the covenant gave the Israelites hope and assurance amid their struggles and trials. It was a reminder that God was with them and that he had a plan for their future.

The ultimate fulfilment of this covenant came through Jesus Christ, a descendant of David who fulfilled the Old Testament prophecies about the Messiah. Jesus' birth, life, death, and resurrection were all in line with God's plan for salvation and redemption, and his ascension to the right hand of the Father established Him as the universe's eternal King and Ruler. This is confirmed by the apostle Paul.

**“And we declare unto you glad tidings, how that the promise which was made unto the fathers, God hath fulfilled the same unto us their children, in that he hath raised up Jesus again; as it is also written in the second psalm, Thou art my Son, this day have I begotten thee. And as concerning that he raised him up from the dead, now no more to return to corruption, he said on this wise, I will give you the sure mercies of David.”**

**Acts 13:32-34.**

This covenant with David was an unconditional covenant because its fulfilments did not depend on David's actions or for that matter on the actions of any of the members of his household. Although David was a man after God's own heart, David committed grievous sins<sup>597</sup>. However, despite David and his sons' failure and sins, God keeps his covenant to provide a faithful descendant of David to reign. Who was David and yet a man after God's own heart with whom God kept His covenant with? David was<sup>598</sup>:

5.3.1.19.6. A shepherd (1 Samuel 17:34).

5.3.1.19.7. A Giant slayer (1 Samuel 17:45-47).

5.3.1.19.8. A leader (Acts 13:22, 36).

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<sup>597</sup> 2 Samuel 11:2-27

<sup>598</sup> Rutland, Mark. (2018) David the Great: Deconstructing the Man After God's Own Heart. Florida: Charisma House

- 5.3.1.19.9. A man of prayer (1 Chronicles 29:10-19).
- 5.3.1.19.10. An adulterer and a murderer (2 Samuel 11:4-8).
- 5.3.1.19.11. A king (2 Samuel 5:3, Acts 13:22).
- 5.3.1.19.12. A faithful servant (1 Samuel 22:14).
- 5.3.1.19.13. An anointed musician (1 Samuel 16:23).
- 5.3.1.19.14. A repentant man (Psalm 51:1-6).
- 5.3.1.19.15. Always honest with God (Psalm 69:5-6).
- 5.3.1.19.16. Failed as a father (2 Samuel Chapters 13-15).
- 5.3.1.19.17. A fearless warrior (1 Samuel 17:8-9).

Jesus Christ was called the “Son of David.”<sup>599</sup> These words refer to the everlasting kingship of David’s house and are important because it is a prophecy concerning the coming of the Messiah. It is noticeable that the covenants specifically discussed build upon one another, forming an utterly redemptive storyline. God created the world via Noah, redeemed it through Abraham, founded the nation of Israel through Moses, promised an eternal shepherd-king through David, and finally fulfilled all his commitments through Jesus<sup>600</sup>. God's promises and plans to rescue the world through the seed of the woman grew stronger with each Covenant, until salvation could only come through King Jesus.

#### 5.3.1.20. Jesus the New Covenant

Israel ignored for generations the terms of their covenant with God by living their own definitions of good and evil. The prophets spoke of a New Covenant amid their rebellion and exile. The prophets said that God would fulfil all His promises, repair His relationship with His people and bless the nations through His New Covenant<sup>601</sup> and this New Covenant will be everlasting. The New Testament is evident in its proclamation of the New Covenant, and it is essential to understand what it means and how it differs from the Old Covenant.

God and the Israelites established the Old Covenant through Moses, which was founded on the Law. Every aspect of Jewish society, from religious practice to civil legislation, was governed by a set of laws, rules, and ordinances known as the "This Law." On the other hand, the Old Covenant had problems since it was based on human adherence of the law and was unable to provide real sin forgiveness or redemption. Romans 2:15 and 2 Corinthians 3:3 both refer to the law inscribed on

<sup>599</sup> Matthew 1:1, 12:23, 15:22, 20:30-31, 21:9, John 7:42, Romans 1:3, 2 Timothy 2:8, Revelation 5:5

<sup>600</sup> Covenants: <https://bibleproject.com/blog/covenants-the-backbone-bible/>

<sup>601</sup> Jeremiah 31:31-34

the heart and refer to the renovation of the Christian's heart by the Holy Spirit.

