

The Theocratic Kingdom

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## Introduction

One of the first questions that is asked when I start to consider taking my notes and making it into a book is “why?” For what reason should I decide to write this out as a book instead of a handful of notes? In this case, the answer is simple. I’ll tell a story as an analogy.

I am one who enjoys physics. I specifically enjoy cosmology – the study of the universe. A few hundred years ago, there was a man by the name of Galileo. One of the reasons that Galileo is so famous is because of the advancements that he made in science. One of those advancements is his discovery in gravity. He discovered that all objects fall at the same rate. The reason that we don’t say the same speed is because they accelerate – continue to pick up speed. Galileo was able to quite accurately measure this rate.

Then Newton came along. When Galileo was accepted as giving one of the most accurate measurements of gravity, Newton expanded upon it. He said that not all objects fall at the same rate. The reason that we find a cannon ball and an apple falling at the same rate is because of the extremely large mass of the Earth. He made the formula that we all have to learn in high school:  $F=ma$ . By this formula, Newton was able to figure the orbit of the planets around the sun, the speed of those planets’ motion around the sun, the orbits of moons, and the mass of galaxies.

For a long time Newton was the name in physics. If you wanted to study the world around us, and study beyond our world and into the universe, you would use Newtonian Mechanics. In the late 1800’s and early 1900’s, there was a problem discovered. Mercury’s orbit around the sun wobbled. Why did it wobble? They didn’t have an answer. So some scientists started speculating that there must be “dark matter.”

Dark matter is basically matter that we cannot see. We do not know if it exists, but we see the effects of it. It was assumed that this dark matter between Mercury and the Sun was the reason behind the wobbling orbit. However, Einstein disproved that. In his General Theory of Relativity, Einstein explained a deeper understanding of how gravity works. Because of this deeper understanding, the need for dark matter vanished. I assume that the same is true today. Modern scientists who discuss dark matter probably are simply misunderstanding the science involved. A new physics is required.

I set my heart to learning about the Kingdom of God. This search and study lead me on a path that called into question almost everything that I had previously held to about the Kingdom of God. With that being said, I in no way want to bash the presence of God in our lives here and now, tangibly. I in no way want to eliminate the understanding of the Kingdom of God within. I in no way want to abolish or discriminate or mock any belief that holds to the Kingdom of God *now*.

Just as Galileo did not have the full understanding of how gravity worked, I believe that many today do not fully grasp the Kingdom of God. We need an update. These things mentioned previously are not necessarily wrong. They have their place. Since many of us do not understand the Kingdom of God, we place translations upon these verses and teachings that are indeed false. The phrase itself is not wrong. The Kingdom of God *is* now. It *is* within. We *can* experience it tangibly.

What I take fault with is the assumptions and translations that then stem out of that. We then take the assumption that because the Kingdom of God is within that we take the Kingdom of God with us. We assume that we take the presence of God wherever we go. We teach that Jesus returns to judge the world, but neglect that He will establish a Kingdom upon this world. The Kingdom of God is indeed now, but a fuller expression is to come *later*.

While digging through the Scriptures, I have come to vastly different conclusions than what I had originally thought. I hope that they will alter your perception. I hope that they bring you into closer relationship with Jesus Christ. But most of all, I hope that they work in you a spirit that would rightly cry out, "Even so, come Lord Jesus."

Words which do not give the light of Christ increase the darkness.

-Mother Teresa

If you don't do your part, don't blame God.

-Billy Sunday

If the Lord's people will humble themselves by admitting that deception is possible to them, they will be the less deceived.

-Watchman Nee

"Oh, to realize that souls, precious, never dying souls, are perishing all around us, going out into the blackness of darkness and despair, eternally lost, and yet to feel no anguish, shed no tears, know no travail! How little we know of the compassion of Jesus!"

-Oswald J. Smith

## I. In the Beginning

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. And God said, “Let there be light,” and there was light. And God saw the light, that *it was* good: and God divided the light from the darkness. And God called the light Day, and the darkness he called Night. And the evening and the morning were the first day.

