

## THE IMMORTALITY OF THE SOUL CONTROVERSY

This chapter is likely to be the only comprehensive, in-depth Bible study you will ever find concerning this important subject. In spite of the fact that many beliefs and practices within modern Christianity are influenced by this long-standing tradition, the sad truth is – no matter what church or theological school you attend, and no matter what side of the controversy you are on – you have never had this doctrine adequately and formally covered in sermons, Sunday schools, Bible school curriculums, or home Bible study. There are several reasons for that. First, as with other subjects that are “common knowledge” in society, there is a lazy perception that learning about the immortality of the soul issue is a boring waste of time. (Another example of something that is common-knowledge-based is the way most motorists aim their side-view mirrors: they redundantly and improperly use their car’s side-view mirror as another rear-view mirror and thereby unnecessarily create the infamous and dangerous “blind spot” so common among the thoughtless driving masses – a subject covered on page D36-12,13.)

Second, those few Christians whose intellectual curiosity is aroused and who actually begin searching for doctrinal material are quickly discouraged when they find no Biblically-substantive information in Christian bookstores, on the Internet, or in church and university libraries because Christianity has largely ignored the immortality of the soul issue.

Third, the Lord designed this topic to be like His parables: The only way to understand it is to already have obediently mastered other related Bible topics so the pieces of the puzzle fit right into place without strain or contradiction. Therefore this topic is the “precept upon precept, line upon line, here a little and there a little” type of time-consuming Bible study God requires of “them that are weaned from the milk, and drawn from the breasts” before He opens their understanding of His doctrines – according to what He says in **Is 28:9,10,13,14**. Wherefore hear the word of the Lord, ye scornful men, lest ye go and fall backward, and be broken, and snared, and taken.

Fourth, most Christians cannot handle a Bible study as long as this chapter, let alone as lengthy as this book or, God forbid, as long as His Book. I know because I have learned to no longer be surprised when I offer treatises on Bible doctrines to Christians (who had professed interest) for them to react by incredulously flipping through the several pages of typed material, handing it back, and loudly scoffing, “Whoa! What did you do...write a book! No way do I have time to wade through this!” I then realize if they’re unable to run with footmen (a few pages of material), there is no way they can contend with horses (the entire Bible) in the swelling of Jordan (**Je 12:5**). Yea, they shall die by the very Sword they despised and failed to master (**Jn 12:48**).

In addition, most Christians who begin reading this chapter will never finish it because they believe their job as God’s servants is to eat the forbidden fruit and gain a knowledge of right and wrong. They will read just enough to find out what my “position” is on the topic, and if they *agree* with me they’ll quit because they already “know” the “right answer”, and if they *disagree* with me they’ll also quit because, in spite of the fact that they’ve never mastered this topic, they think tradition has already “taught” them the “right answer” – and there is no sense wasting their time reading something by a man whose position differs from theirs. I put “taught” in quotes because subjects like sex, morality, and the immortality of the soul *are never taught in churches or Bible schools*. I say again, the information about those topics that we gleaned from our unsaved secular societies when we were unsaved, is never re-taught, revised, or corrected when we are born again and join a Bible-preaching church. Why? Because they are “common knowledge” (like driving mirrors) – in spite of the fact that almost nobody can put two intelligent sentences back-to-back about any of those topics.

The purpose of a Christian servant is not to know the “right answers.” Our purpose is to do the will of our Master. That means we must get to know Him. For example, if we know He has said “Thou shalt not kill” and “Thou shalt not eat unclean meat”, and then one day He tells us to kill our son as a sacrifice like He told Abraham (**Ge 22:2**), or He tells us to “kill, and eat” unclean animals like He told Peter (**Ac 10:12,13**), we won’t resist the will of God and backtalk Him like Peter did (**Ac 10:14**). As you mature Bible believers know, it is infinitely easier to “know” the “right doctrinal answers” than it is to understand the principles behind those doctrines; and it is easier to know how tradition describes Jesus Christ than it is to gradually, through Bible study, get to know the parable-like Christ who reveals Himself through the word of God to those who love Him enough to discern the pieces of the parable by prayerfully and tirelessly putting together precept upon precept, line upon line, here a little and there a little. Make no mistake about it, brother, God reveals Himself through a knowledge of His Holy Bible – not via knowing the “right answers.” Knowing the “right answers” about doctrine only makes us Pharisees. This business of God being a Parable who is revealed only to those who **learn and do the words in the Bible** is what the Lord was saying to Judas (not Iscariot) in **Jn 14:21-26**. There is no substitute for learning the Bible/getting to know God.

Those of you who have studied this book from the beginning will find some of this material was covered earlier. I touched upon immortality of the soul in earlier chapters (see *Index*) because I wanted you to see the historical context of the development of the belief that even unregenerate souls have immortality. Those of you who skipped ahead to this chapter will most likely have to go back and master the material in the historical section and the earlier doctrinal chapters because, while I repeat some of it here, I rely on your already having studied those earlier chapters in order to understand some of the specifics and some of the Bible principles that support and complement my explanations in this chapter. If you have not first acquired an understanding of some of the basics in the Bible, you simply will not be equipped to understand this doctrine that has befuddled so many Christians for centuries because they, too, “skipped ahead” to this advanced topic. Once you have mastered this doctrine you will understand why so many of our forefathers, no matter which side of the controversy they were on, never really understood the topic: They never learned all the separate-but-related doctrinal pieces of the Bible puzzle that fit together to form, support, and reveal this parable-like doctrine that is such an important key to seeing the big picture. That advanced level of Biblical understanding, and the faith, belief, and strength needed to apply those pieces by putting them together, requires an intimate walk with the Lord that springs only from the kind of true love for Him that makes Bible study a passion, not a chore. If you newcomers stubbornly, imprudently, impudently, and slothfully refuse to go back and study the other chapters, you will be unable to keep up with the rest of the class and will remain in the ranks of the befuddled who live in darkness because they never filled their lamps with oil.

In this chapter we'll first review some basic teachings in the Bible that are prerequisites to understanding Christianity itself, let alone doctrine. Then we'll look at two subjects affecting the immortality of the soul issue: 1) the Law, which Christians don't understand enough about to know it affects the pagan immortality issue, and 2) the Great Commission, which *everybody* brings up. Then in a historical chronology we'll cover what God's people believed – and why – during the Old and New Testament eras, which is very illuminating because it will show you why Christians stopped publishing material defending the immortality of the soul long before the Protestant Reformation. In this historical part we'll also examine the two types of arguments for pagan immortality, one Bible-based and one Reason-based, that have been used to defend the doctrine since the Protestant Reformation. When you complete this study you will have the kind of in-depth Biblical and historical understanding of this topic that will allow you to speak up with confidence and authority in any setting – no matter which side of the argument your audience is on.

You will notice I often say “the immortality of pagan souls” instead of just “the immortality of souls.” That is because I want you to focus on the crux of the issue. No Christian denies born-again saints have immortality and therefore live beyond the grave; *everybody* agrees on that. The controversy is over pagans...have they – through some process other than the new birth – also received immortality so they, too, live beyond the grave? Nobody, no matter which side of the argument they are on, will object to my being specific by referring to the issue as “the immortality of the souls of the unregenerate” because, by definition, the generic term “immortality of the soul” includes pagans. If we attempt to “prove” *pagans* have life after death by proving *Christians* have life after death we are wasting our time because Christian immortality can be explained by being born of the Spirit, but pagan immortality cannot. So, since we all agree Christians have either 1) immortal souls, or 2) mortal souls that gain immortality from the spiritual birth, and since we all agree animals have mortal souls and do not live beyond the grave, let us open the Bible and see if unregenerate humans have immortal souls (or immortality of *any* kind) that allow them to live beyond the grave.

### THE BASICS

The information I discuss here is from simple, easily understood verses in the Bible. If you grew up in a church that did not cover these plainly-worded verses, it is probably because these verses dare to contradict denominational traditions. Therefore you may be shocked by what these verses boldly state. If you determine your knowledge of the Bible is incomplete and you have been victimized by well-intentioned-but-tradition-bound preachers, you must be the kind of faithful saint who stands up and bases his service to God on what He says – rather than the kind who wimps out and goes along with tradition because being alone in combat scares him to death. With that as an exhortation (!) gird your loins, brother, pick up God's Sword, die to self, and let us read and receive the things of God that only born-again Christians can know because they are spiritually discerned, and let's please the Lord by subjecting ourselves to His word in a way the unsaved, the unfaithful, and the carnal cannot do.

#### **Mortal flesh (animals and unsaved humans) vs. immortal spirits (angels, devils, and saved humans)**

God created humans and beasts out of *earth* (**Ge 1:24,25; 2:7**). God gave humans and beasts the *breath of life* (**Ge 2:7; 6:17; 7:15**). God made men and beasts *living souls* that *die* (**Re 8:9; 16:3; Jb 12:10; Ezek 18:4; Ge 2:7; 7:21-23**).

So far we see no difference between men and beasts. In fact, God plainly states men have no preeminence above beasts because both of them share the *same breath* and both *die* (**Ec 3:18-20; Ps 49:12,14,20**). In those verses the fact that both men and beasts are *mortal* is a big deal because until the animals in **Ge 3:21** died no living creature had ever seen any other creature *die*. In order to understand the significance of *mortal death* as it relates to men and beasts we need to examine the angels.

God is the “Father of spirits” (**He 12:9**). The angels are *spirits* (**He 1:7**) and are therefore *sons* of the Father of spirits (**Jb 1:6**). God is the capital S Spirit (**Jn 4:24**), and His children are lowercase s spirits. Angels (spirits) are immortal (**Lk 20:36**). Humans are mortal. That's why the Lord Jesus Christ, in order to be *able* to suffer mortal death on the cross had to become a beast (a Lamb), a human son of Abraham (**He 2:14,16**) – because beasts and humans are the same from the perspective of mortality; they can *die*. Angels are spirits, and spirits cannot die, which is why Christ had to be made a beast/human, to be made *lower* than angels, in order to suffer *death* (**He 2:9**).

Unregenerate humans and animals share mortality because they are merely body (made from this earth) and soul that share the same breath of life. That's why the bodies of mortal beasts and humans end up in earthly graves. The children of God the Spirit, on the other hand, have immortality because they are spirit – and *spirit* and *life* are synonymous (**Jn 6:63**). God's children can never die, which is what led Him to create the lake of fire for His disobedient spirit children (**Mt 25:41**).

And that is why **Ec 3:18-20** says the reason there is no difference between beasts and unregenerate humans is they are both mortal, they are dead, they have no (true) life in them because they are lower than spirits/angels. And that brings us to the new birth.

#### **Importance, necessity, and results of the new birth**

Now we shall examine the new birth and see how it makes us different from unregenerate humans.

**Jn 3:6** says when a human being gives birth the child is merely flesh and blood – as in mortal *body* and *soul* like beasts. And it says when God the Spirit gives birth the child is spirit – just like the angels. That means God's children get their immortality from being *spirits*, not from being *body* and *soul* like the beasts. That's why saints are body, soul, and spirit (**1 Th 5:23**), but unregenerate humans and beasts are merely body and soul. Verily, verily, I say unto thee, ye must be born of God the Spirit in order to gain a spiritual body and immortality.

**1 Co 15:44** talks about the two bodies available to us. The natural body is the one we get from our human parents; the second body, the spiritual body, is the one we get from our heavenly Father of spirits. And again, the only way to get the spiritual body is to be born of God, which is why the angels are called “sons of God” (**Jb 1:6**) and we saints are called God's “sons and daughters” (**2 Co 6:18**).

Christ complemented His teaching that hell was created for His disobedient spirit children (**Mt 25:41**) by warning that disobedient born-again saints cannot escape His wrath. When we compare **Mt 10:28** and **Lk 12:5** we see that Christ taught His Old Testament era listeners (remember, **He 9:16,17** says the New Testament era didn't begin until Christ died on the cross) that after a disobedient saint dies and his natural body is rotting in the grave, that man's soul and second body go to hell. Thus, the Lord Jesus Christ plainly teaches that those in hell obtained their second body, which is spirit, from the Father

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of spirits Himself via the new birth. This doctrinal teaching of Christ's is flatly ignored by those who think the souls of unregenerate humans are – unlike the souls of beasts – immortal. In fact, they think Christ is wrong to teach us the damned have received a second body via the new birth, and they think He is wrong to say the born-again second body accompanies the souls of the damned to hell. Make no mistake about it, tradition really does make the words of Christ of none effect...and that is why this Bible study just ended for many of our brethren. They simply cannot live by faith by trusting His word.

Now we'll examine why we must be born again in order to become God's children, and then we'll see when that fact became apparent to God's people back in Old Testament days.

When dealing with human beings we must be careful to distinguish between saints and the unregenerate because there is a huge difference between the capabilities of the old natural man and the new spiritual man. The key to understanding their differing capabilities is to understand **1 Co 2:12-14** and **Ro 8:5-8**.

In 1 Co 2:12 we see the "spirit" (attitude or worldly wisdom) of the carnal world that is part of our old man is accompanied by a new "spirit" (the second body of 1 Co 15:44) we get from God via the new birth (Jn 3:6) in order "that we might know the things...of God." These differing abilities between immortal spirit and mortal flesh can also be seen by contrasting **1 Co 1:18a** and **1 Co 2:14** with **1 Co 1:18b** and **Ro 8:9**.

1 Co 2:13 says the Holy Ghost teaches us spirit children "spiritual things."

1 Co 2:14 contrasts that with the old natural man: he receiveth not the spiritual things of God because they seem like foolishness to him. Indeed, the Bible goes further and says plainly the natural man cannot know the things of God because they must be **spiritually discerned** by His spirit children. That is why we do not expect giraffes and aardvarks to live by the Bible – beasts have only the natural flesh and are therefore 100% carnal with no ability to discern spiritual things. God never told His Old Testament people to stop pagans from doing whatever they wanted to do in their own countries. God's rules apply only to His people because only they are spiritual branches attached (by the new birth) to The Vine of God the Father of spirits.

**Romans 8** perfectly complements the material we just covered:

V.5 says carnal people (backslidden saints and all pagans) walk in the flesh, but godly saints walk in the Spirit.

V.7 says the carnal mind is **enmity** against God, and then it explains why that is an absolute, unchangeable fact: the carnal mind is **not subject** to the law of God. And if that isn't plain enough for you, God goes on and says the carnal mind cannot possibly be subject to His laws. Again, God has never required giraffes, aardvarks, and the unsaved to live by the Bible.

V.8 says they that have been born merely of the flesh (rather than the Spirit) **cannot please God** if they wanted to. Why? Because carnality – and the unregenerate are nothing but 100% carnal – is by its very earthly makeup enmity against God. God says no matter what they do they can't please Him.

Once Christians understand what the Bible says about the unregenerate natural man's lack of capabilities, and accept the vast difference between the Bible-defined capabilities of the Spirit-born new man and the flesh-born old man, they'll see that saints, with their two bodies, have a choice to think like a dog or to think like a son of God, but the unsaved have no choice but to be dogs. Let me emphasize that: **The fundamental difference between the capabilities of saints and dogs exists only because saints are spiritual.** This spiritual difference in capabilities is as infinite as the difference between eternal and mortal, and it exists in direct opposition to the philosophy-based Age of Reason, which decreed that all men are equal. That is why many Christians not only do not believe the above plainly-worded verses, they actually think the truth is the exact opposite of what the verses say. That means we are at least as ignorant of the difference between Spirit-born saints and flesh-born pagans as Nicodemus was in John 3. And we are ignorant in spite of the fact that God has plainly spelled out **THE BASICS** for us in His New Testament!