The New Covenant was prophesied in the Old Testament and established by Jesus Christ through His death and resurrection. Jesus Himself declared the establishment of the New Covenant during the Last Supper when He said in Luke 22:20: "Likewise also the cup after supper, saying, This cup is the new testament in my blood, which is shed for you." The New Covenant is based on faith in Jesus Christ and His sacrifice for sin instead of human obedience to the Law.

The New Covenant has theological significance because it signifies a fundamental change in the dynamic between God and humanity. God's relationship with humans is based on grace and faith in Jesus Christ under the Old Covenant. The Old Covenant is not replaced by the New Covenant; rather, the New Covenant completes it. The Law was given to Israel to show them their sin and their need for a Saviour and the New Covenant provides the solution to that need. The New Covenant is also significant because it provides true forgiveness of sins and salvation. Under the Old Covenant, sins were forgiven through the sacrificial system, but this forgiveness was temporary and required continual sacrifices. Under the New Covenant, sins are forgiven once and for all through faith in Jesus Christ.

**"By the which will we are sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all."**

**Hebrews 10:10.**

The New Covenant has significant implications for the contemporary Christian life. First and foremost, it reminds people that their relationship with God is based on grace and faith in Jesus Christ, not on their efforts to obey the Law. People cannot earn their salvation through good works or by following a set of rules. Instead, they must place their trust in Jesus Christ and His sacrifice for sin.

Secondly, the New Covenant reminds people of the importance of forgiveness. Because they have been forgiven through Christ's sacrifice, they must therefore forgive others<sup>602</sup>. Finally, the New Covenant reminds people of their responsibility to live a holy and righteous life<sup>603</sup>. While people are not saved by their good works, they are called to live a life that reflects the holiness and righteousness of God.

Thus, Jesus is the Mediator<sup>604</sup> of the New Covenant<sup>605</sup>. Therefore, He must be in the image of Man and in the image of God. Without in the

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<sup>602</sup> Colossians 3:13

<sup>603</sup> Hebrews 12:14

<sup>604</sup> Galatians 3:20, 1 Timothy 2:5, Hebrews 9:15, 12:24

<sup>605</sup> Oosthuizen, Josef Peter. (2018) The Order of Melchizedek: The Order of Sons. RSA: Josef Company Publishers. pp.117-118

image of man, He would not have been able to bring peace between God and man because Jesus mediated an eternal inheritance for humanity. God gave a mediatorial guarantee to the interim of the Law until the Seed would come, as the promise to Abraham was that in his seed, the nations of the earth would be blessed. The temporary mediatorial arrangement of the Law, through the shedding of the Blood of animals, was eventually given permanency through the shedding of the blood of Jesus.

2 Corinthians 3:6 is a verse that holds excellent theological significance within the Christian faith because it highlights the contrast between the Old Covenant, which was based on the written law and the New Covenant, which is the work of the Holy Spirit. It emphasizes that believers are made competent to serve as priests of the New Covenant through the transformative power of the Holy Spirit.

This verse also emphasizes the shortcomings of the written law, which has the capacity to judge and murder, and the life-giving power of the Holy Spirit, which brings about spiritual rebirth and transformation. This verse also stresses the significance of comprehending and accepting the role played by the Holy Spirit in the church and in the lives of believers. Overall, this verse provides deep theological insights regarding the New Covenant's nature, the Holy Spirit's transformational power, and the function of gospel priests.