At the very beginning we find darkness. We find chaos. We find void – or emptiness. We find shapelessness. These are all descriptions of emotions and feelings that every human being on the planet has felt at one time or another. We’ve all felt as though there is no form to life. We’ve all felt as though we’re empty and purposeless. We know what it is to feel in a state of chaos. In fact, I would submit that the most chaotic that we feel is not when we’re busiest, but when darkness is upon the face of the deep. In the moments when life slows down and seems surreal because of heartbreak or suffering – in that we find the most chaos.

We spend the rest of the chapter seeing how God created order and light. When the universe was empty, God filled it. When the world was formless, He shaped it. God brought order into the creation, and day after day He brings more order out of the chaos. But we don’t see God eliminating the darkness. Why is that?

Before I get into that point, I want to search a little deeper in what God does do. We find in Revelation 21-22 that there is no darkness. God was not unknowing when He made this world. If it is in God’s plan and intention now (or at least in Revelation 21) to have no darkness, then I must believe that it was God’s original plan. What we find that God does do in response to the darkness is that He set up rulers over the darkness.

On day four, it is written that God “made two great lights; the greater light to rule the day, and the lesser light to rule the night: *he made* the stars also.” Why this wording of rule? Do the sun and moon rule over the darkness? Genesis 1 seems to indicate yes. They were made for the intention of giving light to the world, and to hold back the darkness. This does not tell us why God allowed the darkness to stay, but it does show us that God had intention of withholding it.

I don’t know, and this is merely speculation, but it also seems to indicate in the Psalms that the angels of God were created to rule over God’s creation. Psalm 82 is a great example of this – the whole Psalm is dedicated to speaking to these “rulers” that are greater than men, but will be judged as men. Is it possible that God created the angels to guard over the darkness? Did God possibly make the angels to co-rule with Him over the earth and to bring forth righteousness and justice in the land?

This of course brings us to the pivotal point of the plot. Where did Satan come from? Did God create Satan – and thus create evil? When we examine the Kingdom of God, we are describing something that is quite different than anything we see around us. We are surrounded by darkness, violence, and terror. How do you perceive something that is quite contrary to that which you see all around you?

## Clothed in Darkness

In Genesis 1:2, we find a bit of Hebrew poetry. The Spirit of God is being cross-compared with the darkness. Because the word for “deep” and the word for “waters” are being likened to one another, the word for darkness and the word for Spirit are being likened to one another. That is not to say that they are synonymous. The author is saying something about God. His Spirit has some sort of a positive relation to darkness.

This quick hint that is very subtle gives us a bit of a tip off. Why did God not completely purge heaven and earth of the darkness? We find various Scriptures that might help us to understand. In Exodus 20, Moses draw’s near to the “thick darkness” where God was. This is reiterated in Deuteronomy 4 and 5. 2 Samuel 22:12 states that God made thick darkness, dark waters, and thick clouds His pavilion. The Lord speaks to Solomon in 1 Kings 8:12 and says that He will dwell in the thick darkness.

God seems to be found in the thick darkness – specifically when the name YHWH is used. So why would God keep the darkness at the beginning? Is it possible that God created humanity pure, but even that purity and innocence could not protect Adam from the glory and the light that God is? At the end of the Bible, we find that the people of the city of God are in the midst of the light of God, but there are a people outside of that city that are being ruled over (check the last part of Revelation 22:5).

Is it possible that even with purity we cannot see God and live? Does it take something more substantial than purity? What I’m getting at is that maybe it was a mercy of God to allow the darkness to continue for a season. Adam needed to take of the fruit of the tree of life before he could see God and live. In the next chapter we’ll explore what that tree of life symbolizes. For now, we’ll leave the idea with whatever that tree bore, the life that it offered was the only thing that could cause Adam to see God face-to-face.

If this were true, then God would need to clothe Himself in darkness. He would need to cover Himself as mercy so He could walk with Adam in the Garden. There would come a day when God could dwell with mankind and not need to disguise himself or cover His majesty. The Scripture shows this to be heaven.