By accepting and applying those Bible truths showing the vast difference between the capabilities of single-bodied beasts and unsaved humans (that are 100% carnal and lack the spiritual attachment to The Vine), and the capabilities of two-bodied saints (who have a choice of being *carnal* by walking after the flesh, or being *spiritual* by walking after the Spirit), we understand more about the Old Testament saints, how they learned to call pagans dogs – and why they later forgot.

If Adam, Noah, Methuselah, Enoch, etc. had not been born again of the Spirit they would have had only the carnal old man. That would have made them incapable of receiving the spiritual things of God, incapable of being subject to His laws, incapable of pleasing Him, and incapable of anything but being enmity against Him. Therefore God's people in the Old Testament were born-again saints with spirit bodies that attached them to The Vine. If they pleased God their physical bodies rotted in the grave when they died and their soul and spirit body went to the Abraham's bosom side of hell. If they displeased God their soul and second body went to the fiery side of hell. The New Testament accurately and specifically says Old Testament saints like Abraham's son, Isaac, were offspring of God the Spirit just like we New Testament saints are (**Ga 4:22,23,28,29**) (but Abraham's pagan son, Ishmael, was merely born after the flesh), and Christ's disciple, Judas, was a born-of-the-Father spirit-gone-bad like Lucifer (**Jn 6:70,71**). (The subject of Old Testament saints being born-again Christians before Christ was born is covered extensively on pages D8-2,3.)

When God **divided the human race** (page H2-1) in Abraham's day something dramatic happened. But before I get to that, let me be clear about what I'm saying about pagans' inability to please God because they – like beasts – are 100% carnal. I am not saying God cannot use a talking ass (**2 Pe 2:16**) or a pagan king (**Je 43:10; 25:9; 27:6; Ezr 1:1,2**) for His purposes. Just as we can train horses to dance and dogs to lead the blind, God can use the services of certain pagans. But because of what carnality is and how it breaks the chain of command leading up to God, He is not glorified when pagans do things for Him. That same principle applies to Christians who do not know the Bible; they have no choice but to be followers of men or to be their own independent heads, both of which are carnal attacks on the existence of God as the One-and-only Head. That is why it is so important for us to get to know God via the Bible, and to glorify Him as our Head and King via submissive obedience to His revealed will. When we walk in the flesh we are at enmity against Him. When we walk in accordance with His Book we are exalting Him over Self, which is the way we are going to have to be for all of eternity if we are to be in His kingdom.

Back in Adam's generations all humans were God's people. That meant when all babies were born (flesh), God arbitrarily gave each child the second birth (spirit), which made every person a saint with the attached-to-the-Vine ability to receive and know the spiritual things of God, to be subject to His laws, and to please Him via His chain of command. But when God divided the human race in Abe's day, pagan humans came into existence for the first time in history. Now when a non-Hebrew child was born of the flesh, God let it remain 100% carnal by withholding the spiritual birth. But when a Hebrew descendant of Abraham was born, God arbitrarily gave that person the new birth so he could be His servant just as He had with

all of Adam's descendants. That's why only Abe's offspring were God's people. And the difference between born-of-the-Spirit saints and born-only-of-the-flesh Gentiles manifested itself over time; the Old Testament Hebrews came to understand they had abilities that set them *above* unregenerate humans (Ex 19:5; Dt 7:6,14; 10:15). The unsaved simply were incapable of receiving and knowing the things of God because they are spiritually discerned. They were incapable of being subject to God's laws, and they lacked the ability to please God. The saints then understood and applied the part in the Bible where God showed Adam that **beasts**, which are flesh-and-blood living souls with the breath of life, **were not meet to be his servants (Ge 2:18-20)** as we covered on page D16-1. When Adam considered animals such as giraffes and aardvarks, he probably reacted (quietly and respectfully in God's presence) the same way any human would: he wondered why God had him search among beasts that were so laughably and obviously incapable of being his servant-wives. It may be that Adam and his descendants (who were all God's old-man/new-man children), never understood why God had so carefully shown Adam that beasts are incapable of being proper servants. But when God divided the human race so only Abraham and his descendants were His old-man/new-man children, the Hebrews came to realize the vast difference between them and old-man-only Gentiles, and they understood there really wasn't any difference between unsaved men and beasts – neither is meet to be God's helper-wives. And when God in His communications with His Hebrew servants began using animal names when referring to unsaved humans, His children followed His lead (Ex 11:7; Ps 22:12,16; Mt 7:6; 15:23-28; Ph 3:2; Re 22:15) because they now understood only spirits have the ability to be subject to God's laws, know His spiritual truths, and please Him by choosing, through obedient submission to His will, to walk in the Spirit rather than the flesh. When the human race was divided into saints and ain'ts, God's people learned the difference between spirit and flesh, between life and death, between immortal and mortal, and between the Kingdom of God and the Kingdom of Heaven.

### APPLYING THE LAW

The Biblical topic of **Laws** is another area of Bible study that helps us understand the big picture about the theory that pagans have immortal souls, and the accompanying theory stating the purpose of the Great Commission's missionary work is to rescue the unregenerate from spending their everlasting lives in hell. I have covered Laws extensively in chapter D19, so I'll just make one point here.

Many modern Christians think Adam's fall cursed us all with damnation in the lake of fire. In other words, they think everybody on earth is going to hell unless they get saved. Let's use our understanding of Laws to see if these traditionalists are correct. Read the following Scripture with my bracketed inserts that make it clear what many modern traditionalists think the Scripture says:

**Ro 6:23: For the wages of sin [Adam's original sin] is death [being damned in the lake of fire]; but the gift of God is eternal life [which pagans get by saying the "sinner's prayer"] through Jesus Christ our Lord.**

**Ro 5:12: Wherefore, as by one man [Adam] sin entered into the world, and death by sin [because the wages of sin is death in the lake of fire]; and so [the second] death [damnation in the lake of fire] passed upon all men [everybody on earth], for that all have sinned [via inheriting Adam's original sin]:**

**Ro 5:13: (For until the law sin was in the world [sin was in the world *even before* God gave Moses the law up on Mt. Sinai]: but sin is not imputed when there is no law.**

Initially verse 13 has no impact because it is saying the same thing as Ro 6:23, **4:15; 1 Jn 3:4: the law** is what works wrath because it not only declares what transgressions are, it also assigns punishments for breaking the law. In other words, if there is no law to break there can be no sins, because sins are transgressions of the law. So we're reading verse 13 and thinking, "Yeah, what's the point?" And then verse 14 makes the point:

**Ro 5:14: Nevertheless [even though there was no law before Sinai, and therefore nothing to define sins] death [the second death, the lake of fire] reigned [over everybody on earth] from Adam [the first man] to Moses [who received the law on Sinai], even over them that had not sinned after the similitude of Adam's transgression [even over them that hadn't sinfully eaten the forbidden fruit of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil].**

Verse 14 is devastating to modern tradition: If sin is transgressing the law, and if the wages of sin is *death*, and if death means being damned to live forever in the lake of fire, verse 14 plainly states all people from Adam to Moses – including many heroes of the faith – were damned to die in the lake of fire! How is that devastating to modern tradition, doesn't it go along with the popular theory that everybody on the planet has an immortal soul and must be rescued from their inherited damnation in the lake of fire? The correct answer is No, but that truth is only apparent if you understand Laws in the Bible. Sadly, most Christians have never mastered Biblical Laws and therefore lack the Schoolmaster's framework for thought and doctrine.

In the Bible the two Testaments stand for two Laws: the Old Testament stands for the Law of sin and death (being damned in the lake of fire), and the New Testament stands for the Law of grace (which is the real eternal security). A Law is made effectual and permanent by the death of the testator (He 9:16,17), therefore nobody who is damned to the lake of fire can ever get out, and nobody whose marriage to Christ is consummated at the marriage supper of the Lamb can ever be put away – once you understand Biblical marriage and divorce. That means the "death" suffered by everybody from Adam to Moses is not the one that refers to the Law of sin and death/the lake of fire – because nobody can change the will of a testator after he has died. The death of the testator seals his will forever, which is why those damned by the Law of sin and death, such as Lucifer and Judas Iscariot, will never escape the lake of fire. And that is how we know the *death* everybody inherited as a result of Adam's fall wasn't the lake of fire. The Bible says sin is transgression of the law. The law God gave Adam was, "Do not eat the forbidden fruit." Adam transgressed that law, which made him a sinner. The Bible says the wages of sin is *death*, and God told Adam if he ate the fruit he'd *die* that very day. Traditionalists think Adam did die that day because he was damned to the lake of fire. That would be a pretty good theory if God hadn't put Romans 5 in the Bible to make us think and then *apply* what it teaches: Whatever death Adam suffered that day was also suffered by all of his descendants, which means that death, that curse of the law, was *mortality*. I say again, the curse was not "spiritual death", also called "separation from God", also called being damned to everlasting fire. There is no such thing in the Bible as "spiritual death"; the term is an oxymoron because *spirit* means *life*.

The *death* in **Ro 5:17** that reigned over Adam and his descendants was *the grave*, it was *the law of mortality*. Let's test that teaching: Did all men from Adam to Moses die mortal deaths? Yes. Now let's test the theory of the traditionalists:

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Were all men from Adam to Moses damned to everlasting fire? No – when you understand the finality of Laws enacted by the death of the Testator, Jesus Christ.

But we're not through with Ro 5:17; it goes on and contrasts the curse of death that Adam passed on to all men with the gift of life from Christ. I am claiming Ro 5:17 contrasts the human mortality we inherited from Adam with the spiritual immortality we get from Christ when we are born again, and that it is not contrasting being damned to the lake of fire with being saved by the new birth. **Ga 3:13** says Christ has redeemed us from the curse of the law that we inherited from Adam. That curse was mortal death. How do we know that? Because the verse says Christ took that curse upon Himself by physically dying on the tree. Wrong, say the traditionalists, Christ didn't take the curse of the law of mortality upon Himself, He took the curse of the Law of sin and death in everlasting fire upon Himself as proven (they argue) by His descending into hell (the Abe's bosom section) after His resurrection. We'll give them credit for appealing to the Scriptures to support their position, but, alas, we must mark their answer wrong because they didn't go far enough. Let's see what they missed:

We learned in Hebrews (as covered above under **THE BASICS**) that in order for Christ to suffer the curse of mortal death (the first death), He had to be made a little lower than the angels! Did you catch it? If the traditionalists are correct and all men are damned to hell (the second death) by inheriting Adam's original sin, then Christ would not have had to be made a little lower than the angels in order to suffer the second death – He could have just visited the spirit realm of hell! All Christ would have had to do was be a visible spirit-apparition when He walked on earth (as some cults think), and then pay for our sins by "dying" by going to hell for a little while. But the Scriptures make it clear that our Spirit God took upon Himself mortality: He became the flesh-and-blood seed of Abraham so He would be able to partake of the same curse Adam and all his descendants suffered – mortal death (on the cross). To suggest that the wages of sin is the curse of death in the lake of fire rather than mortal death in the grave is folly, and it makes a mockery of these verses we've covered by destroying their incredible consistency.

But why is mortal death a curse? Mortality/mortal death is a curse because flesh and blood cannot inherit the Kingdom of God (**1 Co 15:50**), which is a spiritual realm, which by definition is everlasting, which means only those with everlasting life can go there, which excludes mortals. That is a huge curse. We are saved by Christ from that curse when He makes us spirits via the new birth – just like He birthed His other spirits such as Lucifer and Gabriel. But, while becoming a spirit does give us everlasting life (because nobody can terminate the life of a spirit), that spirit birth does not determine whether we'll spend our everlasting lives with Gabriel in heaven or with Lucifer in the lake of fire. Gaining immortality only puts us into the War. Not until Judgment will we find out from Christ if we pleased Him with our Christian walk or not.

### MISSIONS, COMMISSIONS, EVANGELISM, AND PHILOSOPHY

Most modern evangelicals have accepted philosophy's doctrine of equality. Therefore they think all men are equal and have the same ability to receive and respond to the spiritual truths of God. In other words, evangelicals reject the 1 Co 2:14 teaching that the unsaved cannot receive and know the spiritual things of God. Evangelicals also think God is wrong in Ro 8:7,8, and those verses should be rewritten to say the unregenerate can be subject to the law of God and can please Him. In that way evangelicals make of none effect what the Bible says about the fundamental and far-reaching Scriptural inequality between those who have been born again and those that have not – they think the only practical difference between saints and dogs is their eternal destination. I say again: the reason modern evangelicals focus on eternal destination is because they have rejected the Bible's teachings about the capabilities of the born-again man and the lack of capabilities of the old man. They have allowed philosophy-based tradition to make the word of God of none effect.

When seriously studying the immortality of the soul, Christians often notice irregularities and inconsistencies between what the Bible says about evangelism and what the modern church practices. Many people think the purpose of evangelism is to rescue the unregenerate from hell. That belief, in turn, is used to "prove" the theory that the souls of the unregenerate have everlasting life. So if pagans really do have everlasting souls, evangelicals conclude they will go to hell unless they are evangelized and saved. In order to properly understand evangelism we must go into some depth to see what the Bible says about it. We've already seen that Romans 5 and the irrevocability of the Law of damnation to hell show that mankind inherited mortality from Adam – not damnation. But that would mean pagan souls are mortal and go to the same grave animals do...so, what is the purpose of evangelization?

The **Old Commission** (be fruitful and multiply) that governed the Old Testament era wasn't replaced by the **Great Commission** (preach the gospel to every creature) until after Christ rose from the dead. The Great Commission is what applies to us New Testament era saints.

The Old Commission called for physical intercourse for a good reason: the Old Testament saints came under physical patriarchs, the first being Adam. When he and his descendants had children they were, in accordance with the Old Commission, adding to the church. It was not their physical intercourse that produced saints, of course, because physical intercourse merely produces earthy, carnal, old-man bodies (that are mortal, no different from beasts, incapable of receiving and knowing the things of God because they are spiritually discerned, not subject to the law of God, incapable of being subject to the law of God, and incapable of pleasing God); it was God, who alone is the Father of spirits, who gave them the new birth, which gave them spirit bodies (that attached them to The Vine, made them children and servants of God, gave them the spiritual ability to receive and know His truths, and to please Him with obedient submission – if they walked according to the Spirit rather than the flesh). What did Adam and his children and their children do to become God's children? Nothing; they became God's children simply because God Almighty decided Adam's descendants were going to be His people – just like He decided to birth Lucifer and Gabriel.

The second patriarch was Noah. God gave him the Old Commission to be fruitful and multiply because God was going to give the second birth to all of his children and their descendants. I say again, Noah's offspring had nothing to do with their becoming God's people. They became Christians simply because God decided to use Noah as a patriarch.