Old and New Covenant contrasts:

- 5.3.1.20.1. Old Testament – 2 Corinthians 3:14; New Testament – 2 Corinthians 3:6.
- 5.3.1.20.2. Law of Moses – Acts 13:38-39; Law of Christ – Galatians 6:2.
- 5.3.1.20.3. Law of sin – Romans 7:23, 8:2; Law of righteousness – Romans 9:31.
- 5.3.1.20.4. Law of the flesh – Romans 7:5-7; Law of the Spirit – Romans 8:2.
- 5.3.1.20.5. A yoke of bondage – Galatians 5:1; Law of liberty – James 1:25.
- 5.3.1.20.6. Aaronic priesthood – Hebrews 7:11; Melchizedek priesthood – Hebrews 5:5-10, 7:21.
- 5.3.1.20.7. Animal sacrifices – Hebrews 9:12; Human sacrifice – Hebrews 9:14-28.
- 5.3.1.20.8. Earthly tabernacle – Hebrews 9:2 ; Heavenly tabernacle – Hebrews 8:2.

- 5.3.1.20.9. No inheritance – Romans 4:13; Eternal inheritance – Hebrews 9:15.
- 5.3.1.20.10. Unprofitable – Hebrews 7:18; Profitable – Hebrews 7:19, 25.
- 5.3.1.20.11. Dead works – Hebrews 9:14; Living works – Hebrews 9:14.
- 5.3.1.20.12. No mercy – Hebrews 10:28; Complete mercy – Hebrews 8:12.
- 5.3.1.20.13. Brings bondage – Galatians 4:24-25; Brings liberty – 2 Corinthians 3:17.
- 5.3.1.20.14. Exposes sin – Galatians 3:19; Covers sin – Romans 4:1-8.
- 5.3.1.20.15. Under law – Romans 6:14-15; Under grace – Galatians 3:22-25.
- 5.3.1.20.16. For Israel only – Deuteronomy 4:7-8, 5:3; For all men – Matthew 26:28.

The fundamental flaw of the Old Covenant was that although there was a high priest who would regularly offer an animal sacrifice for the sins of Israel, such sacrifices could never fully secure forgiveness<sup>606</sup> because, with the New Covenant that Jesus established and the gift of the Holy Spirit who indwells in all Christians, they can go directly to God through Jesus<sup>607</sup>.

The New Covenant and the Order of Melchizedek are two critical concepts in the Christian faith that are often connected in theological discussions. The New Covenant, as described in the Bible, refers to a new agreement between God and humanity, which was established through Jesus. This covenant is said to supersede the Old Covenant, which was established through Moses and the Law. The Order of Melchizedek, on the other hand, is a biblical priesthood that predates the Levitical priesthood and is associated with Melchizedek, a priest-king who appears in the Book of Genesis.

Hebrews 7:15–17 states that because Jesus was not a descendant of Aaron, like Melchizedek, he is regarded as a priest in the Order of Melchizedek. So, according to the Law of Moses, He would not be eligible for the Jewish priesthood.

The order of Melchizedek represents a higher and more ancient form of priesthood than the Levitical priesthood. Therefore, the connection between the New Covenant and the Order of Melchizedek lies in the idea that Jesus is the mediator of the New Covenant and that He fulfils

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<sup>606</sup> Hebrews 10:4

<sup>607</sup> Hebrews 7:22



the role of a priest in the Order of Melchizedek. This connection has essential implications for Christian theology as it highlights the superiority of Jesus Christ and the New Covenant He established.

#### 5.4. Melchizedek's Historical Significance

In both Jewish and Christian theologies, the figure of Melchizedek is shrouded in mystery and obscurity. In the Old Testament, he is only referenced twice: in Genesis 14:18–20 and Psalm 110:4. He is then named once again in Hebrews 5–6, 10–, 6–, 20–, 7–, and 21–. Despite the paucity of Melchizedek's biblical mentions, his contributions to the growth of the Jewish and Christian faiths cannot be understated.

In the Genesis narrative, Melchizedek as a Gentile<sup>608</sup> is presented as the king of Salem, which is often identified with Jerusalem and a priest of God. When Abraham returns from a successful military campaign, Melchizedek meets him and blesses him. Abraham gives him a tenth of all the spoils. This event is regarded as the first instance of tithing in the Bible. This has been interpreted by some as a sign of Melchizedek's superior status to Abraham since he received a tithe from him.