If we desire to know why God would not just make us so that we could behold Him, then we lack understanding of His essential character. It is and always has been the pattern of God (even from Genesis 1) to bring forth from a lesser glory into the greater glory. This is why resurrection is so crucial to the Christian faith. It is not about the first state of something that we should pay attention to. We ought to pay attention to the details of how God chooses. He chooses the weak and foolish to confound the wise. He takes the thing in darkness and chaos and starts bringing light and order into it. This is the pattern set up from the beginning – who are we to challenge God?

Adam was made from the dust of the earth. He was made pure – undefiled. Corruption was brought into Him from deception. The very darkness that was intended for Adam’s good was thus used as a power to destroy the relationship between God and man. This point is pivotal. Adam was created undefiled, but that purity and innocence was not enough to see God. Adam needed something else – something greater than innocence and human righteousness – to see God as He is.

The reason I belabor this point is because Adam was not intended from the beginning to remain in that condition. God made Adam pure. That is true. But God intended that Adam would be more than pure. God intended Adam to experience the fullness of His self. We can know that because we can read the end of the Bible to see humanity and God coexisting together. We can see the ultimate intention that there would be no darkness. It isn't necessary any longer. People can behold the Lord as He is.

So when we look at Adam, we should not see him as something that we should go back to being. Rather, we ought to view him as corruptible. He was corrupted. But there is a glory that God is bringing into humanity that would make them incorruptible. Where darkness at one point had opportunity to defile mankind and bring sin, there is coming the time where darkness has no power and sin is nonexistent. We have not attained to that glory, but just because we have not attained to it *now* does not mean it was not intended by God *at the beginning*.

But if I understand anything from Scripture it is that God intends to work with humanity. It is very possible that God had intentions to work with His creation in driving back and expelling the darkness. The ultimate intention was for all of His creation to work together – led by humanity as co-rulers with God – to expel the creation of darkness. But still, there needed to be something to happen to that humanity. It is not that Adam was fallen. It is that no created thing can behold God and survive. The whole of creation would need to be made into something more glorious. And that doesn't happen because God simply remakes it. That only comes about by a certain kind of cleansing.

The whole of Scripture (and especially eschatology) seems to speak of this climax where a final tribulation breaks forth and darkness is given full reign to rule. In this time of calamity, the saints are purged like never before. Even with the darkness having full sway, God somehow is able to use that darkness to bring about purity and righteousness in the creation that would cause all things to be new. It is after the 1000-year reign of Christ, the war of Gog and Magog, and the judgment seat that we find the new heaven and new earth. These are not things that seem to be somewhere else.

The new heaven and new earth seem to indicate more of a cleansing of this heaven and earth. Darkness has passed away. Because it has passed away, the whole of creation is not the same as it was before. That in its self is a total change. All of creation wars against the darkness in the final tribulation. Revelation seems to indicate this. The sun scorches people, the moon turns red, the stars collaborate together to strike the earth, there are earthquakes and hailstones the size of cars, at one point it seems like a super volcano erupts, and even the people are crying out to the rocks to protect them.

The end of the age is concluded by a massive onslaught of creation and the righteous – working hand-in-hand together – to expel the darkness and cleanse the world from evil. If this is how it ends, then it was God's intention from the beginning. The violence and wickedness might or might not have been what God intended. That isn't the point of discussion. However darkness would choose to react is outside the question. We cannot know such things.

From whence evil?



This is an age-old question. Many skeptics have used it as reason to doubt. Many theologians have used it to believe. The question of evil and suffering are very difficult subjects to navigate through. We need to be very precise in our wording and very cautious to not say something that is heretical or blasphemous. God did not create evil. He did not create the devil. From that which is absolutely pure, no evil can come.

But this, of course, sparks the long asked question? From where *did* evil come? Who *did* create the devil? I would like to attempt to clarify a little bit. God created Lucifer. The name itself means light bearer. He created the angel. This is made clear in both Isaiah 14 and Ezekiel 28. But God looked at His creation on day 6 and said it was very good. Just when did Lucifer fall? We see in the book of Job that the angels rejoiced at the laying of the foundations of the earth. That took place on the third day. So before the third day, God must have created the angels.