The third patriarch was Abraham, and he, too, received the Old Commission's exhortation to have physical sex in order to provide more people to whom God would give the second birth in order to make them His people. But for the first time in history, something didn't happen: When the people not descended from the physical loins of Abraham had children, God did not give them the second birth! And by now you know what that meant Biblically: It meant those people who were not born again of the Spirit were merely mortal souls and bodies. They did not have immortal spirit bodies like Abraham's descendants. They were Gentiles, pagans, dogs, no different from beasts, and therefore not meet to be His servants because

they could not receive and know the spiritual things of God, could not...etc. *Why* did God arbitrarily give the new birth to Abe's descendants? Because He is God; He can and does do things arbitrarily. He did it that way because He wanted to. And *why* did God withhold the new birth from giraffes, aardvarks, and human descendants of non-Hebrews? Because the King can do whatever He wants (**Ro 9:18-21**).

Now we must deal with why God – over thousands of years – did not order His Old Testament saints to save pagans from hell, to stop Philistines from worshipping Dagon, and to teach pagans that picking up sticks on Saturday was an abomination. And why the Lord Jesus Christ, when He sent His disciples out to preach the gospel, specifically and unambiguously ordered them not to preach to pagans (Mt 10:1,5-7). And why God taught His people that their enemies were their fellow Christians (**Mt 10:34-39; Ps 55:12-15; Je 11:14; 14:11; 18:19-23**). The answers have to do with the fact that this spiritual warfare was started by God's beloved son, Lucifer – it was not started by pagan dogs. Lucifer is a Spirit-born child of God who went bad and started this war by rebelling against the dictatorial authority of God. Lucifer has everlasting life, therefore he is going to be around forever. But God doesn't want rebels like His son, Lucifer, around forever. Therefore He created the lake of fire for His Spirit-born children who go bad (Mt 25:41), an everlasting abode for everlasting spirits.

God is not concerned with pagans or the religious beliefs of giraffes and aardvarks. Unregenerate humans and animals do not matter because their mortality means they will all die. End of "problem." I put problem in quotes because things that are mortal cannot be considered lasting problems because mortals are limited from the perspective of time and extremely insignificant from the perspective of eternity. The Lord didn't tell His people to try to get Philistines to be subject to His law for the simple Scriptural reason that pagans cannot be subject to His law (Ro 8:7) because the natural man cannot know the spiritual things of God (1 Co 2:14).

That's why faithful Christians like Joseph in Egypt and Daniel in Babylon never tried to convert the pagans around them: the new birth was, is, and always will be given according to the sovereign will of God (**Jn 1:13; 6:44,65**) – not by evangelizing the unregenerate. If people received the new birth as a result of deciding to "repent" when they are evangelized, it would be a contradiction of what the Bible teaches. It is unscriptural and ridiculous for modern preachers to ask the unsaved to "by faith repent and be born again by saying the sinner's prayer":

- A corrupt tree cannot produce good fruit, and it is unscriptural to think the unregenerate, who are 100% carnal because they are nothing but flesh, can produce the good fruit/faith to ask God (compare Ro 8:8 with **He 11:6** and Jn 6:44,65) to make them His priests because nobody takes the honor of the priesthood upon himself; if you weren't a Levite you couldn't become a priest no matter how many times you said the sinner's prayer. And for a modern preacher to claim the unregenerate produce or receive the faith required to say the "sinner's prayer" is to ignore **Mt 7:17,18** and 1 Co 2:14. When you put everything together you'll understand why the Bible says preaching the word of God to pagans and beasts doesn't work (**He 4:2**) – because mortals that perish don't have spiritual ears (1 Co 1:18a; 2:14). The word of God only affects *saints* because saints have spiritual ears (1 Co 1:18b). But remember, if saints choose to walk in the flesh rather than in the Spirit their spiritual ears won't hear.
- Modern preachers are always calling on the unsaved to repent, but every time the Bible says "Repent!" it says it to God's Spirit-born children whose new birth gives them the ability to receive the things of God (**Ezek 18:27,30-32; Mt 3:2; 4:17; 9:10-13; cp. Mt 10:5-7 and Mk 6:12; Lk 13:3-5; Ac 2:5,22,38**).
- In the Bible the sinner's prayer (**Lk 18:13**) is always said by God's Spirit-born priests. We know that because pagans were not allowed inside the temple, and the saint saying the sinner's prayer was inside the temple (**Lk 18:10**). Modern evangelicals don't even know enough Bible to use Scriptural terminology!

(The reason I keep calling God's Old and New Testament saints *priests* is to remind you of the fact that *we cannot do anything* in order to become one of God's born-again priests; God arbitrarily creates priests (Jn 1:13; 6:44,65) by *begetting* them (as we covered in detail on pages D8-2,3). In other words, since all of God's saints are His priests, and He says we become His priests via His begetting us – not by our glorifying ourselves by taking that honor upon ourselves, this example complements other lessons in Scripture that say the unsaved don't say the sinner's prayer, are incapable of receiving the spiritual things of God, and are mere mortals like beasts that do not go to the lake of fire because it was created for immortal spirits born of the Father of spirits like Lucifer and Judas Iscariot.)

The Old Commission to be fruitful and multiply by having physical sex was given to the patriarchs Adam, Noah, and Abraham because during the Old Testament era the Lord used human patriarchs to establish His church. But the real meaning of much of what He does, including His use of human patriarchs, is disguised like a parable – and it is incumbent upon us to figure it, and Him, out. Those human patriarchs were merely *types* of the real Patriarch – the Lord Jesus Christ. If you carefully study the Book of **Galatians** you will find it begins by saying some Christians were led astray by the Apostle Peter (chapter 1). Then we learn (chapter 2) that **dissembling** and **dissimulation** (which claim there are doctrinal differences between Jewish saints and Gentile saints) are false doctrines, which today often go by the name **dispensationalism**. (When you understand the Bible you'll see that God has always been consistent in His dealings with His children and that dispensationalism is dissembling.) Then Galatians chapter 3 says the Old Testament law justified nobody, but was a schoolmaster pointing to Christ, the High Priest of Old and New Testament saints/priests, which means there is unity in Christ for all – Jews and Gentiles. Chapter 4 is introduced by the last verse of chapter 3, which says all Christians are Abraham's seed. How can that be? Then chapter 4 says the Old Testament law, which said God's people came from the loins of Abraham, is not what made Old Testament saints God's people. And the proof is in the fact that Abe's son, Ishmael, who was born of Abe's flesh, was not a Christian. But Abe's son, Isaac, also born of Abe's flesh, was a Christian *only because he was born again of the Spirit*. Then we who are born of the Spirit, which makes us spirits, **angels** (**Ga 4:14**), are warned (chapter 5) to walk in the Spirit because if we angels walk in the flesh we'll lose our inheritance and become fallen spirits, devils (Jn 6:70). That warning is repeated in chapter 6.

Today we don't have earthly patriarchs; Christ is the Patriarch and from His loins alone are born God's spirit children. Christ was a son of Abraham, and we humans who are born of the Spirit, whether we be Jew or Gentile, are descendants of Abraham because we are descendants of Christ (**Ro 2:28,29; 4:16**). In other words, it is only the spiritual lineage that matters. The same was true during the Old Testament: Ishmael was merely born of Abe's flesh, *which didn't make him a true Jew!* Why? Because the only true patriarch was, is, and always will be Jesus Christ. Only those who are born again like Isaac, no matter what "dispensation" they are in, can be spirit descendants of Christ, who in turn is a descendant of Abraham. The

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New Testament reveals that the real Patriarch has always been Christ, which brings us to the New Testament's *Great Commission*.

Now that Christ has revealed Himself to be the one and only Patriarch, we know His saints are those who are born of the Spirit. That's why Adam, Noah, and Abraham no longer matter; they are no longer patriarchs and God no longer gives the new birth to their descendants. Today God gives the new birth to whomever He wants – no matter who their human daddy is. But that creates a problem: how are we going to know our brethren, our fellow saints? Ye shall know them not by their circumcised penises or by their ancestry – ye shall know them by their fruits. In other words, a person's relationship with the Bible is an exact indication of his relationship with Jesus Christ. If a person knows no Bible but is drawn to it like a babe to his mother's breast, you have a babe in Christ on your hands – feed him. If a person knows a lot of Bible and lives it, he is a mature Christian – fellowship with and learn from him. If a person says with his lips he is a Christian but he doesn't know the Bible, exhibits no true interest in learning the Bible, and seems content to follow along with denominational religious tradition, morality, and conservative politics, you suspect he's not a Christian, not a spirit, because he has no need to feed on the spiritual milk and meat of the Word of God. But you are not to judge him. Take him at his word and either gently exhort him to feed or rebuke him for being a carnal sloth – as determined by the situation and his attitude.

The reason Christ has always been the only true Patriarch of both the Old and New Testament eras (and the only Testator and the only High Priest) is simple: Any human who is not born again is no different from beasts and will die because only spirits have immortality. Being born again of the Spirit is the only way to become a son of the Father of spirits, to become a member of His house, a child servant of the only Patriarch, Jesus Christ. Being born of the Spirit is the only way to become eligible for the Inheritance, the Promise, which we inherit from the only Testator of both Testaments, Jesus Christ. And being begotten of the Spirit is the only way to enter the royal priesthood in order to serve the only High Priest, Jesus Christ. Being born only of Adam, Noah, and Abraham never did anybody any good; what, callest thyself a master of the Bible and yet thou doth not know and apply these things? Verily, verily, I say unto thee again, that which is born of the flesh is merely flesh; but that which is born of the Spirit is spirit. Marvel not that I said unto thee, Ye must be born again. Them that have ears, let them hear.

Christ replaced the Old Commission with the Great Commission for a very good reason: Today our spirit brethren manifest that they are of the Spirit and not of the world (**Jn 14:22**) by their relationship with the Bible (**Jn 14:23,24**). The reason the Holy Ghost teaches Scripture only to Christians and brings Scripture to the remembrance only of His spirits (**Jn 14:26**), and the reason the Scriptures are to be used to differentiate between saints and dogs, is the truth of 1 Co 2:14 and Ro 8:5,7,8. In other words, the Great Commission tells us to use the word of God, which is spiritual food (**Jn 1:1,14; 6:53-55,63**), to find those that have been born of the Spirit by utilizing the fact that they alone are drawn to the spiritual food that pagans cannot receive. Spreading the word (evangelizing) is merely offering spiritual food to draw out those people that are spirits who hunger for spiritual food. That's why Christ, when He told His disciples to spread the word to every creature (**Mk 16:15**), said it was to find out which people were His born-again sheep ("feed my sheep", not pagan dogs – **2 Sa 5:2**) and therefore had a *need to feed* (**Jn 21:15-17**). And those of His flock that endure to the end by being believers who do the word shall be saved (**Mk 16:16a**) because nobody can pluck them from their Father's hand (**Jn 10:29**). But those of His flock that turn out to be unbelievers like Lucifer and Judas shall be damned (**Mk 16:16b**) when their Father, who is The Husbandman (**Jn 15:1**), taketh away the fruitless branches that were in Christ/"in me" (**Jn 15:2**), and casts them into the fire (**Jn 15:6**) prepared for the devil and his fellow spirits who were born of God but went bad (Mt 25:41; **Mt 13:49,50**; Jn 6:70).

Mt 10:5-7, when Christ ordered His disciples not to evangelize pagans, wasn't the only time Christ said something offensive to modern evangelicals. He also offended them in **Mt 23:15** by rebuking the scribes and Pharisees for their widespread missionary work among pagans. (Today's preachers ignore that part of His rebuke and speak only about those tradition-bound Bible preachers leading people to hell with their false doctrine.) It is obvious Christ did not want His people evangelizing pagans. Why? Because they were diluting the Old Commission. The Old Commission made it pretty clear which people were saints (Hebrews) and which were dogs (everybody else). But when God's people began to evangelize pagans, the Hebrews became less distinct from pagans (**Ne 13:23,24**).

We have some clues that help us figure out when God's people began evangelizing dogs. In about 800 B.C. God's people were loath to evangelize pagans. For example, when God specifically ordered Jonah to do missionary work in Nineveh (which was a foreshadowing of the coming Great Commission and the end of the age of human patriarchs), Jonah refused to obey until God punished him with a whale. In about 400 B.C. when the Jews were returning to Jerusalem from the Babylonian captivity, they were again zealous about being separate from pagans – as evidenced by their intentions to divorce the pagan women they had married in Babylon (as covered on page H4-1 under "Return To Jerusalem").

Evangelizing pagans began in earnest roughly a century before Christ when the family of the Hasmoneans – also called the Maccabees – started their populist dynasty as high priests of Jerusalem (even though they were not Levites). The Hasmoneans recaptured the temple in Jerusalem, invented the religious holiday of Hanukkah, forged an alliance with Rome, and forced the Idumeans (Edomites) to convert to the religion of God's people. One of their Idumean proselytes, Herod, who became king by gaining the political favor of Rome, rebuilt the temple and made it a huge and grand edifice. Herod also, because conversion had brought him into the fold of God's people, presided over the establishment of a program of widespread evangelization that compassed sea and land to make more proselytes (**Mt 23:15**). The immediate effect of this untimely missionary zeal among God's people (the Hasmoneans, the Herodians, and the Pharisees) was the undeniable fact that it sent more people to hell. (I say *untimely* because they were acting as if they were under the New Testament's Great Commission to preach to all people instead of the Old Testament's Old Commission to be sexually fruitful.) But the long-term result of the missionary zeal of these groups was their "modernizing" of Christianity by establishing superficial precedents: They emphasized large church buildings and large numbers of converts, and they used Greek Reason to attack the literal accuracy of the Bible and promote religious tradition and morality – which defrauded those they proselytized as well as all of Christianity to come. It is no surprise, therefore, that *based on their fruits* (not on being "judgmental") it appears that our modern churches are populated by a mixed bag of dogs in sheep's clothing who can't be anything but carnal, and born-again-but-carnal Christians who choose to walk in the flesh rather than in the Spirit. That is why our modern, carnal, "exciting", evangelical denominations teach nothing about such topics as sex, morality, cussing, the immortality of pagan souls, and other topics covered in this Bible study – and continue to live in accordance with the moral traditions and conservative politics they learned from the world back before they became "Christians" (**Ro 12:2**).

When Christ says, “Give not that which is holy unto the dogs, neither cast ye your pearls before swine” (Mt 7:6), and when Paul up on Mars’ Hill walked away (Ac 17:33) from pagans *even though they wanted to hear more* (Ac 17:32), they greatly confuse and offend modern evangelicals who, forced to choose between what the Bible says and the evangelical traditions they inherited from the Pharisees, let tradition make the word of God of none effect by deciding those passages are errors in the Bible because “our loving and merciful God would never withhold His holy truth from the unsaved.” But Christ and Paul acted the way they did because they knew people who truly hungered and thirsted for spiritual food would latch onto them (Ac 17:34) like hungry babies cleave to their mothers’ breasts. Christ and Paul used the Scriptures as a *lure* to attract born-again Christians, not as something to be crammed down pagan throats. They refused to stand around and tolerate the carnal self-based opinions of the ignorant who countered Scripture by saying, “Well, I think such and such”, and, “Many people disagree and think this and that.”