In Psalm 110:4, the psalmist prophesies that the coming Messiah will be a priest according to the order of Melchizedek. This verse predicts that the Messiah would not be a priest according to the Aaronic priesthood, which was the established priesthood in ancient Israel, but according to a higher and more ancient priesthood which Melchizedek represents. In the Book of Hebrews, Paul confirms the significance of Melchizedek for Christian theology.

Paul argues that Melchizedek is a type of Christ in that he is a priest-king who blessed Abraham and received a tithe from him. Paul also confirms that Melchizedek's priesthood is superior to the Levitical priesthood, which was established by Moses since he is without father or mother, without genealogy, without beginning of days or end of life and is made like the Son of God. He had a father, mother, birth, and death, but these were not recorded so that he could be a type of Christ who was an eternal being really without beginning and ending<sup>609</sup>. The only two people that had a personal encounter with Melchizedek were Abraham and David and he appeared as a person only in an interpolated image because he has no genealogy.

The significance of Melchizedek for Jewish and Christian theology lies in his representation of a priesthood that is not bound by the genealogical and historical limitations of the Levitical priesthood. Melchizedek's priesthood is seen as a foreshadowing of Christ's eternal priesthood, which transcends the limitations of the Mosaic Law and provides a means of atonement and reconciliation with God that is available to all people. The status of Melchizedek as a priest-king also points to the idea of a messianic figure who will combine the roles of king and priest in a unique and unprecedented way.

The significance of the priesthood of Melchizedek is that he was the first priest in ancient Israel to serve and bless Abraham with bread and wine, which was an excellent way of a sacrifice compared with the customs regulations in those days. In those days, priests slaughtered animals and offered their blood to God. Just as Melchizedek blessed Abraham

<sup>608</sup> Dake's Annotated Reference Bible, 1999. p.20

<sup>609</sup> Hebrews 7:3

with the physical through bread and wine, Jesus became the High Priest in the Order of Melchizedek and blessed Christians with eternal life through the Passover bread and wine.

Ian Clayton, the author of *The Order of Melchizedek*,<sup>610</sup> believes that Christians, in their capacity as priests, should go back to “where the beginning and the end meet and be able to administrate from that position so that we can terminate sin at its conception.” Because in doing this, earthly priests will be able to frame it from the source of the beginning when there was no record of sin. This will empower Christians to walk righteously because sin is terminated at the beginning. Melchizedek’s blessing of Abraham and the spiritual blessing comes through faith rather than physical lineage or adherence to the law.

## 5.5. Conclusion

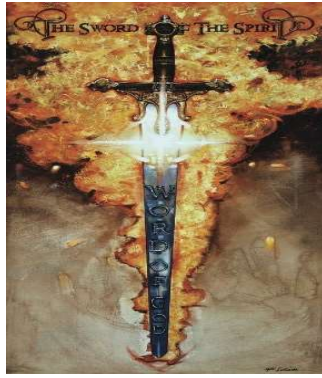
Some individuals are too preoccupied with the midges in their lives to notice the giraffes as they pass by. Stay calm and allow God to work. Being still does not equate to being silent. These words come from the Hebrew word *rapha*, which is translated as “to be weak, to let go, to release.” It just means to give up and pay attention. Give up attempting to manage your life, your worry about money, your unforgiveness, and your history. Give up everything you can't manage and trust that God is in charge.

The blessings and curses result from obedience or disobedience to covenantal terms. Seedtime and harvest are the natural consequences of agricultural practices in Israel. The blessings promised in the covenant include abundance, prosperity, and protection, while the curses have scarcity, poverty, and hardship. The principle of seedtime and harvest implies that Israel would reap what they sow, and the quality and quantity of the harvest would be directly proportional to their faithfulness to God’s covenantal commands.

The covenantal foundation that governs these principles highlights the importance of obedience, loyalty and faithfulness to God’s commands and serves as a reminder that the consequences of their actions are interconnected and interdependent. Jesus’s reward for being obedient to death on the cross was that God raised Him to new Heights in Heaven and gave Him a name above every name, such that at the very mention of Jesus’s name, everything that’s over the earth and under the earth must bow at the mention of His name. His name carries the power to subdue all other power, no matter where it resides.