God rested on the seventh day. There is no way that we can say that Lucifer fell on the seventh day. If that were true, then God wouldn't have rested. Genesis chapter 2 is a reiteration of the sixth day. So when we reach chapter 3, we are now reading of some time not announced. It is possible that Adam lived in the Garden for 100 years before taking of that fruit. He was 130 when he bore Seth. We don't know how old Cain was when Seth was born, and we don't know how old Cain and Abel were when Abel died.

I say this to make the point that we really can't give conclusive answers to when Satan tempted the woman. The best we know is that it was probably within that window of after day 7 and before Adam was 100. I have a theory on how it happened. It doesn't necessarily tell us when. God created out of darkness, but did not eliminate the darkness. When there was void (emptiness), He filled; when there was chaos, He created order. But darkness continued. I've already ventured into this thought a little bit.

God set up lights to govern the darkness. The sun was to govern the day, and the moon was to govern the night. We see in Isaiah 24 that they are ashamed and confounded at the end of the age. They allowed the darkness to continue to creep in and overtake God's creation. I speak of light and darkness as though they have personality. I don't believe this is mere personification. I think that words escape us on this description. We are left groping for proper language.

I don't think that the physical light and physical darkness is what is being expressed here. When I read the writings of John, I am captivated by the usage of these words. I don't think they simply mean physical light and physical darkness. John's gospel gives to both light and darkness personality. Darkness has a power to blind and to cause people to stumble. Light has power to set free and to release from the blindness and stupor that the darkness has brought.

Jesus is called the light of the world. John refers to Jesus at the very beginning of his gospel as the light; "the true light that gives light to every man was coming into the world." In Jesus was life, and that life was the light of men. This life that is the light of men shines in the darkness and the darkness cannot overcome it. Do you see what I mean by John personifying light and dark? It is almost as if these are actually two different powers of two different kingdoms.

And here is where I think the answer lies. I can't help but wonder if maybe Lucifer saw the darkness and was captivated by it. Something about the darkness might

have enticed him, and he allowed it to overtake him. The power of darkness that was being governed over and held at bay now became the force by which Lucifer tried to establish himself as the Most High.

In this we have much that needs to be discerned. Is there a difference between sin and darkness? Sin has a power. It is more than an action. There is something about sin that actually binds and blinds humanity. We cannot get free from its grip. To stop performing actions that God calls abominable is not enough to make it to heaven. Our righteousness is not enough. There is still something within mankind that is not up to par. I think this is especially true after the fall. In Adam we all die.

The power of Satan is the darkness itself. It is by this darkness that he blinds us. What it is about darkness that causes humanity to be in a stupor, I don't exactly know. Sin is only a side effect of this. I don't mean to make it less than what it is. As abhorrent as sin is, the real fight is against darkness itself. To fight against that darkness is to fight against everything that is opposed to God. God originally used darkness as a cloak. It was originally permitted for a season.

What is it about the darkness that God was willing to allow to remain? I think that before it was harnessed for evil to go against God, the darkness was a symbol of mystery. It was something of the unknown. God allowed the darkness to remain because darkness hides. It cloaks. There are certain things that have not been revealed yet. The apostle Paul speaks of mysteries that were not before known until revealed in his time. Two of these would be the mystery of Christ and the mystery of the Church.

The mystery of Christ is stated as thus: the savior of the world had to come as priest and king, and had to come as sacrifice and ruler. Atonement had to be made. This is what many of the Jews miss. This is what many Christians even miss. It says in Daniel 7 that Messiah comes in the clouds. It says in Zechariah 9 that Messiah comes on a donkey. Which is it? Does He come in the clouds or on a donkey? The answer is both. Hosea 6:3 says that the Messiah would come like the former and latter rains – like the spring and fall harvests.