God was not being cruel when He left pagans out of the picture by issuing the Old Commission, by specifically ordering His disciples not to evangelize pagans, and by ridiculing the Pharisees for their missions programs. Neither was God being cruel when He specifically said, “Feed my sheep” rather than “Feed everybody: sheep, dogs, and wolves.” How can a modern evangelical properly differentiate between Christ’s sheep (born-again Christians) and unregenerate dogs? In other words, if an evangelist or missionary wants to obey Christ by feeding only His born-again sheep (rather than disobediently and indiscriminately feeding unsaved dogs and swine), how can he find out which people are sheep and which are dogs? He obeys the Great Commission by presenting the spiritual food of Scripture to “every creature” in such a way that saints with a Spirit-born hunger *will respond*, and dogs with a flesh-born lack of spiritual appetite *will not*. This business of scaring ignorant dogs by telling them they’ll rot in hell if they don’t say the magic sinner’s prayer and attend church is merely using “gun-barrel conversions” to “add” to the church. Ignorant preachers actually think they are doing God a service when they tell pagans that saying the “sinner’s prayer” makes them Spirit-born priests of God.

The reason so many wolves, dogs, and swine are able to disguise themselves as sheep in our modern churches is nobody seriously discusses Scripture anymore. Neither born-again-but-slothful sheep (pewsters and preachers) nor unsaved church members (dogs disguised as sheep) want to risk embarrassing and exposing themselves as not having mastered the Bible, so they eschew serious doctrinal discussions with each other and try to act “spiritual” by discussing politics, morality, family values, and denominational traditions instead. The only people aware of this carnal, air-headed, unspiritual environment are those good saints whose spiritual need to feed goes unsatisfied, revealing that their church’s “Christian fellowship” revolves around the world rather than the word of God (1 Jn 4:5,6). In other words, because modern lightweight Christians do not understand the purpose of the Great Commission’s evangelization, they actually think they can go out to the highways and byways and get pagans to say the “sinner’s prayer” in order to take the royal priesthood upon themselves. But all they are doing is bringing tares into the church. Indeed, many well-intentioned but tradition-bound preachers even have contests to see how many unsaved visitors their pewsters can bring to church. The preachers use emotional salvation sermons that appeal to carnal guts to get their visitors to say the “sinner’s prayer” in order to join the church – and the preachers continue to preach salvation sermons to their congregations for the rest of their Scripturally-ignorant lives, which doesn’t help anybody learn doctrine, but it sure drives home the tradition that hell wasn’t created for God’s children like Mt 25:41 says it was. This vicious cycle of ignorance has caused the church to wallow in apostasy.

### HOW PHILOSOPHY TURNED WHEAT INTO TARES

We shall now examine the historic and doctrinal fact that the Old Testament era and the New Testament era mirror one another; each began with God’s people unadulterated by philosophy...but each ended in apostasy because the acceptance of philosophy doctrinally corrupted God’s people. The four periods are:

1. Early Old Testament: The *doctrinally-correct* descendants of Abraham (2000 B.C. - 400 B.C.).
2. Old Testament advent of philosophy and the rise of Enlightened Jews (400 B.C. - First Coming).
3. Early New Testament: The *doctrinally-correct* disciples of Christ (First Coming - 400 A.D.).
4. New Testament return of philosophy and the rise of Enlightened Christians (400 A.D. - Second Coming).

Our focus will be on the effects of philosophy: When God’s people were unaffected by philosophy, that absence of equality and Reason allowed them to properly distinguish between saints and dogs; but when philosophy reared its ugly head, equality and Reason blurred the Biblical distinction between Spirit-born people and flesh-born dogs.

#### 1. EARLY OLD TESTAMENT: PRE-PHILOSOPHY (2000 B.C. – 400 B.C.)

Beginning with Abraham when God divided the human race and lasting until the Babylonian captivity, God’s people understood they were different from pagans. Pagans were, like animals, born only of the flesh. God illustrates this difference between Old Testament saints and dogs in Ga 4:22-29 where He says Isaac was born after the Spirit, but the pagan Ishmael was merely born after the flesh. In other words, during this era when God and His people referred to pagans as *dogs*, they did so because they understood the literal accuracy of the term. That is why God’s people never tried to evangelize pagans or stop them from worshipping false gods (except when God *forced* Jonah to be a type of the future Great Commission). During this period God’s people understood the difference between Spirit-born saints and unregenerate flesh-born dogs.

#### 2. LATER OLD TESTAMENT: PHILOSOPHY CORRUPTS SAINTS (400 B.C. – 1st Coming)

God used pagan King Nebuchadnezzar to punish His apostate Jews by conquering them and taking them captive for 70 years. When they returned to Israel God rebuked His people for diluting His doctrines and His covenant with Israel by marrying pagan women. In other words, God’s people were beginning to forget spiritual realities such as the important doctrinal distinction between the carnal minds and viewpoints of unregenerate people, and the spiritual understanding of those people brought by Him into the covenant of Israel by the new birth. For God’s Old Testament saints to forget the difference between being born of the flesh and being born of the Spirit was inexcusable, which is why Christ rebuked His people in Jn 3:4,9,10. Their doctrinal ignorance led them to wrongly focus on superficialities like being from the physical loins of Abraham (Mt 3:9), thus forgetting that God had used Ishmael to show that being born of Abe’s flesh was nothing.

This period is important because it shows how dramatically God’s people were corrupted: Abraham’s descendants, who used to understand that the new birth elevates men from the physical- and mortal-only level of dogs to the immortal level of the spirit realm, degenerated to the point that Jesus Christ had to rebuke Nicodemus for not understanding this important doctrine. In order to understand what leavened God’s people and corrupted their doctrine, we have to grasp the doctrine-



affecting significance of events during this 400-year period. In a nutshell, the Greeks invented philosophy and forced it upon the Jews. Let's look at the origin of Greek philosophy, see what it did to God's Old Testament saints, and think about how much a part of our lives it is today.

The philosophers wanted to free Greek society from the ignorance and superstition of religious mythology. They said man should utilize Self in order to separate fact from fiction. Using Self as the basis of thought (rather than basing thought on religion) was called Reason. However, that humanistic, religion-free, secular, carnal way of thinking was considered by the public to be disrespectful blasphemy against the gods – and some philosophers were executed for heresy. The public's righteous indignation about philosophy was based on the fact that society was and always had been hierarchical and authoritative; they simply understood that the issue of *authority* made it blasphemous, disrespectful, and presumptuous to think on your own, to utilize secular thought without first consulting God in heaven and the king on earth. To solve the problem of blasphemy, the philosophers had to come up with some way to make Reason palatable to religious societies. Their solution was brilliant: They said the gods or the Prime Mover that created the cosmos programmed the universe to behave in accordance with certain laws, called Natural Law or the Law of Nature. And this god of creation used Natural Law for more than making the sun rise and set and the tides rise and fall; the divinity also used Natural Law to imbue mankind with Reason so man could know from within himself divine truths – that is where the word *divine* got its second meaning: *To perceive truth by supernatural intuition, insight, or conjecture.*

Sophocles taught, “**Reason is God's crowning gift to man**”, and Aristotle taught, “**Reason is a light that God has kindled in the soul.**” They brought the human *soul* into the picture as part of their attempt to give credence to their theory that “Reason” is a god-given ability to become aware of spiritual truths by applying what we learn from the physical cosmos around us to life and religion. Plato foolishly assumed the philosophers who lived before him were correct about the origin and purpose of Reason, and he built upon his assumption by dreaming up a “proof” that Reason really does reveal eternal truths – which, in turn, “proved” the immortality of human souls. Plato's “proof” was ill-thought-out and rife with contradictions: he said man has the ability to look at beautiful *physical* things and thereby divine eternal *spiritual* truths via God-given Reason because man's soul has immortal life just like God. The philosophers applied Reason and the immortality of the soul to all men in order to satisfy their belief in *equality*; it wouldn't be *fair* and *equitable* if only God's Spirit-born children had immortality. Reason was also used to give respectability to pagan morality, which is the Self-based, majority-confirmed knowledge of good and evil, which is also called “common knowledge”, “common sense”, and “conscience.” Animals did not have immortal souls, they concluded, because they do not have divinely-implanted Reason and the accompanying ability to introspectively develop intellect and morality.

Material improvements to society brought about by philosophy's math and science, together with the self-evident Logic of philosophy, gradually convinced people that Reason wasn't anti-God, it was merely neutral...and *secular* became socially acceptable. And social acceptance contributed to Reason's gradually becoming part of religion in order to prevent *superstition*, which was defined as having blind faith in unprovable religious doctrines.

Today we Christians live in the dark last days of religious apostasy. And, like the Greek philosophers, we'd like to be able to know what parts of religion are based on truth and what parts are based on blind superstition. Unlike the philosophers, we have an authoritative source of divine truth – the Holy Bible. But today many Christians, infected with philosophy, think faith in an unprovable Bible is *superstition*. Good Christians, however, understand that *superstition* is merely an unbeliever's definition of *Biblical faith*. Good Christians use that faith to *discern* whether today's Christian religion is based upon God's Book or upon false traditions. If we lack Biblical expertise, we have no *authoritative* way of knowing if we are apostate or not. Indeed, if we have willfully, disrespectfully, and slovenly failed to master the Bible, it doesn't matter if our churches are doctrinally sound or not, because we have chosen to follow men rather than sit at the Lord's feet and hear the Shepherd's voice and follow Him.

The Greek philosophers did not believe any book on earth came from God, did not believe any man on earth spoke God's inerrant truth, and therefore taught that Self must be the measure of all things; to thine own self be true. Today Greek dictionaries teach Christians the same thing: no book on earth is God's inerrant truth, therefore you need to look up Bible words in Greek dictionaries and let Self choose among the several meanings the definition you prefer. By using Greek and Hebrew dictionaries Christians are dethroning God and exalting Self. (If you do not have Faith and if you do not understand the doctrine of Authority, you cannot understand what you just read.)

Because all societies on earth had always been based on Authority, and because the governmental and religious authorities did not want people thinking they should be led by Self, the philosophers needed an appealing foundation upon which to base their idea that everybody had the prerogative and the ability to think and act on their own. That foundation was **Equality**. Equality is the basis of every aspect of philosophy. Equality is the opposite of authority, it is anti-authority, and it is the justification for every impudent child screaming, “You can't tell me what to do; my opinion is just as good as yours!” Rebellion, independence, philosophy, false gods, and freedom of religion cannot exist unless Equality first exists. Equality is the evil God created in **Is 45:7** in order to find out which of His children loved Him and which loved Self. Those who love self are independent and therefore are in a state of rebellion against the submissive obedience God requires.

The philosophers understood the tremendous importance and power of equality; it was *equality* that empowered and justified Reason and made it seem *right* rather than *rebellious*. It was *equality* that gave the principles of philosophy social and religious relevance and history-changing power. Christians today have no idea that equality is evil. In fact, most Christians do not even believe God created evil and that He uses it to suit His purposes. Yet He sent Satan to tempt both David and Christ, and to ruin Job's life, and He sent Nebuchadnezzar to butcher and enslave Judah.

Before philosophy infected society with equality, people believed their duty in life was to do the will of their authorities, whether they be parents, preachers, or governors, good or bad. But equality gradually caused people to shift their focus from knowing the *will of their authorities* so they could be faithful servants, to knowing *right and wrong* so they might be good people. The issue in the Bible is obedience to authority; that's why God considers it an abomination when we acquire the self-based knowledge of good and evil.

One immediate consequence of philosophy was Skepticism – everybody questioned everything, and people became secular and worldly minded. Religious doctrines, because they could not be proven with hard evidence, became less based on what sacred texts said, and more on what individuals *thought*. The basis for truth was no longer the gods; man became the measure of all things.

Reason has an undeniable Logic and appeal to the carnal mind, and God's people gradually relied less on faith and more on Reason. Over the centuries they drifted away from the old doctrinal truths of their Godly ancestors, and religion became so full of tradition that what the Bible actually said was of so little effect that when the Messiah showed up and taught the Bible literally His own people crucified Him. The following examples testify to the effect Greek philosophy had on society and religion during the period leading up to and immediately following the time of Christ:

- God established only one priesthood in Judah, and it was led by the sons of Aaron, the Levites. In 300 B.C. Alexander conquered Israel and the known world, and the Enlightened Ptolemaics and Seleucids began spreading Greek philosophy among the Jews (as covered in chapters H5 and D23). God's people, led by the Maccabees, resisted militarily, but ideologically they succumbed to Reason, incorporated Equality into their way of thought, and rejected inequality. The first manifestation of their new belief in equality was the widespread acceptance in Israel of the Maccabees (called Hasmoneans) as high priests – it was no longer *fair* and *equitable* for priests to come only from the sons of Aaron. The authority structure established by God was being eroded by Greek equality.
- God's people fragmented into two denominations, the Pharisees and the Sadducees. Rather than settle doctrinal questions within the church because God's people were bound together by a common Scripture-based love for the Lord and by their need to feed on the word, Christians lost their Scripture-based love and no longer cared if the church split into different doctrinal camps. The existence of denominationalism meant God's people cared little about doctrine, had grown unsure about their doctrine, and philosophically agreed with the Greek Skeptics' disinterested, snappy little air-headed comeback that Pontius Pilate used when Christ spoke with him: "What is truth?" (**Jn 18:38**). Doctrine no longer *really* mattered because truth wasn't definite and *God-centered* ("what does the Bible say") – it was relative and *man-centered* ("what do I think God wants").
- Philosophy also infected doctrine: The Pharisees, influenced by Greek "divinely-implanted" Reason, no longer got their doctrine solely from the Bible; they believed the religious traditions of their forefathers were just as much from God as were the Scriptures. And the Sadducees, influenced by philosophical skepticism, used Nature's Reason to conclude that God's people do not have spirit life, that there is no resurrection, and that angels do not exist (**Ac 23:8**). They believed in the provable, physical here and now.
- Things like circumcision were supposed to be reminders of the fact that God's people were to constantly subdue both Reason and the flesh by walking after the Spirit. But Greek philosophy undermined religion and exalted science by emphasizing equality and the Natural man's supposed ability to serve God via Natural Law. God's people gradually forgot the *spiritual* message of circumcision by focusing on the *physical* aspect of circumcision.
- Another result of Jewish Enlightenment was the forced conversion of the pagan Edomites, which included Herod. This new, unauthorized, widespread program of converting pagans was motivated by equality and a lust for dominion – not by a desire to save dogs from hell. Hellenized Jews decided pagans had an equal right to everlasting life – it was only fair. Their real motivation, however, was political; they wanted to increase their power and influence in the face of the spreading Roman Empire. When Herod became king, proselytizing the heathen became common and widespread, for which Christ ridiculed the Pharisees.
- Jesus Christ spoke about the first (physical) body rotting in the grave while the second (spirit) body and the soul were in hell (Mt 10:28; Lk 12:4,5; 1 Pe 3:19), expecting His listeners to understand the physical body, the spirit body, and the soul. And when He spoke about the spiritual new birth He was angered when Nicodemus idiotically (but supported by Logic and Reason!) responded with incredulity (or condescending sarcasm) by stupidly asking how a physical man could squeeze back into his mother's physical womb and be physically born again. That's why Christ rebuked and shamed Nicodemus by pointing out He expected masters of Israel to *already understand* the difference between our spiritual and physical births (**Jn 3:1-10**). Many Christians today, who believe the religious traditions of their forefathers, reject the Scriptures covered in **THE BASICS** and think Christ was cruel and unfair to rebuke His Old Testament era saints for not already understanding a spiritual new birth that modern denominations think never happened until the New Testament era!
- In Christ's day His saints were so focused on **right and wrong** rather than on submissive **obedience to authority**, and were therefore *so engrossed in regaining dominion* over physical real estate (as covered in D23), that they rejected the submit-when-persecuted-by-evil-civil-and-religious-authorities message of their Messiah and accepted the rise-up-in-rebellious-insurrection message of carnal thugs like Barabbas. In other words, they participated in political matters because they incorrectly thought they should have physical dominion on earth.
- Reason revealed that many places in the Bible were probably meant to be allegorical rather than literal. One of the foremost Enlightened Jews was **Philo of Alexandria** (20 B.C.-50 A.D.). His studies of Greek philosophy caused him to agree with the heretical Sadducees that it was old-fashioned mythological superstition to take the Bible literally. A forerunner of modern theology, Philo taught that intelligent men used Reason when studying the Scriptures in order to find interpretations that agreed with the Laws of Nature. He also believed the self-based Greek ethics and morality that pagan societies used should be adopted by God's people.
- Enlightened liberals became convinced by Reason that God is more pleased with men like Plato who live "good lives" in accordance with "right and wrong" than He is with men like Abraham who believe our duty to God is to obey our authorities – even if they order us to sacrifice our own son or slaughter babies in Bethlehem. Good first- and second-century Christians despised these Enlightened liberals such as the early Christian scholar, **Justin** (100-165 A.D.), as leaven-spreading doctrinal subversives. Justin was executed for his philosophy-based heretical doctrines.
- Early advocates of Greek philosophy believed the use of Reason when studying the Bible was necessary to finding the "real" meaning of Scripture. **Clement** (155-215 A.D.) was one of these early Enlightened Christian pioneers of "theology" and its accompanying liberal doctrine: he espoused equality- and morality-based right and wrong,