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<sup>610</sup> Clayton, Ian. (2017) *The Order of Melchizedek*. United Kingdom: Son of Thunder Publications Ltd



## 6. Conclusion

The null hypothesis on this dissertation effectively states that man cannot limit God because His plan to save the lost was preordained before the establishment of the world as stated in 1 Peter 1:19-20, “But with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot: Who verily was foreordained before the foundation of the world, but was manifest in these last times for you,” but the hypothesis is well proved throughout this dissertation with evidence from a Biblical perspective that man limits God when everything is deteriorating because for some it is hard to stay focused on the promises of God.

The hypothesis was grounded in existing literature and Scripture, demonstrating a thorough understanding of the research as the goals and objectives flowed logically from the hypothesis outlining the goals and research objectives of this dissertation was to go back to the Word of God and research what He has to say about getting our thinking and decision making in line with His Word and to know that through Jesus Christ (the anointed One and through His anointing) we have been freed from every curse. Therefore, we can walk in complete blessing, not limiting God in our lives.

The title of the writer’s master’s degree was A Biblical Exegesis of Adam from Genesis and the Fulfilling of the Last Adam as in the Book of Revelation and the title of this dissertation is seemingly disparate but share a common thread in their exploration of the nature of humanity’s relationship with God. A Biblical Exegesis of Adam and the Fulfilment of the Last Adam as in the Book of Revelation seeks to examine the theological significance of Adam as the first human created in the image of God and the ultimate redemption through Jesus Christ.

Meanwhile, An Exposition of Man Limiting God by not Embracing Poverty of the Spirit from a Philosophic Theological Christian Perspective delves into the implications of the human condition in relation to embracing poverty of the Spirit, a Christian virtue that involves surrendering oneself to God’s will.

Adam’s disobedience in the Garden of Eden not only resulted in the fall of humanity but also revealed a fundamental lack of trust in God’s word. In Genesis’s narrative, God had given Adam a clear commandment not to eat from the tree of knowledge of good and evil, earning him that disobedience would lead to death. However, Adam doubting God’s word, limited the extent to which he could experience the fullness of God’s love and provision. As a result, the consequences of Adam’s mistrust continue to affect humanity today.

The consequences of Adam’s disobedience in not trusting God with Scripture are far-reaching and profound. First and foremost, his act of rebellion led to the entrance of sin and death into the world, resulting in the brokenness and suffering we see all around us. Furthermore, Adam’s mistrust has had a profound impact on human spirituality and theology, shaping our understanding of God, sin, and redemption. Adam’s distrust and disobedience then equal man’s mistrust and disobedience today.

Christian theologians throughout history have wrestled with the implications of Adam's fall, exploring the nature of original sin, the extent of human depravity and the role of Christ's atonement. Adam's disobedience has also had an impact on broader cultural and philosophical debates, including the role of free will and the problem of evil. Ultimately, Adam's mistrust of God's word highlights the importance of obedience and faith in God's character, both for individuals and society.

The New Testament presents Jesus Christ as the last Adam, a new and better representative of humanity who brings about the restoration of all things lost in the first Adam. In contrast to Adam's disobedience, Jesus perfectly obeyed God's will, even to the point of death on the cross and through His resurrection, He inaugurated a new creation, reversing the effects of sin and death.

Both research titles address the complexities of human existence in relation to God and highlight the importance of embracing a God-centred life.

In the minds of some people, they set boundaries upon what they thought God would or could do for them. This is a poverty mentality. When Jesus says: "Blessed are the poor in spirit: for theirs is the kingdom of heaven,"<sup>611</sup> He wanted people to be humble in their spirit and realize their own sins and spiritual emptiness. The exposition of man who limits God because of his imperfect heart and unbelief was pointed out from Chapter 1 of this dissertation, as this was the primary motivation of the research on man limiting God.

The concept of man limiting God is not a new one and can be traced back to the Old Testament. The Israelites, despite witnessing numerous miracles and divine interventions, often failed to fully trust in God and His power and covenants. This led to them attempting to control and manipulate their own circumstances rather than relying on God's guidance and provision.