His coming would be twice. In between would be an entity associated with Israel but outside Israel called the Church. Paul mentions a mystery yet to be revealed called the man of sin. This is known in Revelation as the beast or the Antichrist. The darkness originally had a sense of mystery and cloaking, but that does not mean that there was evil contained within it. What Satan did was took that mystery and cloaking and held it over the man and woman. He proclaimed as one who has secret knowledge that the woman knew nothing of.

When the serpent went to the woman, he did not tell her to eat the fruit. Not one time did the serpent tell her that she should take and eat of the fruit. He was much more crafty than that. The serpent started by asking a question that denies God's innate goodness. Is God really after our best interest? Does He truly want our success in the highest sense of the word? Does God, as a Father, so love us that if He withholds information from us it is for our good, and never for our downfall? This is what the serpent attacks.

He came along and started to speak words that challenged whether God really does desire our benefit. Because God has hidden this knowledge from you, how can you

be sure that He isn't holding more from you? How can you be sure that He isn't withholding something that is essential to you?

This is the way the serpent twists and mocks. He took the darkness – the mystery and the unknown – and he used it to then confuse and deceive the woman. Thus, the darkness, though it was originally intended for good, was forced to perform something wicked. The darkness was for our benefit. That mystery and the hidden knowledge was for our good. If it was essential that mankind would determine for self what is good and what is evil, then the fruit of this tree would not have been forbidden. However, our morality and our knowledge of right and wrong do not come from our own perception. It comes from something deeper than what *we* think.

Our morality as Christians is to come from God and God alone. The Father instructs, the Son reveals, and the Spirit enforces. It is contained within all three parts of God that we find morality. No one is greater than the other, and we cannot say that morality comes from one part alone. It is neither in Christ alone, nor by the Spirit alone. I make this point only to display how far we are from this. Even in our Christianity we have taken of the knowledge of good and evil.

We'll dive further into this topic in the next chapter. For now we end with a reasonable conclusion. God had created all things good. God had kept the darkness at bay by having the two great lights to govern it. Satan then took that darkness and yielded it for evil. Something in the darkness must have enticed him and consumed him with pride and envy. So, by manipulating the very creation that God had made, the devil brought in evil. Mankind's fall was not contained only in humanity. It was a cosmic fall because it brought darkness into all aspects of creation. That which was at the first made to dwell in light has been now cast into darkness.

If the whole Church goes off into deception, that will in no way excuse us for not following Christ.

-Leonard Ravenhill

To be right with God has often meant to be in trouble with men

-A.W. Tozer

Silence in the face of evil is itself evil. God will not hold us guiltless. Not to speak is to speak. Not to act is to act.

-Dietrich Bonhoeffer

“We don’t need a new definition of Christianity, we need a new demonstration of Christianity.”

-Leonard Ravenhill

“How shall I feel at the judgment, if multitudes of missed opportunities pass before me in full review, and all my excuses prove to be disguises of my cowardice and pride?”

-Unknown

## II. Two Trees – Two Wisdoms

“And out of the ground made the LORD God to grow every tree that is pleasant to the sight, and good for food; the tree of life also in the midst of the garden, and the tree of knowledge of good and evil. And the LORD God commanded the man, saying, Of every tree of the garden thou mayest freely eat: but of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, thou shalt not eat of it: for in the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die,” Genesis 2:9, 16-17.

When I look at this text, I see that God created two trees in the midst of the Garden. When the serpent comes to tempt Eve, he only speaks of one tree in the midst of the Garden. Eve in return only addresses one of the two trees in the midst of the Garden. The word “midst” would mean the middle. The image in my mind is of a small clearing with these two trees next to one another. Both of them represent something in and of themselves, but each of them represents the other tree just as much.

What is it about the tree of life that it would be blessed? What is it about the tree of the knowledge of good and evil that it would be cursed? Both are symbols of something larger than what is initially being spoken. What captures my attention is that to only one tree was commanded that it should not be eaten of. We find out later in Genesis 3 that the result of eating of the tree of life is that man would never die. I’m not sure that mankind would have died regardless, at least physically. I think that this symbol of life is something deeper than physic.