caused later liberal Christians to reject the inspiration of the Scriptures because the Old Testament in numerous places said God ordered His saints to go into pagan cities and indiscriminately slaughter all the men, women, children, and beasts (as if there were no difference between men and animals!), and then rebuked His people when they failed to obey Him completely. Philosophy deemed it better and more loving to evangelize pagans than to slaughter them – therefore the “real God” could never have told His followers to be such sadistic, unloving, bloody baby-killers. In other words, Reason was causing Christians to either deny the inspiration of the Bible, or to admit its inspiration but then *ignore many verses!*

- Another example of the effect Greek philosophy had on society and religion is **Origen** (185-254 A.D.). He was an infamous early Christian who was so enamored with philosophy that he is one of the earliest scholars to be labeled a “Christian philosopher” by historians. His heretical belief in equality and its offspring, self-based values, convinced him that God is not a cruel and arbitrary dictator who vengefully forces His own value system upon others by throwing them into hell. Origen said all people – including unregenerate dogs – will go to heaven because all people have equal capacities for “good.” Because pagans cannot go to heaven unless they have some kind of immortality, Origen’s philosophy-based beliefs led later liberal Christian scholars to use him as a “proof” that “the doctrinal position of early Christians” was that pagans have immortal souls.
- My final example of the spreading leaven of philosophy is **Cyril of Jerusalem** (315-386 A.D.). He was an Enlightened Christian preacher and “Doctor of the Church” who accepted philosophy’s teaching that God gave Reason to Christians and pagans so they could all receive and know His truths. Therefore, he said, those religious beliefs common to all men *must* be true. This philosophical belief was the foundation for religious tradition, “common knowledge”, and morality.

We’ve seen how the equality and Reason of Greek philosophy caused God’s people to reject the inspiration and sufficiency of the Scriptures, split into denominations, forget the distinctions between spiritual saints and flesh-only pagans, and variously reject the existence of life after death or to think even pagans can go to heaven. These apostates became the vast majority among God’s people and would remain the majority until Christ’s First Coming. When Christ showed up He was so appalled by their incredible ignorance of the Bible that in addition to repeatedly and pointedly saying things like, “Ye do err not knowing the scriptures... Have ye not read...? Is it not written...?”, He even asked with sarcastic exasperation, “Have ye not read so much as this...?” (Lk 6:3). Let’s examine how Christ’s teachings were in perfect agreement with the beliefs of Abraham’s generations...but so different from the religious beliefs of the Maccabees, the Pharisees, the Sadducees, and many modern Christians.

### 3. EARLY NEW TESTAMENT: CHRIST’S ANTI-PHILOSOPHY (1<sup>st</sup> Coming – 400 A.D.)

The Lord Jesus Christ’s ministry was a tremendous success, in part because He was such an outstanding teacher of the Bible. Many people learned a lot of Bible from Him: There were the two fools on the road to Emmaus (Lk 24:13-35), to whom He opened all the Scriptures and expounded the things concerning Him. There were the eleven Apostles who sat at His feet for years. The Apostle Paul was taught by Him in the wilderness. Nicodemus learned things he should have already known. There were also the Lord’s many disciples, and it was “of them” that He picked twelve to be “apostles” (Lk 6:13). From these many disciples He “appointed other seventy also” (Lk 10:1,17). These 85 men profited greatly by having Christ personally teach them the Bible. As the Lord traveled around the countryside He taught thousands and thousands of people on hillsides, on lakeshores, in synagogues, at public water wells, at stonings, and in their homes. He was *always* teaching the Bible. Therefore when He returned to heaven He left a huge army of doctrinally-correct Christians who had *learned their doctrine directly from Him*.

These Christians went on to *teach others what Christ taught them*. In many cases, these teachings of Christ directly or indirectly *affect the issue of soul immortality*. For example, Paul taught that Ishmael was a pagan, born only of the flesh; but Isaac was a saint, born of the Spirit of God (Ga 4:22-29)...and Paul expected his New Testament audience to understand that difference when he referred to people as *dogs* (Ph 3:2). Nicodemus taught that people born only of the flesh cannot see or enter the spiritual realm (heaven and hell), *ye must* be born again. Others repeated what they’d learned from Christ about how the souls of the people who go to Abraham’s bosom and hell have left their physical first body in the grave and taken their second body of the new birth to the spirit realm inhabited by God’s spirit children (Mt 10:28; Lk 12:4,5). Others repeated Christ’s teaching that the grave is for mortals who have the capability of dying *because they are lower than angels* (He 2:9), but that God created the everlasting lake of fire for His bad *angels* (Mt 25:41) because His *angels* are spirits (He 1:7) and spirits *are not able* to die (Lk 20:36) in the grave like dogs. The Apostles said Christ taught them that Judas Iscariot was, before the cross, one of those spirit children of God’s who was going to the lake of fire (Jn 6:70), but that Paul was one of God’s spirit children who had been to the spirit realm of the third heaven in his second body (2 Co 12:2-5; Jn 3:3,5). They also passed on the teaching that the Old Testament saints in Abe’s bosom were *spirits* (1 Pe 3:19) who were birthed by the Father of spirits. These guardians of Biblical Christianity also warned everybody about the leaven of philosophy (Co 2:8). In other words, Christ sent His first-century disciples around the world to teach their brethren the things He had taught them, and He had them record those same teachings in His Bible *for us*. That is why good Christians get their doctrine *from the Bible/Christ* – not from the philosophy-based writings of men like Philo, Justin, Origen, and Cyril.

Christ’s teachings were passed on to early New Testament saints, and these teachings are the evidence that the early church as a whole rejected the Greek philosophers’ theory that the souls of dogs had everlasting life. In other words, the early Christians were doctrinally correct because they accepted all of the above that Christ taught them about the difference between born-once pagans and born-again saints.

Christ’s death terminated the Old Testament era, which suddenly made the old majority of philosophy-infected Jews (such as the Pharisees and Sadducees) irrelevant. The New Testament church, though small at first, was the new majority. It rejected tradition and philosophy.

The philosophy-loving minority in the New Testament church was made up of those few we’ve already discussed (such as Justin, Clement, Origen, and Cyril). These Enlightened Christian heretics were ridiculed and sometimes executed for their subversive doctrines. Why did these heretics think everybody – including the unregenerate – go to heaven? Because they thought you do not have to be born again of the Spirit in order to leave this physical realm and enter the spirit realm of eternity.

They thought you do not need Christ in order to get everlasting life. And, of course, they rejected the differences between born-once heathen and born-again saints. None of that stuff about heathens living beyond the grave, being equal to saints, and having innate Reason to receive and know the spiritual things of God was in the Bible, which means the early heretics, such as Justin and Origen, listened to the *Greek philosophers* – not to the privileged thousands of saints who were personally instructed by the Lord Jesus Christ Himself.

#### 4. LATER NEW TESTAMENT: PHILOSOPHY CORRUPTS SAINTS (400 A.D. – 2<sup>nd</sup> Coming)

The nascent belief that pagans have immortal souls got its first big boost in the 5<sup>th</sup> century when Augustine published his book, *The City of God*, which included the world's first (and only!) "Christian proof" that pagans have immortal souls. Augustine's philosophy-based book effectively marks the reintroduction of Greek philosophy into Christianity. Because it was disguised in sheep's clothing it was more effective than the heavy-handed program of Hellenization imposed upon God's people by the Ptolemaic and Seleucid empires. Those Old Testament attempts to infect God's people with Reason had caused the well-intentioned Maccabees to rise up in rebellion, but this time there would be no military resistance because the heaven was coming from within the church.

Discerning Bible-based Christians were disappointed when Augustine addressed the immortality of the soul controversy because of what his "proof" ignored. He chose to ignore the fact that the Bible says the unregenerate flesh-only man cannot receive and know spiritual truths, cannot be subject to God's laws, cannot please Him, and cannot be anything but enmity against Him. Knowledgeable Christians saw that Augustine's proof only dealt with mankind *in general* by completely ignoring the Biblical distinctions between saints and the unregenerate. For reasons unknown to scholars he merely restated Plato's childish "proof" – and then used that as the foundation upon which to conclude that all men are made in the image of God, which is a direct contradiction of what the Scriptures plainly say (covered in chapter D26, *In The Image of God Made He Them*), and that the souls of all men – including the unregenerate that have been born only of the *flesh* – are somehow *spirit*, which gives them everlasting life.

There were men who read Augustine's book and immediately recognized him as an intellectual fraud, such as **Vincent of Lérins**. It cannot be determined with certainty whether Vincent and the other discerning Christians were that smart, or if the majority of Christians was that stupid – *but it did take 850 years for the majority to realize Augustine was a fraud!*

Discerning Christians were unable to stop Augustine's "proof" from spreading because his book was quickly adopted by the Roman Catholic Church and accepted as doctrinal dogma. The immortality of pagan souls became the justification for the Catholic Church's high-profile wars to convert pagan nations at sword point...*they had to save the poor creatures from spending their "everlasting lives" in hell!*

#### THE CONFLICT BETWEEN CHRISTIANITY AND ORGANIZED RELIGION

As the centuries went by, discerning Christians lived quiet lives away from the spotlight of history because, knowing we do not have dominion and understanding the heathen hoards weren't pouring into hell, they were not interested in building empires by conquering kingdoms and building denominations by recruiting unregenerate dogs. But they were actively involved in helping each other remain strong in doctrine and weak in the flesh, and they never hesitated to share the gospel with strangers and exhort Catholics to study the Scriptures. Precisely who these groups of Christians were and what their exact doctrines were is unknown because history is written by the victors – and the Roman Catholic Church wiped these groups out and then wrote their "history."

Geographically, these groups, whose origins go back to the first centuries of the New Testament era, settled the contiguous regions along the trade and migration routes from the Caspian Sea, around the Black Sea, and along the Danube River all the way to the Atlantic. The group names that pop up most frequently in history include: 1) The **Paulicians**. This eastern group of Christians originated in Armenia, which became the world's first Christian nation (300 A.D.) and included the region of the old Assyrian Empire in the vicinity of the Caucasus Mountains. 2) The **Bogomils**. This central group was made up of **Slavics** and **Saxons** who spread east and west from the region south of the Balkan Mountains from the Adriatic Sea to the Caspian Sea – an area centered around the cities of Berea, Thessalonica, Philippi, and Neapolis (**Ac 16:11,12; 17:10-13**). 3) The **Cathari**. This large western group spread all the way across southern Europe from the Adriatic Sea to the Atlantic Ocean. 4) The **Albigenses**. This group of Christians appears to have been part of, or closely linked with, the Cathari of southern France and northern Italy. The Albigenses got their name from one of their main population centers, the city of Albi, in southern France. The different names may have been nothing more than conveniences of communication for historical and geographical identification – because the different names cannot be used to prove they were doctrinally divided into denominations. For ease of communication I usually refer to them collectively as the Cathari (pages H7-6 and D24-1).

Doctrinally, these groups had a number of things in common and, in fact, may have been homogenous. They completely rejected the spiritual efficacy of the physical sacraments of the Roman Catholic and Greek Orthodox churches (called "sanctifying grace" in the Roman Church). They rejected the New Testament validity of the priesthoods of those two denominations. They rejected the earthly political aspirations of those two churches. And they rejected the hierarchies of the two. The Cathari refused to call physical buildings churches, which caused some people to claim they were anti-church. They embraced Spartan lifestyles and devoted themselves to preaching the Bible, which they claimed to be more authoritative than the doctrinal teachings of the Greek and Roman churches. And they rejected the Roman Catholic doctrine of the immortality of pagan souls. Not surprisingly, the Roman Catholic and Greek Orthodox churches, which excommunicated each other as heretics and non-Christians, hated these Cathari groups because their preaching convinced many Christians to leave the two powerful denominations. Both churches labeled the Cathari heretics, non-Christians, and followers of cults such as the Manichean dualists. Because historians have never found any evidence linking the Cathari with Manichaeism, it is believed medieval Catholic historians linked the two merely because of some dualistic similarities in doctrine – which are not dissimilar to some things within Christianity and Catholicism. I'll cover some of the elements of Cathari "dualism" shortly, but remember that history contains very few specifics about their doctrines – except for their rejection of the above-mentioned particulars of Roman Catholicism.

The Cathari were fruitful, and over generations as their communities spread out, they came into more frequent contact with Scripturally-ignorant members of the Catholic Church. When a Scripturally-mature Christian speaks with a Christian who is religious but hasn't mastered the Bible, the one walking in the light immediately recognizes that fact, but the one walking in darkness doesn't realize his ignorance is so apparent. So it was no mystery among the growing communities of Bible-believing

Cathari that Roman Catholics, who claimed to be doctrinally-correct Christians and who thought the whole world should join their church or go to hell, were merely stumbling along in the darkness of ignorance, carnality, and philosophy-based religious traditions. When the Cathari spoke with Catholics, they told them to learn the Bible because when the blind follow the blind they both go to hell. The Catholics responded by saying the ones going to hell were the non-Catholic Cathari and the unconverted heathen. The Cathari responded by saying dogs weren't qualified for hell because they were merely flesh-born mortals. Not being able to handle the Scripture they were shown, the Catholics went and got their priests. But the priests could no more engage in swordplay than their pewsters, so they simply defended the immortality of pagan souls by pointing out that Plato proved it, early "church fathers" like Justin and Origen accepted it, the great Augustine established Plato's proof as consistent with Catholic doctrine, and therefore the Cathari needed to submit to the magisterium of the pope in Rome. The Cathari kept replying, "Yeah, I hear you, but where does the Bible say pagans have everlasting life *of any kind*?" Confused and embarrassed, these angry priests sent official reports to their superiors in Rome stating that increasing numbers of heretics were causing faithful Catholics to doubt established Roman Catholic doctrines, ask questions about the Bible, and in some cases to leave Catholicism and join the ye-must-be-born-again heretics.