Today, many individuals continue to limit God in a similar manner, seeking to control their own lives and circumstances instead of surrendering to God's will. This is the absence of trust and faith in God, ultimately hindering spiritual growth and development. To fully experience the power and provision of God, individuals must surrender their own desires and trust God and let God be God. Thus, no one should ever limit an infinite God who is omnipresent, omnipotent, omnibenevolent, and omniscient!

The proposed chapters for this dissertation have been comprehensively covered because it provides a thorough examination of the title and topic. Therefore, the proposed chapters have been successfully addressed to offer broad insights and contribute to the existing body of knowledge because this topic is not addressing just the limitations or just the poverty mentality.

"An Exposition of Man Limiting God" did explore the ways in which man constrains the power and potential of God through their actions and beliefs. The second component, "Not Embracing Poverty of the Spirit," did focus on the concept of poverty of the spirit, a term derived from the Christian faith that emphasizes humility, simplicity, and willingness to rely on God.

Finally, the third component, "From a Philosophic Theological Christian Perspective," did approach these topics from a philosophical and theological perspective grounded on the Christian faith and by focussing on principles of the Word of God. Thus, a deep and nuanced exploration of the ways in which man limits the power of God was done. The embracing poverty of the spirit can help to overcome these limitations from a Christian philosophical and theological

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<sup>611</sup> Matthew 5:3

perspective.

The value of this research is to make people realize that they are spiritually poor and have nothing that is of any worth to God except their souls. Christians that are poor in spirit will inherit God's Kingdom. This knowledge was obtained through the integrative literature review and mainly secondary data collection, also known as desk research, added to the electronic search of academic databases.

The contribution of the dissertation adds to this field of knowledge is how to take the limits off God because if you take the limits off God, you will see miracles occur. If you don't, there will be no more prosperity in your life and Satan will put more limitations on your life. Satan will limit you more by reminding you of your past<sup>612</sup>. These are the most significant reasons for this dissertation.

The twofold objectives of this dissertation were achieved because the research questions were aligned with the dissertation objectives and were well addressed. A comprehensive literature review was conducted and identified the holes in other research, which was pointed out for further studies and research in this dissertation.

Throughout the research process, a critical perspective and attention to detail were kept gaining knowledge to make this research of value as a correlation was drawn between those who are "the poor in spirit"<sup>613</sup> and those who have realized that their self-sufficiency is not enough to carry on, those who recognize that people must be contingent on God to be alive and thrive and the children of God who is not limiting the working power of the Holy Spirit in their lives.

If the Apostle Paul had not warned people about quenching the Spirit, who among them would have thought it was possible<sup>614</sup>? To suggest that the supreme Spirit of God could ever be quenched and thus restricted in what he might do otherwise in the lives of people and in the life of the local church is to tread on delicate scriptural slush. Sometimes the limits that people are dealing with are not keeping them imprisoned or stopping their abundance, they are preventing them from moving into the next place God has for us because when God gives the directions, people must trust and obey God. He will provide. God gave directions to Joshua saying:

**"And thou shalt command the priests that bear the ark of the covenant, saying, When ye are come to the brink of the water of Jordan, ye shall stand still in Jordan."**

**Joshua 3:8.**

God told Israel to wait three days at the shore of the Jordan River. While waiting, Israel saw the rushing river due to the snow melting in the mountain of Lebanon<sup>615</sup>. Already forgotten when Moses stretched out his hand at the Red Sea and the waters divided allowing Israel safe passage on dry ground<sup>616</sup>, thinking about how they would make their way through with all their possessions, seemingly an impossible obstacle at that time for them. Joshua encourages and commands Israel<sup>617</sup> to follow the priest who bears the ark of the Covenant and because of their

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<sup>612</sup> Franklin, Jentezen. (2013) Limitless. Florida: Charisma House. pp.69-71

<sup>613</sup> Matthew 5:3

<sup>614</sup> 1 Thessalonians 5:19

<sup>615</sup> Dake's Annotated Reference Bible, 1999. pp.407-408

<sup>616</sup> Exodus 14:21-22

<sup>617</sup> Joshua 3:9-13

obedience when the feet of the Levites priests touched the brim of the overflowing waters of the Jordan, a path on dry ground<sup>618</sup> was made immediately and the waters formed a heap<sup>619</sup>.