In the last chapter I talked about how God might have used the darkness to cloak Himself. He still does today. I talked about how Adam might not have been able to see God in full glory and live. The tree of life is what is necessary to see God. In the New Testament, this is typically called very specifically “eternal life.” Why would Adam not take of that? I’m not sure how long Adam was in the Garden. It is possible that he was there for close to 100 years. Why would the one tree be rejected, and the other be the means of temptation?

In the last analysis, the tree of life is the only tree remaining. When we look at Genesis 1 and 2, we find both trees. But at the end of Revelation, we only find the tree of life. I’ll discuss later why this is. For now, I want to establish the point that if God has set it up this way *now*, then His original intention was that very same thing. God’s original intention was that darkness would be overcome and that mankind could live with God and in His presence unadulterated. This means two things: the tree of the knowledge of good and evil cannot last forever, and darkness must also be exterminated.

Why exactly God chose to do things the way He has chosen is His prerogative. This is the defining characteristic of God. He is the one that chooses. His choices establish His sovereignty in a greater degree than any amount of foreknowledge and sovereignty in the Calvinistic sense ever could. This is not an argument for Arminianism either. Arminians fall short of this perception too. This kind of view takes God’s sovereignty as absolute. Our prayers and our moods cannot determine whether God chooses this or that. His choice speaks of His character. This is the scandal of specificity. Arminians are afraid to get too specific. God’s specific choosing is interpreted as predestination. But we cannot lack in our Bible verses to say one over the other.

While discussing the two trees, let's ask the question of what they mean. Why would knowledge of good and evil be what God does not desire for us to take? In our free will, the one thing that God never gave us was "what we think best." Free will does not mean that we are allowed to determine for self what is best and to pursue that. God alone gives revelation of good and evil, right and wrong. I don't think that God would have hidden this from Adam. The question isn't whether God intended us to make our own choices. The question is from where do we determine if that choice is good?

Our morality and sense of good and evil must only come from God. Anything outside of Him is taking up that same fruit that caused curse. This, then, begs the question of how to determine from where our morality is coming from at all. And this is why we must understand what the tree of the knowledge of good and evil symbolizes. In short, I find these symbols to be most correct: self-preservation, self-promotion, and self-pleasure. The tree itself denotes self. The things that are self-promoting, self-preserving, and self-gratifying are the things that our flesh longs for.

It is from the basis of self that we determine right and wrong, good and evil. If I wouldn't want someone to do this to me, then I shouldn't do it to others. If I want someone to do it to me, then I should do it to others. However, if there is a time where we must stand up for truth and we know that we'll be placing self in danger, we then quietly find another alternative. We might gossip or we might anonymously write a note, but to stand up and get in the face of unreality and deception is far from us.

I don't need to look far to find an example. I caught a coworker stealing. Truth demands that I would report it. However, in sympathy I didn't simply report it. I offered myself. I went to the boss and I offered to pay for it. I was self-sacrificial as much as possible. The other person lost their job, and almost the entire staff – other than the boss and a handful of others – despised what I did. Before this incident I was well liked. After that incident many of the people no longer desired to associate with me.

While being asked why I chose to do this, a manager asked me how I thought this would help the man. I wasn't trying to help him. Truth demands that I would stand up for it. When something happens that goes against God, you must stand up against it. These are the moments that are the hardest. It is easy to go with the flow and be well liked. It is extremely difficult to stand up for God. It is even more difficult when it means that you are jeopardizing your reputation, friendships, stature, job, family, or all the other areas of self.

## Two Value Systems

It seems to me as that these are two polar value systems. The one tree promotes self. The other tree – the tree of life – promotes selflessness. Jesus told us that if we lose our life we shall obtain it. If we take up our crosses and follow Him, then we shall be His disciples. Those that want to save their lives shall lose them. But those that lose their life for Jesus' sake shall save it. The tree of life is about resurrection. It is about a denial of self-life to take up eternal life.