By the early 11<sup>th</sup> century the Vatican felt so threatened by these large, growing groups of quiet-living, Bible-preaching heretics that it actually responded with the murderous violence of Cain – it launched several full-scale military crusades to wipe out Cathari population centers. Then it sent the Inquisition into every nook and cranny to find and execute the survivors. When members of the Inquisition questioned – under torture – captured Cathari families about why they rejected the immortality of all human souls, the questioners had no more understanding of the Bible-based answers they were given than today's Catholics do. The Cathari were talking way over their Inquisitors' heads when they replied, "In order to understand the immortality of the soul issue, you must first understand the new birth, carnality, serving the God of heaven by walking in the light of the Spirit, serving the god of this world by walking in the darkness of the flesh, and why carnality renders the natural man incapable of responding to the Bible because the unregenerate are not subject to the law of God and neither indeed can be because the spiritual things of God must be spiritually discerned. Verily, verily, I say unto thee, priest, ye must be born again."

The Inquisitors, who were supposed to be the ones safeguarding correct doctrine, were embarrassed and angered by the obvious Bible knowledge of these humble people who remained pious even under severe, bloody, sexual torture. But all the Inquisitors agreed these heretics condemned themselves by believing Jesus Christ meant it literally when He referred to pagans as *dogs*. So the Inquisitors tied these families of heretics into huge living balls, consigned them to the fires of hell, and rolled them over the sides of mountains. (One conservative calculation indicates one thousand Cathari were butchered every month for two hundred years before the dwindling number of survivors made that kill rate unsustainable. For documentation of the atrocities committed see Fox's *Book of Christian Martyrs* and van Braght's *Martyrs Mirror*.) Then the Inquisitors sat down in the homes of their victims and snacked on their food while writing reports justifying these latest executions. Centuries later, Catholic historians would peruse those reports, not understand what the Cathari were talking about, and write that the Cathari were dualist heretics who rejected the One God of Creation and therefore weren't even real Christians. There were so many of these dangerous families and communities of Bible believers spread out over 1,500,000 square miles that it took the Roman Catholic Church four centuries to completely wipe them from the face of the earth. After this genocide there was no one to stand up and explain that Cathari "heresy" was merely the product of Roman Catholic ignorance of the Bible and enmity against those who refused to bow to a wafer as if it were Jesus Christ in the flesh.

Why would historians think humble Bible-preaching people like the Cathari were "heretics"? I'll use Nicodemus' encounter with Jesus Christ in John 3 as an example.

Nicodemus did not understand fundamental Biblical truths about the new birth or about the important distinction between mortal flesh and immortal spirit. And from that we may infer he also lacked a proper understanding of carnality and the difference between the evil of walking in the darkness of the flesh as opposed to properly walking in the light of the Spirit. The conversation he had with Christ, in fact, shows he understood less about being born again than your average Roman Catholic does today – because even Catholics don't ask questions half as stupid as Nicodemus did. So, let's pretend Nicodemus rejected Christ and therefore didn't have the foggiest idea what He was talking about. And let's also say Nicodemus wrote a history book about life in Israel in his day in which he says Christ was a weirdo and a heretic. Here's an excerpt from Nicodemus' "historical proof that Christ was a heretic":

I don't know why some people liked this penniless carpenter from Galilee. He was an itinerant mooch who always invited himself into people's homes in order to get a free meal. He didn't even own a home and often slept in the public park over on the Mount of Olives with a scruffy group of unemployed wanderers. He suffered from megalomania and told people he was the son of God, claimed to have angels at his beck and call, and said he was the true king of the Jews even though he always shunned political involvement and refused to be made a king. He was finally executed as an insurrectionist, but not before he started a sect that believed in *dualism*.

We Jews know from the Bible there is but one God, and He created the universe. God taught us it is good to have circumcised penises, wash the outside of our dishes, rest on Saturday, and keep a list of other Commandments. Keeping His Commandments is good; not keeping His Commandments is bad. But the carpenter who called himself the Christ rejected all of that and preached dualism.

Jesus rejected our Biblical belief in one God and one creation: he said there is a good god in heaven who rules over a spirit realm of light, and there is another god – an evil one – on earth who rules over a physical realm of darkness. These two gods are fighting against each other. Some people on earth are children of light because they are spirits. But people who are flesh and blood are evil children of darkness because the physical world is evil. I actually heard Jesus tell some Pharisees their father was the devil and they were walking in darkness. This carpenter also rejected God's rule-based system of right and wrong. For example, I heard him tell some people there is nothing wrong with eating with unwashed hands, there is nothing wrong with working on Saturday, and it is OK to enter the temple and take the showbread and eat it...as long as you are "a child" of "the kingdom of light."

When I asked him how people become children of light, he said they have to squeeze back into their mothers' wombs and then be "born again"! I've never heard anything so ridiculous in my life! I just stood there a minute looking at this deluded pauper while he continued spouting more of his claptrap about the flesh is part of this worldly kingdom of darkness, and people have to be "born again" and walk around with their heads in the clouds in order to be a good member of the heavenly kingdom of light.

If you understood as little Bible as this “Nicodemus” did, it would be easy to think Christ was a “heretic”, and even easier to convince later generations of ignorant Christians He was a heretic.

Now, because I referred to dualism, and because Catholic historians accused the Cathari of the heresy of dualism, I’ll describe *dualism* as if I were a secular historian:

As its name implies, dualism attempts to subvert the traditional Christian belief in one God and one creation by introducing a vague and contradictory belief that there are two opposing gods and two opposing worlds (often called kingdoms) under the command of these opposing gods. The teachings of dualism seem to boil down to the idea that there are two opposing systems of good and evil – the spirit world (good) is opposed by the physical world (evil). For example, the Bogomils, who were closely related to the Cathari, thought the devil is the god of this world who fathered and rules the physical human body. But the Bogomils only practiced a *modified dualism* because they thought the god of this world, the devil, is not co-equal with the god of heaven, but is a rebellious child of the god of heaven. At any rate, the devil and the god of heaven are fighting over the souls of men by using their two opposing kingdoms of good (spirit) and evil (physical matter). The belief that physical matter is bad and spirit is good caused some people to go to the extreme of saying Christ never had a true physical body on earth; he was a spirit who manifested himself in human form. Dualists believe the good spirit realm will eventually triumph and use fire to destroy this evil physical world.

The destruction of this earth by fire contradicted the traditional belief of the established church, the Roman Catholic Church, which maintained that the earth God created is not evil, and therefore the Biblical destruction of this world should not be taken literally; it is an allegorical representation of the eventual triumph of the Church and the establishment of the Kingdom of God on earth. The Roman Church believed it was blasphemy to think God would create anything evil, or to think God is not the one supreme ruler over all of creation.

One of the modern offspring of dualism was the “Doctrine of Transcendence”, which said people could use Natural Law meditation to transcend this physical world and get in touch with the beauty and truth of the glorious realm above and beyond the earth. However, Transcendental Meditation fell from vogue in the mid 1800s when it was agreed Natural Law never existed.

The above descriptions of “heretical beliefs” show how easy it would have been for Biblically-ignorant historians to sincerely – but incorrectly – call the Cathari heretical dualists. Therefore, terms like “ye must be born again” in order to avoid “walking in the flesh” after “the god of this world” seemed very strange to those that lived by sight rather than by the literal living words of the living God.

The rotting corpses of millions of Cathari put Christians who rejected the immortality of unregenerate dogs in a distinct minority, and it made those who accepted the immortality of pagan souls a distinct majority that would remain until the Second Coming. However, during the destruction of the Cathari the Christian majority was embarrassed to find out Augustine’s proof of the immortality of souls was specious. That revelation launched many years of intense theological debate and religious and political maneuvering, which are of great doctrinal and historical interest to those studying this topic. Let’s examine that debate within the context of history.

### THE IMMORTALITY OF THE SOUL’S DOCTRINAL CRISIS

When the fourth crusade against the Cathari completed the task of razing their remaining towns and slaughtering the inhabitants, the Vatican commanded the Inquisition to sniff out, torture, and kill any survivors who had gone into hiding. Because dead people cannot discuss doctrine, it looked as if Rome had *finally* done away with those who questioned the validity of the Catholic tradition that pagan souls are immortal. But then the unexpected happened: A man named Averroes reached out from the grave, discredited the only “Christian proof” of heathen immortality, and put the Vatican into another panicked defense of not only its doctrinal competence, but also its continued status as a social and religious powerhouse.

Before we get to Averroes, we need to briefly set the stage. The Crusades (1095-1291) had energized commerce between Europe and the Middle East, and allowed Catholic scholars to have access to documents preserved by Muslim scholars, which included unadulterated copies of Greek philosophy. Many scholars were impressed with and won over by philosophy and the use of Reason. Philosophy in turn seemed to lend credibility to the teachings of early Christians like Justin and Origen, who in their day were heretics but were now increasingly viewed as *intellectuals*. The process of elevating those men from heretics to “intellectuals” and then to “church fathers” was a long and slow one that paralleled the increasing acceptance of Reason, resulting in theologians adopting the beliefs of these early heretics as “doctrinal precedents.”

When modern Bible scholars first began examining the teachings of early liberal Christian intellectuals (such as Justin and Origen who thought pagans could please God and go to heaven via Reason and morality – without the Scriptures and without the new birth), they realized the liberals weren’t *really* very *intellectual*...because they had based their doctrine on Greek philosophy rather than the Bible. Ordinarily that would have caused modern scholars to discredit the early intellectuals, but because the scholars had the hindsight of history, they already knew Augustine would come along and establish a “precedent” by “Christianizing” Plato’s Reason-based immortal soul “proof.” Therefore, scholars assumed that even though the early liberal non-intellectuals had based their doctrine solely on the *wrong foundation* of pagan philosophy, they’d accidentally reached the *right conclusion*. In other words, the early Enlightened non-intellectuals were excused for erroneously relying on *pagan* precedents...because those precedents would eventually – when Natural Law and Reason became “Christian” – be redefined as *Christian* precedents.

The growing use of Reason caused more and more Christians to conclude that pagans like Plato were in touch with God, that all men, pagans and Christians, were going to heaven, and that even pagan religions taught certain religious and moral tenets that were of God. Because everything was now open to skepticism, some scholars even thought it had been wrong for God’s Old Testament people (like King David) to slaughter innocent pagans and then claim “God told us to do it!”

But Averroes tossed all of that traditional wisdom out the window.

**Averroes** (1126-1198) was a brilliant Spanish-Arab Muslim theologian and philosopher who was so well-respected and influential among Enlightened Christian and Jewish theologians and scholars that they graced him with an honorary nickname. Just as Aristotle was deemed so great that he was simply known as “The Philosopher”, scholars likewise called Averroes, “The Commentator.” Averroes was a devoted student of Greek philosophy who accepted its teachings about Reason, Equality, and Happiness, which made him unpopular among fundamentalist Muslims who took the Koran literally. Averroes

believed people of all religions have access to God's truth through philosophy (Reason). But he believed the masses lack the intellectual capacity to understand and appreciate the higher truths hidden within religious law, and that they would react with superstitious fear if they ever learned of them. Therefore only the intellectual elite should be given access to the higher truths revealed by philosophy. He believed Moses, the best prophet of his era, was superseded in greatness by the later prophet, Jesus Christ. But the latest and greatest prophet of all was Mohammed – simply because Reason allows mankind to grow ever closer to God's truths through the study of the accumulated wisdom of Enlightened scholars of the past.

Averroes' works integrated Greek philosophy and the religion of Islam, which showed how Reason can link all religions by revealing their common moral values. Averroes' combining Reason and Islam made him the Muslim forerunner of Thomas Aquinas. He is also the father of modern liberal Islamics because his works were influential in splitting off from fundamentalist Muslims who take the Koran literally a new Enlightened group of Muslims who are liberal, sophisticated, and progressive. For example, Averroes believed the treatment of women as servants was in accordance with the literal Koran and therefore should be the belief of the masses, but at the same time it was OK for the elite to understand that women are equal. In other words, his teachings were very similar to the literal teachings in the Bible that Christian women are fundamentally equal to their husbands by virtue of the fact that all saints are in Christ, but at the same time wives are made servants of their husbands by virtue of the different jobs God gave to men and women.

Averroes showed that the philosophical arguments of Plato and Augustine were specious by demonstrating conclusively and undeniably that Augustine's Plato-based "proof" of the immortality of human souls actually – if you took Reason seriously – made a good case for the opposite conclusion! In doing so, Averroes single-handedly pulled the rug out from under the validity of Plato, the "church fathers", Augustine, magisterium, and papal infallibility. This was a huge crisis for the Vatican. If it allowed people to think Augustine was wrong about heathen immortality, and if it allowed people to think Christ had been literal when He called pagans *dogs*, they might question the Vatican's doctrinal competence, its military conquest of pagan nations in order to save their souls, and its extermination of millions of Cathari "heretics."

Even before Averroes' works became public, many scholars privately knew Augustine's "proof" was specious, but they had been too timid to speak up – so the issue was quietly ignored. But now that Augustine's "proof" was openly criticized as specious, and because most Christians know their church's doctrines are supposed to be based solely on the firm foundation of Biblical truth, and because of the reality that many of the naïvely-faithful had been shocked to learn that *Augustine's brain-dead "proof" had been the only doctrinal foundation supporting heathen immortality in over 1,300 years of New Testament Christianity*, Catholicism realized it had a problem it could no longer ignore. Now that the Augustinian foundation of Roman Catholicism was discredited, scholars could no longer utilize other Catholic traditions – such as sending missionaries out to rescue pagans from hell – as backward "confirmations" of the theory that all souls are immortal. Scholars now had to face the fact that many church traditions over the centuries had been founded upon Augustine's assumption – and subsequent "proof" – that early heretics like Philo, Justin, Clement, Origen, and Cyril had been correct to teach that God and His saints should not be taken literally in the Bible when they call pagans dogs. Scholars needed *humility* to admit their error, *faith* to believe what the Bible literally says, and *time* to study and grow into doctrinal maturity so they could dismantle centuries of errors built upon errors. It was all just too much for the Vatican to handle; too much had been built upon the foundation of heathen immortality to go back to *sola Scriptura*. But doctrine wasn't Rome's only problem: Long before the writings of Averroes showed up, spiritual matters like doctrine had been overshadowed by temporal political, geopolitical, military, and denominational problems directly related to the Church's lust for worldly dominion.

The Vatican's machinations had alienated the king of France, Philip the Fair, who rejected the Catholic doctrine of worldly dominion that said kings should be subordinate to the pope. I'll skip the myriad concurrent historical details (such as King Philip's Babylonian Captivity of the papacy) and focus on the four things the Vatican did in an effort to save face, preserve the discredited doctrine of pagan immortality, and retain its political and religious power.