It's possible to limit God by forgetting all He has accomplished for us. The psalmist describes the wonders and miracles that God worked for the Israelites in Egypt in Psalm 78:11–12. He says, “And forgot his works, and his wonders that he had shewed them, Marvellous things did he in the sight of their fathers, in the land of Egypt, in the field of Zoan.”

The Israelites' forgetfulness led to their disobedience and lack of faith, as they failed to remember God's provision and deliverance. This forgetfulness limited God's ability to work in their lives, as they did not fully trust in Him and His promises.

In our own lives, we can also limit God's work in our lives by forgetting His past provisions and deliverances. When we forget what God has done for us, we can become complacent, taking His blessings for granted and failing to trust in His ability to provide for us in the future. We can also become more prone to fear and worry as we forget that God has been faithful in the past and may continue to be so in the future.

Therefore, it is essential to remember what God has done for us and to cultivate an attitude of gratitude and thankfulness. We should make a habit of reflecting on God's power and ability to work in our lives and from limiting Him by our forgetfulness and lack of faith.

The author of this dissertation, from the Prolegomena, referred to Psalm 78:41, “Yea, they turned back and tempted God, and limited the Holy One of Israel.” According to Psalm 78, man can put limitations on God due to the following:

- 6.1. Disobedience in Psalm 78:10, “They kept not the covenant of God, and refused to walk in his law.”
- 6.2. Forgetfulness in Psalm 78:11, “And forgot his works, and his wonders that he had shewed them.”
- 6.3. Unbelief in Psalm 78:22, “Because they believed not in God, and trusted not his salvation.”
- 6.4. Worldliness in Psalm 78:33, “Therefore their days did he consume in vanity, and their year in trouble.”
- 6.5. Insincerity in Psalm 78:36-37, “Nevertheless they did flatter him with their mouth, and they lied unto him with their tongues. For their heart was not right with him, neither were they stedfast in his covenant.”
- 6.6. Ingratitude in Psalm 78:42-72.
- 6.7. Idolatry in Psalm 58-61, “For they provoked him to anger with their high places and moved him to jealousy with their graven images. When God heard this, he was wroth, and greatly abhorred Israel: So that he forsook the tabernacle of Shiloh, the tent which he placed among men; And delivered his strength into captivity, and his glory into the enemy's hand.”

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<sup>618</sup> Joshua 3:17

<sup>619</sup> Joshua 3:16

All Christians today must live by the confession of Jerry Savelle<sup>620</sup>, an American author and televangelist who is the author of over seventy books and has preached in more than three-thousand churches and twenty-six nations. Many of his teachings were about not limiting God and his confession is:

“I choose to open the door to the supernatural today. I remove any limits I have established by my wrong thinking and choose instead to believe what God says in His Word. I now receive God’s limitless ability and goodness and declare I will be all He created me to be.”

To close and conclude:

**“Blessed is the man that walketh not in the counsel of the ungodly, nor standeth in the way of sinners, nor sitteth in the seat of the scornful. But his delight is in the law of the LORD; and in his law doth he meditate day and night. And he shall be like a tree planted by the rivers of water, that bringeth forth his fruit in his season; his leaf also shall not wither; and whatsoever he doeth shall prosper.”**

**Psalm 1:1-3.**

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<sup>620</sup> Jerry Savelle:

[https://www.google.com/search?q=who+is+jerry+savelle&rlz=1C1GIGM\\_enZA698ZA699&oq=who+is+jerry+savelle&aqs=chrome...69i57j0i512l2j0i22i30i395j0i10i22i30i395j0i22i30i395l2j69i60.21066j1j7&sourceid=chrome&ie=UTF](https://www.google.com/search?q=who+is+jerry+savelle&rlz=1C1GIGM_enZA698ZA699&oq=who+is+jerry+savelle&aqs=chrome...69i57j0i512l2j0i22i30i395j0i10i22i30i395j0i22i30i395l2j69i60.21066j1j7&sourceid=chrome&ie=UTF)