At the root of all disputes in modern Christianity we have these two trees. Everything forms from such a view. There are many questions that our society faces. Not one of those questions is left unanswered when we face down our darkest deeps and ask the question of where it comes from. Does our understanding come from the tree of life, or does it come from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil? Our theology can actually misrepresent Christ and turn people to a misappropriation of God. That should seem obvious. What isn't so obvious is the root.

Jesus said in John 7:17 that anyone who chooses to do the will of God will know whether Christ's words are true. There is an actual exchange between holiness and understanding. It is by obedience that we obtain knowledge. The reason this is so is because of the definition of wisdom. If our definition of wisdom is simply an application of knowledge, then we have misappropriated that word. It says in Proverbs that the fear of the Lord is the beginning of knowledge (1:7). It is said later in Proverbs (9:10) that the fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom. If this is true, then what shall we say of the atheists?

Do atheists have knowledge or wisdom? We know that they do. But then, is the Bible incorrect? We are not finding any kind of contradiction. The struggle is the same ancient struggle. From where do you gain your knowledge and wisdom? God has given us a brain to be able to reason and probe and learn. We can, in our own humanity, learn and become knowledgeable. But if we're going to understand the concepts of knowledge and wisdom from the biblical perspective, then we need to dig deeper than what the Oxford dictionary tells us.

It takes a desire to wrestle in order to understand such words. How do you understand the word glory? How do you understand the word holy? These are not simply taught. They are only understood on the basis of openness to God's Spirit, and revelation from His Son. There is no other way to come into a deeper knowledge. Indeed, the fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom and knowledge. Without it, we cannot even understand what such words entail.

And so when we read this verse in John 7 about only those who do the will of God will know whether Jesus' words are truth, I think it is safe to say that it is the case for all of Scripture. Why are there debates on Calvinism and Arminianism? Why are there debates on evolution and creation? Does the Bible not clearly teach these things? Are there grey areas in Scripture where human interpolation is needed? I whole-heartedly say no, there are no grey areas in the Scripture. Many times what we find is that we are unwilling to dive into the text without a pre-conceived notion that it has to be one way or another. To say that both Calvinism and Arminianism are true sounds paradoxical.

There is a deeper knowledge than our modern great debates. There is a bigger picture that does not diminish any Scriptures, but instead promotes all Scriptures. I find that when I am trying to push a certain idea, it usually means that my base is off center. Because I have not grasped the deeper picture, I have held to a specific point or view. By my holding to that specific point or view – even if that view is truth – I promote that view until it is no longer truth. It no longer holds as reality. A good example of this would be the modern hyper-grace movement. Of course there is some marvelous truth that we are no longer condemned if we are in Christ. But the rest of that verse says it is only true for

those that walk according to the Spirit. A carnal and immoral man that is in Christ is a liar. You cannot be of the light and walk in darkness.

And all of this is obtained through the grounds of resurrection. Our understanding of the faith and our knowledge of God can only be obtained by the tree of life. If we humanly try to understand, we will warp Scripture and cause it to say something that it was never intended to say. Scripture cannot be known on the basis of intellect. That is why God has chosen the foolish things to confound the wise. The wisdom of this world is at a complete loss when used to try and understand the Bible.

Only obedience to God will give us our understanding. Nothing less than devotion and holiness can grant us deeper insight. I hope that the point does not need to be made that we should study the Bible. Holiness and devotion cannot be obtained only through prayer – devotion itself requires a study of Scripture to know what God has said. And it is this point that is critical. I often see things in opposites. The world and its value system are at a polar opposite with God and His value system. Then the atheists have the audacity to claim that God is immoral because of the genocide recorded in the Bible.

In the next chapter we'll look into the principalities and powers. When we examine the demonic presences that influence humanity, I will continue to drive this point. So for now I want to make the base in order to springboard into that discussion. What is at the root of the two value systems? It is the tree of life or the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. The former states that God alone is good – the latter states that humanity is sufficient.