First, the Vatican told the Inquisition to continue killing the Cathari – and anybody else who denied that pagans have everlasting life. Yes, everyone now knew the Cathari might have been correct for well over a thousand years...but it was too late for the Vatican to dismantle the Roman Catholic denomination that had taken 900 years to build.

Second, the Vatican began looking for someone with the intellectual ability to salvage the sagging credibility of the never-proven doctrine. It selected the well-known scholar, Dominican bishop, and teacher of philosophy, **Albertus Magnus** (1200-1280). Albertus was an excellent choice; he was the foremost scholar of his time, and is the only one to be given the title "the Great" (which is what *magnus* means). But Albertus quickly found out why the immortality of pagan souls had never been proven: there are no examples in the Bible of Egyptians, Philistines, Persians, Babylonians, or any other pagans living beyond the grave; all examples involve God's people. If Albertus tried to take the examples of God's people (apples) living beyond the grave and apply them to pagans (oranges), he would expose himself as an intellectual dunce, be stripped of his *magnus* title, and become *Albertus Idiotus*.

Knowing he could not prove his case with the Bible, and knowing Averroes had been correct in saying he couldn't prove his case with Reason, either, Albertus stooped to using a last-ditch tactic very familiar to debaters: he wove the Bible into his rhetoric and used Reason to modify it, and then he'd say things like, "therefore thus-and-such", and, "from that we must conclude yakkety-yak" – when he'd really proven nothing. He might have gotten away with it if Averroes hadn't just shown everybody how to recognize such tactics. Albertus' frustrating attempts to make it look like he'd proven the traditional Catholic doctrine were all embarrassing failures.

But nobody blamed him and nobody tried to call him Albertus Idiotus; because every scholar who'd ever examined the issue knew it could not be proven by Reason, was not in the Bible, and in fact seemed to contradict a number of places in the Bible. When scholars and theologians saw Albert the Great fail, it merely convinced them that any Christian of lesser intellect who attempted to prove the doctrine was also going to fail – and was going to expose himself as Biblically and intellectually immature. That is why no serious Christian scholar since Albertus Magnus has ever tried to publish a comprehensive Biblical proof that pagans have immortal souls.

Albertus' frustration and failure showed scholars and theologians that neither the Bible nor Reason could be used as convincing, irrefutable proofs of pagan immortality. But they noted that Albertus' inventive usage of convoluted, hard-to-follow Reason-based arguments showed Reason to be more useful than the Bible: With the Bible you get boxed in quickly because the Bible is finite, definite, and *written*. Reason, on the other hand, is infinite and indefinite because it exists only in the mind of man. Therefore Reason showed much promise as a "proof" because its subtleties could be twisted and manipulated into

labyrinthine paths that would be sure to confuse and tire all but the most tenacious scholars. Reason began to appeal more and more to Vatican authorities who somehow had to reestablish their doctrinal credibility.

Therefore when a combination of factors, including religious and political machinations in the late 13<sup>th</sup> century, put pressure on the Vatican, it decided to go ahead and take its third step to establish the credibility of pagan immortality: it assigned its brilliant liberal scholar, Dominican friar, and philosopher, **Thomas Aquinas** (1225-1274), the task of formally recognizing the doctrinal validity and credibility of Reason as part of Christianity. He was not told to prove the immortality of pagan souls because Albert the Great had already proven it couldn't be done. Aquinas merely said in passing that the reason man doesn't *want* to die is because he *can't* – his soul is immortal. And he assured Christians they could continue trusting the teaching magisterium of the Catholic Church.

Also note that Aquinas did not *prove* the Christian validity of Reason; indeed, that was not his assignment. His assignment was to weave Reason into Christianity and show how it could be used to benefit Christianity and mankind. And that is all he did: he wrote and wrote and wrote; he rambled and mused and postulated; he discussed and philosophized and advised; he analyzed and examined and compared. But he established nothing. He proved nothing. But the powerful Roman Catholic hierarchy acted as if he had.

Those who had depended on “great scholars” like Albertus to prove heathen immortality were again disappointed by Aquinas. And those who had been reluctant to accept as valid the very philosophy the Bible warns about continued to have reservations. But most within the Roman Catholic hierarchy recognized how important to the future of the Church Reason was, so they took the fourth step: In 1323 Thomas Aquinas was made an official Roman Catholic saint for his work of integrating Reason and Christianity, and he displaced Augustine as the Church's foundation. All resistance and scholastic debate stopped, and the acceptance of the never-proven and no-longer-open-for-discussion doctrine of pagan immortality was assured among the ignorant and uncaring masses.

Another factor that influenced the spreading acceptance of the theory that pagans have immortal souls was the leaders of the Protestant Reformation all grew up Roman Catholics who trusted in the validity of the works of a Christian saint, their own Thomas Aquinas, and therefore never questioned the revolutionary changes wrought by the Age of Reason. Not one of the leaders of the Protestant Reformation knew enough Bible to question the *never-proven* (!) belief that pagan souls have immortality without the spiritual birth. Probably the closest any Reformer ever came to learning the truth was the brilliant John Calvin. He learned enough Bible to realize the new birth is a sovereign parental act of God and has nothing to do with the carnal “free will” of the unregenerate. Had he not been so preoccupied with establishing Christian political dominion on earth he might have had the study time to discern the centuries-old unsolved parable of the difference between the saved and the unsaved. At any rate, nobody has ever been able to Scripturally prove pagans have immortal souls. That is the reason the doctrine has become such an embarrassment to the modern church that nobody seriously preaches and teaches it. I say again, nobody has ever been able to Scripturally prove pagans have immortal souls. And if anyone ever does, he will be more famous among theologians than Plato, Augustine, and Aquinas.

The ex-Catholic priests who started the Protestant Reformation founded a new breed of Enlightened denominations that would believe (until the mid 19<sup>th</sup> century) Reason was God's gift to mankind to reveal His Natural Law. These Protestant denominations simply and blindly accepted (until the mid 19<sup>th</sup> century) the Bible PLUS Reason as the foundation of doctrine, and by the time they found out Reason and Natural Law never existed, they had already revolutionized the social order of Western civilization, including church and civil government, economics, education, and the purpose of warfare (to fight for democracy rather than religion).

The incorporation of Reason into Christianity allowed the theory that pagans have immortal souls to survive *without ever being proven*. Reason also caused theology to wax...while faith, Biblical literacy, and Biblical literalism waned.

### THE DEBATE OVER THE IMMORTALITY OF THE SOUL

We have dealt with the historical events that established – and later salvaged – the doctrine of heathen immortality. Now we'll focus on the doctrinal arguments made by Christians over the centuries.

**The Bible says pagans are unregenerate, mortal dogs:** The doctrinal position of the Cathari and conservative scholars was Christians are given spirit life and immortality by Christ – but pagans are not. Some of the verses used to prove heathen are mere mortals, flesh-only, no different from beasts, and prevented by a lack of God-given spirit life from receiving and knowing the spiritual things of God, a condition that makes these Gentiles no more subject to the Bible than beasts, included Ec 3:18,19; 1 Co 2:10-16; Ro 5:12-17; 8:7,8; Mt 10:28, which are almost completely ignored today.

**Tradition claimed the “breath of life” equals spirit and immortal:** Liberal theologians attempting to salvage the doctrinal credibility of the Roman Catholic Church responded by turning to Ge 2:7, which says all men have a God-given “breath of life.” They said this “breath of life” is the soul, which they said is a spiritual entity that gives man immortality and the ability to receive and know God's spiritual truths, making man different from beasts because beasts do not have everlasting life, cannot go to heaven or hell, and are not subject to the Bible like humans are. Therefore, they said, pagans are supposed to live by the Bible and will go to hell if they don't – thus proving the Catholic and Protestant missionary programs of proselytizing pagans were not misdirected.

**The Bible says God gave animals the breath of life:** The conservatives then humiliated the liberals by pointing out that Ge 6:17 and 7:15 show animals also have this God-given “breath of life”, and Ge 7:21,22 clearly shows that all flesh, both human and animal, in whose nostrils is the breath of life die. In fact, the reason mortal men and mortal beasts die is the simple fact that they all have the same type of God-given breath: “For that which befalleth the sons of men befalleth beasts; even one thing befalleth them: as the one dieth, so dieth the other; yea, they have all one breath; so that a man hath no preeminence above a beast” (Ec 3:19). Therefore Augustine's theory that pagan humans have immortal hell-bound souls did not come from the Bible. That's why today's encyclopedias openly state that the Christian doctrine of the immortality of the soul is not supported by either Testament of the Bible, but came to Christianity from the Greek philosophers. (Go look it up in your encyclopedia. *Britannica's* Micropædia has it under “soul”; and in the Macropædia under “Christianity” find the section “Christian thought and doctrine”, and in the subsection “Christian Philosophy” read the part called “History of Christian philosophy.”) The pagan origin of the doctrine is not a mystery. I say again, it is *very* well known. But it is an embarrassing unmentionable because it reveals that for many centuries our spiritual forefathers, both preachers and pewsters, were ignorant



and/or shallow in their understanding of the Bible, or were hypocrites who knew better but were too weak and selfish to stand up and preach correct doctrine.

**Tradition claimed animals do not have souls:** The liberals had no choice but to admit that animals have the breath of life, but they rashly countered by saying animals certainly do not have souls. That was an unfounded and unscriptural assumption, and it was based on the traditional view of the soul as an immortal entity that either went to heaven or hell.

**The Bible says animals have souls:** The conservatives then appeared to finally win the argument by pointing out animals do have souls, and that those souls are mortal and don't go to hell. For example, Re 8:9; 16:3; Jb 12:10 say the souls of animals *die* just like Ezek 18:4 says human souls are not immortal because they *die* – all of which reaffirmed the doctrinal validity and literal truth of Ec 3:18,19.

Even though the conservatives won the Bible-based argument about the mortality of dogs, that didn't keep the liberals from continuing to resort to Reason. They pointed out that some ancient pagans – like Plato – used Reason to conclude that all humans have immortality. And Christians like Origen and Augustine used Reason to conclude the same. The conservatives shook their heads and said it didn't matter what anybody used to believe; what mattered was what the Bible says because all doctrines must come from the Bible.

Even though Aquinas avoided the doctrine of heathen immortality, he actually salvaged it by making philosophy “Christian” and teaching that the Bible doesn't answer all doctrinal questions or reveal everything we need to know: some things we have to get from the Natural Laws written on the tables of our hearts. That is why taking the Bible literally and believing the Bible to be the sole authority in all matters of Christian doctrine and all matters of our Christian daily lives never regained the ascendancy and will remain the minority position until the Second Coming of Jesus Christ.

After Aquinas it became “Christian” for the liberals to use pagan Natural Law to “prove” humans really were different from beasts because when God breathed the “breath of life” into man and beast He was “obviously” *giving man Reason* while withholding it from beasts so humans alone could receive and know divine truths/moral values. The Catholic Church began promoting the immortality of human souls by referring to them as “Reasonable souls” and “Intellectual souls”, as distinguished from the mortal souls of beasts that merely had “instinct” – not intellect (as was commonly believed back then). The use of unscriptural terms like “Reasonable souls” helped the Vatican reestablish its doctrinal credibility and to “prove” all human souls have everlasting life – because now Reason was valid, it was Christian. And it was now OK for liberals to use the writings of church fathers, such as Augustine and Origen, as legitimate doctrinal precedents.

Having accepted man's “Reasonable soul” as immortal, and Reason as a valid mystical substitute for the Bible, the Catholic Church built upon this mystical/mythical mental ability by decreeing, “At the bar of God's justice a man will not be judged by anything *but his own conscience.*” (International missionary work, however, would later discredit the theory that conscience is a universal value system implanted by God: conscience is based upon, and changes with, learned belief systems.) Augustine's old discredited doctrine was now accepted again, and the fact that neither he nor anybody else has ever proven pagans have immortality doesn't mean it isn't true! Therefore it *is* true!

The historical debate over heathen immortality illustrates Christianity's division into two camps. One camp believed the Bible didn't answer all doctrinal questions or reveal everything we need to know. Some things we had to get from the wisdom written on the tables of our hearts by God – the writing was Natural Law, and Reason was the mechanism by which all men have access to these eternal truths of God.

The other camp believed the word of God can make us doctrinally perfect and thoroughly furnished unto all good works – including using Scripture to instruct Christ's sheep in the way of righteousness and to reprove and correct those who stray from the word of truth.

Today Christianity remains divided over what should be the source of our doctrine: Some think doctrine should come from the Bible PLUS nothing; others think doctrine should come from the Bible PLUS (add whatever your denomination approves of: Self, Reason, love, church hierarchy, “tongues revelations”, feelings, conscience, morality, family values, democracy, freedom, happiness, tradition...).

### THE MODERN PROTESTANT ORIGIN OF “ETERNAL SECURITY”

That Reason-based doctrinal environment is what nurtured and taught young Catholic boys, many of whom became priests who went on to teach philosophy to others. These men, who later quit Catholicism in order to start the Protestant Reformation, had no idea the foundational pillars upon which Roman Catholicism rested – Reason and heathen immortality – were based upon a discredited “proof” (Augustine's) and a subsequent stubborn defense (Albertus, Aquinas, and the crusades against the Cathari) of the very philosophy the Maccabees fought against and Christ warned about. In all fairness to these “reformers”, however, these were not topics anybody openly debated, because they knew the Inquisition could suddenly show up and take away those “heretics” that doubted them – and nobody wanted to be a “heretic.”

Natural Law and Reason remained the common-knowledge status quo for centuries in Western civilization in general, and in Christianity in particular. But in the early-to-mid 1800s, people, including retired-president Thomas Jefferson, decided to look into the foundations of democracy. These people were shocked when they learned the only foundation and origin of democracy is the specious pagan Reasoning of the philosophers, which, incredibly enough, had also been used as the foundation of the Age of Reason, Western civilization, and the doctrine of the immortality of pagan souls! It was the crumbling credibility of Natural Law that caused Noah Webster to admit in his *Dictionary* of 1828 that the existence of Natural Law was very much doubted. And it was the reason politicians and lawyers in the 1830s wanted our Natural Law/human-Reason-based legal system to be replaced by one based on the Bible. And it is why no Christian since 1849 has published a doctrinal treatise trying to finally prove pagan souls are immortal. And it was the reason, in the early 1860s, the eleven Protestant denominations in the United States that formed the National Reform Association wanted the U.S. Constitution rewritten to remove the shame of our having a godless government and to make the government of the U.S. based on the Bible. But the National Reform Association failed to convince the majority to base the U.S. government on the Bible because the Christians who actually understood why Reason is bad were outnumbered by the ignorant majority.

Understanding that historical context, let's go back to the era of the ex-Catholic Protestant reformers who started their own denominations – because that era is when the modern doctrinal theory of “eternal security” was derived from the Natural Law doctrine of pagan immortality.