## 7. Terms and Definitions

- 7.1. Church: The church<sup>621</sup> is the body of Christ, of which He is the head, as in Ephesians 1:22-23 “And hath put all things under his feet and gave him to be the head over all things to the church.” From the day of Pentecost<sup>622</sup>, the body of Christ is made up of all believers in Jesus Christ until His return. Thus, the church is not a building or a denomination.
- 7.2. God’s Law: God’s Law is the Ten Commandments in Exodus 20:3-17 and describes the essential requirements of Israel’s covenant with God and are the fundamental principles that govern the nation and the work of only Israel in the Old Testament. It is also called the Law of Moses. But for the purpose of this dissertation, God’s Law is the Law of Jesus Christ. Jesus did not come to abolish the Law and the Prophets but to fulfil<sup>623</sup> it. Therefore, Christians are no longer under the penalty of the Law, they live now under the Law of grace<sup>624</sup> in the love of God. The Law of Christ is now in the hearts of Christians<sup>625</sup>.
- 7.3. Poor: For the purposes of this dissertation, the term "poor" is used metaphorically and refers to those who know their own spiritual inadequacies, their need for God, and are those who sorrow over their sin. In its literal sense, the term "poor" refers to beggars or are those who do not have enough income. They understand that they lack any sort of personal righteousness and must rely only on God's mercy and grace. Being self-righteous is the antithesis of having a weak spirit.
- 7.4. Poverty: The spirit of poverty seeking worldly riches, is a spirit of Satan and this spirit uses poverty to steal, kill and destroy<sup>626</sup>.

Poverty refers to a situation where an individual or community experiences economic affliction and suffering, lack of means for survival, or a condition of dire need.

Dr. Frederick Kakwata, a fellow postdoctoral researcher at Potchefstroom University with a Ph.D. in practical theology/development studies and an MA in Biblical studies, thinks that these destructive actions result from people's ignorance of God's will or steadfast rejection of His Word. The relationship between human sinfulness and poverty indicates the absence of love, and faith in Christ is the essential element that can end the cycle of poverty by mending damaged relationships with God, the community, and other people. After Jesus arrived at his home in Luke 19:8, Zacchaeus, the wealthy and in charge of collecting taxes in the city of Jericho, made the following statement. “Behold Lord, the half of my goods I give to the poor; and if I have taken anything from any man by false accusation, I restore him fourfold.” By offering to the poor and making restitution with substantial interest to those he had cheated, Zacchaeus demonstrated inward change by outward action.

- 7.5. Poverty of Spirit: Spiritually poor is to realize that we are spiritually bankrupt; we have nothing that is of any worth to God. People like Moses, Jacob, David Solomon, Job, Isaiah, John the Baptist, the Centurion, Peter, Paul, and the Canaanite women were poor in spirit. Neither considered themselves to be somebody. They leaned completely on God for:

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<sup>621</sup> The Church: <https://www.gotquestions.org/what-is-the-church.html>

<sup>622</sup> Acts 2:1-4

<sup>623</sup> Matthew 5:17-18, Galatians 3:13

<sup>624</sup> Romans 6:14, Romans 10:4

<sup>625</sup> Galatians 2:20

<sup>626</sup> John 10:10



- 7.5.1. a sense of powerlessness in themselves;
- 7.5.2. a sense of helplessness before God;
- 7.5.3. a sense of moral uncleanness before God;
- 7.5.4. a sense of personal unworthiness before God; and
- 7.5.5. a sense that if there is to be any life or joy or effectiveness, it will have to be all of God and all of grace.

God wants us to be poor in spirit because then we will inherit God's Kingdom as found in James 2:5-6 "Harken, my beloved brethren, Hath not God chosen the poor of this world rich in faith, and heirs of the kingdom, which he hath promised to them that love him? But ye have despised the poor. Do not rich men oppress you, and draw you before the judgment seats?"

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