The tree of life is a cross. When we take the fruits of that tree, we die to self. It is a selfless tree. Anyone who attempts to take of that fruit in selfish motive finds that they are all the more practicing the values of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. In order to obtain life we must lose our lives. This seems absolutely absurd. Everything in the natural tells us that in order to gain life you must work to sustain and maintain life. Everything in the natural tells us in order to have life we must work hard to get enough money to go out and enjoy life. The tree of life gives it freely to anyone who abhors their own life and seeks to take up a greater life than their own.

This is the basis of the faith itself. Anyone who says they are of God and still live from selfish passions are liars. They have never met God. To take of the fruit of life is to meet God. To meet God is to die to self and live from Him. To live from Him is to live like Him. That alone is the ground and pillar of truth. We as the Church are called to be a representation of that ground and pillar (1 Timothy 3:15). Knowledge and wisdom are expressions of the Spirit of God.

How did Jesus answer those that came to Him with ridiculous questions? I think that every believer needs to wrestle with this. If we were put on the spot with the same kinds of questions asked Jesus, most of us would end up with our faces sticking out and embarrassed. Where did He get His wisdom to confront the scoffers? It came from the Spirit. And Jesus then put His finger into our chests and told us not to worry about when we're taken before courts and rulers because that same Spirit will reveal to us what to say. And how many of us have mouth-stopping answers?

Our view of wisdom and knowledge is only the biblical perception of wisdom and knowledge when all other previous experience and understanding that has led us up to



this moment cannot account for the answer that we give. Nothing in our lives can attest to why we would respond the way that we respond. It is as though God Himself has spoken or acted through flesh and blood. That kind of obedience to Christ is not born in a day. It is not learned simply because we have read a book or spent a little bit of time in the morning with God. This is only born by deep crying unto deep.

At the center of the faith, and at the center of all of mankind's beliefs, is the question of where our wisdom and understanding come from. The answer to that question is actually not found in searching out our hearts. The answer to that question is found in our openness, willingness, and obedience to every word of God. There is not one word in the Bible that is not important. We are called to follow the Law in every aspect. This takes both study to know what the Law says, and it takes Jesus revealing to us the full purpose and intention of that Law.

Everything that we are about comes from the question of whether we have been raised from the dead. The full purpose and intention of the Law (both Old Testament and New Testament Law) is that we would be full expressions in a corporate body of Jesus Christ. It is impossible to have an absolutely pure and holy and blameless walk before God apart from the resurrection. It is not by might, nor by power, but by God's Spirit. The whole crux of the faith hinges upon resurrection and how we perceive it. If it is simply a doctrine that we hold to, but it is not an outworking reality in our lives, then resurrection has no meaning and/or power.

The value system that we hold to is not achievable on the basis of our own human ability. God calls each and every person to hold to a morality that is beyond our capacity. But the kicker is that God doesn't merely call us as individuals to this kind of lifestyle. The whole point of Israel having their Laws was to display God to the nations (Deuteronomy 4:6). God is calling whole nations and systems and governments to obedience. If it weren't already impossible enough for individuals to live in the light, God then furthers the onus by demanding us to call our nations to obedience before God.

This is why I see there are two value systems and that they are opposite. If we are content to live out of our own ability, these challenges will be worded away. It takes resurrection to even agree with the basis of resurrection. If you hold to the one value system, then you cannot entertain the other. You cannot be halfway. Nor can you hold to one value system without fighting against the other. Our very presence is a spiritual warfare. Our walk before God is fighting against the principalities and powers of darkness. Our authority is not given on the basis of devotion. It is given solely on the basis of resurrection. If the Spirit is at work within, then we have the authority over the enemy. But if the Spirit is lacking, then the demons will reply, "Jesus we know, and Paul we know, but who are you?"

This kind of perception makes demands upon our walk that would not have otherwise been made. It isn't enough to be moral people. Morality only takes someone so far. Ethics only take us so far. Our denomination and categories only take us so far. This is beyond all morale, ethic, and category. This view that bases everything upon the resurrection cannot be defined. All terms seem to fall short. It is a Hebraic view of the faith. This view of resurrection has its inception at the beginning with the two trees in the Garden, and various characters emerge throughout the Old Testament to display the same

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