When these Catholics broke their oaths of allegiance to their priesthood and started their own denominations, they had to decide which Catholic doctrines they would keep and which they would change. That meant they had to start learning the Bible. Unfortunately, learning the Bible is a growth process – and it takes years. Therefore, most of the doctrinal differences these new Protestants came up with were minor ones concerning semantics. For example, the Catholics believed in salvation through faith and works. Some of the new Protestant denominations rejected that and said we are saved by faith alone – but if you had “true” faith and were “truly” saved *you’d have works, too!* Some Protestant denominations continued the Catholic practice of the ministry’s wearing robes like Christ and His Apostles did, but other denominations rejected robes by sneering, “The priests call themselves *fathers* but they have no children and dress like *mothers!*”

These ex-Catholic Protestant leaders had never questioned the validity of the Catholic **Lateran Council of 1513**, which decreed, “Whereas some have dared to assert concerning the nature of the Reasonable soul that it is mortal, we, with the approbation of the Sacred Council do condemn and reprobate all those who assert that the Intellectual soul is mortal, seeing, according to the canon of Pope Clement V, that the soul is...immortal...we decree that all who adhere to like erroneous assertions shall be shunned and punished as heretics.” Therefore when Protestant leaders began studying doctrinal issues to see what the positions of their new denominations would be, and they read that early groups like the Cathari who rejected the immortality of pagan souls were *heretics*, they decided to accept the Catholic doctrine of pagan immortality without proving it. They all rejected the belief that being born again of the Spirit is what gave immortality, because that would mean unregenerate pagans did not have immortality and were no different from mortal beasts. Therefore all agreed both pagans and God’s people *had* to get their immortality from some *other* process – a process not specifically described in Scripture. Some Protestants came up with inconsequential peripheral ideas such as a temporary period of “soul sleep” between mortal death and Judgment, but the belief that *all* men get immortality **split the new Protestant denominations into conservatives and liberals**. The conservatives kept the original doctrine they’d inherited from Catholics, Bogomils, Paulicians, and Cathari that said God’s saints who go bad fall from grace and go to hell (**Ps 51:11; Mt 25:41; Jn 6:70; He 6:4-8; Jn 15:1,2,6**). But the old theory that pagans, too, have immortality caused the liberals, *more than fifteen centuries after Christ*, to come up with a brand-new doctrine – eternal security.

Because the liberals accepted as an unquestioned doctrinal foundation the old never-proven Catholic doctrine that pagan souls have everlasting life, they thought there was a doctrinal conflict between the “everlasting life” associated with the new birth and the “everlasting life” associated with pagan souls. They noticed in the Bible that right after Christ taught Nicodemus, “Ye must be born again” (Jn 3:7), He said “whosoever believeth” would not “perish” but would have “eternal life”, also called “everlasting life”, which are mentioned along with being “saved” (Jn 3:15-17). They also noticed that “whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved” (**Ro 10:13**), and “by the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth...for there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved” (**Ac 4:10,12**).

How in the world, they wondered, did Catholics, Cathari, and the conservative Protestant denominations miss the plainly-worded truth about salvation?! Here the Bible plainly says we are born again only through the Lord Jesus Christ, and the new birth gives “everlasting life” and “eternal life.” But we’ve all “known” for centuries that pagan souls *already have* everlasting life/eternal life/immortality – *and they sure didn’t get it from Christ!* Something was wrong, said the liberals. Of course! The new birth gives *everlasting* life! And it wouldn’t be “everlasting” and “eternal” if it *ended* either in the grave or in the lake of fire/the second death. Therefore, the liberals Reasoned, there must be two definitions of words like *everlasting* and *eternal*; one definition applies to pagans and the other applies to born-again Christians.

Pagans have everlasting life because they will live in the lake of fire forever. But that isn’t really living because the lake of fire is called the second death, therefore the words everlasting, eternal, and immortal – when applied to pagans – mean nothing more than the ability to live forever in hell. Therefore unregenerate pagans do not get their “damned” kind of everlasting life from Christ and the new birth – they get it from \_\_\_\_ (here you will have to fill in the blank with different denominational answers depending on the era): 1) Pagans get their hell-bound everlasting souls from God-given Reason in order to know His truths (no Scripture). 2) They get their hell-bound everlasting souls from their God-given consciences in order to know His truths (no Scripture). 3) They get hell-bound everlasting souls from their God-given breath of life (Ge 2:7). 4) They get their damned everlasting life when God gives them souls (Ge 2:7). 5) They get their damned everlasting life from being made in the image of God (Ge 1:26), which gives their hell-bound souls “spirit natures” (no Scripture). 6) They get their damned everlasting life when God implants in them “a measure of faith” or “a spiritual ability” so they can know His truths and be able to repent (no Scripture) by saying the “sinner’s prayer” (an unscriptural term because in the Bible only God’s people say the sinner’s prayer).

But when a hell-bound pagan with the above “everlasting life” acquires the new birth by saying the “sinner’s prayer”, the liberals decided the everlasting life he was going to have in hell was suddenly *relocated* to heaven. Therefore the doctrinal position of liberal Protestants who believe in “eternal security” is that a clearer translation of the Bible would take the verses that say the new birth gives “everlasting life” and change them to say hell-bound men who already have souls with everlasting life are given *new addresses* by the new birth because they are now going to spend their everlasting lives in heaven rather than in hell. The new birth, they said, is when the “bad everlasting” becomes “good everlasting” – because the new Christian will never again be damned to hell no matter how evil and anti-Christ his life becomes. Therefore, the only difference between the everlasting life the pagans get without the new birth and the everlasting life saints get with the new birth is their everlasting destination. And when the new birth changes the pagan’s address from hell to heaven, nobody can change it back because “God doesn’t have an eraser” and “nobody can take the new saint out of the Father’s hand.”

Those of you who know the Bible already see where the liberal Protestants of the 16<sup>th</sup> century went wrong when they invented their doctrine of eternal security. First, they *assumed* heathen have everlasting life of some kind without the new birth. In other words, they based their new doctrine of “eternal security” on the never-proven premise of the immortality of pagan souls. Second, these rebel Protestants *assumed* the philosophy God warned them about (Co 2:8) was some vague and mysterious philosophy nobody knew anything about. Third, these eternal-security-inventing Protestants *assumed* and *hoped* the philosophy God warned them about wasn’t *the only philosophy in recorded history* – the philosophy of the pagan Greeks that became the foundation of Aquinas’ work, the Age of Reason, Western civilization, the immortality of dog souls, and eternal security! Fourth, these liberal Protestants *assumed* the new birth is the same thing as *salvation*, *saved*, and marital *consummation*. They did not know the *spiritual* new birth neutralized *physical* mortality and established the new saint as a member of God’s household, at which point the new saint had to obediently learn to walk after the Spirit rather than the flesh

to demonstrate he preferred Christ as his Master – not Satan/self. They had so much to learn...but no time to do it because they were fighting a viciously-bloody war against their former Roman Catholic teachers and leaders.

The “Christianizing” of Reason rendered the Biblical arguments of the conservatives of none effect: verses like Ec 3:18,19; Mt 10:28; 1 Co 2:14; and Ro 5:12-17; 8:7,8 gradually disappeared from Christian doctrine as if they had never been written by the hand of God. For the next 350 years – from the Lateran Council of 1513 until Rev. Luther Lee in 1849 – the mystical, magical, and mythological process by which the heathen receive and know the spiritual things of God – Natural Law and Reason – was naïvely accepted as the main foundation and argument for heathen immortality and “eternal security.” But those centuries of doctrinal reliance on Natural Law ended in the mid 1800s when Natural Law and Reason were exposed and discredited as non-existent, and Catholic and Protestant theologians had to make a choice: They could renounce the Enlightened doctrines of their philosophy-using denominational founders and go back and rewrite doctrine based upon what the Bible literally says, or they could ignore the problem, attempt to save face (and their jobs!), and disguise their denominations’ doctrinal foundation of pagan Natural Law and Reason by *changing their vocabulary*. So modern preachers began using different words...*but they meant exactly the same thing* the old Natural Law words did! The Catholics dropped “Reason” and began using “conscience” instead: God gave all men – but not animals – a *conscience* so man could receive and know the spiritual things of God. They said it is the moral and spiritual ability of the conscience that proves the immortality of non-Christians. The Protestants also dropped the word “Reason” and substituted “spiritual ability” and “measure of faith.” They said unsaved humans were different from beasts because when God breathed the “breath of life” into humans and beasts He was “obviously” giving only humans a *spiritual ability* so all men could receive and know divine truths and moral values. The souls of men had this *spiritual ability*, they said – the souls of beasts did not. And this *spiritual ability* “proved” unsaved human souls have everlasting life because humans alone understand God’s “spiritual truths” of *morality*. In other words once Natural Law was exposed, preachers could no longer get away with saying things like: “God gave all men, including pagans, Reason so they can know His truths without studying the Bible, which is why even pagans that have never heard of Christ will be without excuse at Judgment when God throws them into hell.” Now preachers had to use different words that meant the same thing – words that, because of religious tradition, you might never think to question: “God gave all men, including pagans, consciences/spiritual ability so they can know His truths without studying the Bible, which is why even pagans that have never heard of Christ will be without excuse at Judgment when God throws them into hell.”

Today if you ask a preacher how a corrupt-tree heathen can produce the good-fruit faith to repent and say the “sinner’s prayer”, you won’t be told Natural Law gives them “Reason” so they can receive His truth, you’ll be told God gives them a “spiritual ability” or a “measure of faith” so they can receive His truth. Politely thank him for the information and ask him where the Bible says that. When he is unable to produce any Scripture, tell him you have too much respect for him to think he’d believe a doctrine just because somebody said it, and therefore there *had* to be something *authoritative* he based his acceptance of that doctrine on, “so where did you learn it, Pastor?” Many men are not strong and confident enough to handle embarrassment well, so prepare yourself for a wide range of responses – none of them pleasant.

That is why detailed sermons and Bible study lessons on this “doctrine” are nonexistent even to this day – *it isn’t in the Bible*. I cannot stress that enough: the reason this doctrine is quietly ignored is it is nothing but a religious tradition built upon a pagan hoax, a house built on sand.

### MODERN ARGUMENTS FOR PAGAN IMMORTALITY

There have been no modern attempts to prove pagan immortality. Way back in 400 A.D. Augustine tried to prove it using Reason and Scripture. He failed. Albertus Magnus tried it several times using Reason and Scripture in 1250 A.D. He failed. For the next 600 years nobody – Catholic or Protestant – tried because they realized all of the arguments had already been discredited. When the Protestant Reformation and the Age of Reason got underway, deceitful and ignorant Catholics and Protestants merely reused the same old tired and discredited “proofs” in order to appear doctrinally competent in front of small, gullible audiences. I say again, Albertus Magnus’ failed attempt in about 1250 would be the last formal scholarly attempt to prove pagan immortality...

...until 1849.

But let’s set the stage before we get to the only Christian in the last 750 years who dared to step forward and try to become the only man in history to doctrinally prove pagans have everlasting life.

In the first and second decade of the 1800s, research into the origins of the fundamental ideologies of Western civilization exposed Reason and Natural Law as pagan mythology, which started decades of debate over what to do about the fact that our modern democratic society was founded on a lie that originated with and was propagated by pagan Greek philosophy. The debate would rage until the late 1860s when the Protestant National Reform Association’s attempt to Christianize American government met a shocking-but-telling defeat at the hands of the majority. Right in the middle of that period **Rev. Luther Lee**, a minister of the gospel and a Wesleyan Methodist professor of theology, became the only Christian since Albertus Magnus to publish a formal attempt to prove pagans have immortal souls and can go to hell. That was 1849, and since then...nothing.

Our narrative begins when Rev. Lee started looking for course material to teach a classroom of trusting young preachers the doctrinal underpinnings of one of the most important and far-reaching doctrines in modern Christianity – the immortality of pagan souls. Rev. Lee was a well-respected author in theological circles and had enough confidence in his knowledge of what God “really meant to say” that he never hesitated to “correct” his King James Bible by selecting one of the definitions he considered suitable from his favorite, well-thumbed Greek and Hebrew dictionary. Remember, this was the 1840s, a period when most Christians still thought tinkering with the jots and tittles in God’s Book was blasphemy at best and heresy at worst – which underscores the supreme confidence Rev. Lee had in his theological competence.

Upon deciding to educate young Christians in the fundamentals of their faith, Rev. Lee realized he had no comprehensive doctrinal material available on the immortality of heathen souls, so he began a scholarly search within his own denomination...and found nothing. Well, he’d just have to broaden his research to include the theological schools and libraries of other denominations. *Surely* they hadn’t been basing their doctrinal “belief” on the same appalling ignorance as he had all these years. (Why is it that we have a tendency to lazily assume *other* Christians have been the kind of dedicated, motivated, responsible, knowledgeable experts on Bible doctrines that *we* have never cared enough to become?) His extensive research revealed that absolutely nothing existed in all of Christendom that taught the immortality of the soul! He was shocked to find

that the few times the doctrine was even *mentioned*, it was in passing – as if the writer assumed somebody had already proven it! It had been bad enough that his own denomination had no credible, scholarly, Biblical foundation for its “belief”, but to find that not a single church espousing the doctrine knew its rear end from a hole in the ground was worse, because it was clear evidence that modern Christianity was full of pious, hymn-singing, collection-plate-filling slothful apostates who didn’t even care enough about doctrine to master the biggest and most important issues!

And here is where we give credit to Rev. Lee: In the last 750 years he is the only Christian who has attempted to fill the gap by being the first man in the history of this planet to publish a proof that pagans have immortal souls. He wrote a 63-page treatise in 1849 and published it in 1850 under the title, *The Immortality of the Soul*. (You may download Rev. Lee’s book in PDF format from the web page for chapter D27 at TheSwordbearer.org.) You can fault Rev. Lee for not believing the inspired, inerrant word of God existed in the mid 1800s; and you can fault him for not looking into this important doctrine until he had to look like he knew what he was talking about in front of his Bible students; and, yes, you will quickly see that he wasn’t informed enough to know what Noah Webster knew back in 1828 – that the Natural Law foundation of both the Age of Reason and the immortality of the soul was a lie. But we have to look around at every other preacher we’ve ever known or read about and realize they never knew enough or cared enough to step up to the plate like Rev. Lee did. He had guts and he had heart...and that’s more than we can say for anybody else who’s ever pounded a pulpit. Rev. Lee *tried*. And, like Plato, Augustine, and Albertus Magnus before him...he failed.

How do you know he failed even before we take a look at some of his work? Because you’ve never heard of him. If he had succeeded in doing what giants failed to accomplish over the last 2,500 years, he would have become more famous than Plato, Augustine, and Thomas Aquinas. Go look Rev. Luther Lee up in the encyclopedia to see what I mean...

He’s not there. He failed.

I’m sure you will find the following excerpts from the Preface to Rev. Lee’s work as interesting as I did. (I’ve cleaned up some of his language to make it more intelligible to modern readers):

This subject...is vastly important. Whether we have a spiritual nature, or no spiritual nature...and whether sinners who reject the gospel are to cease to exist, cease to know, think, and feel when they die, or if they exist and think and feel forever in hell, are matters of too great importance to be passed by without receiving the most profound consideration. In this little volume will be found these momentous questions, and all the important facts and arguments bearing upon them. It is believed that **a lesson bearing directly on the soul’s immortality cannot be found elsewhere. When the author’s attention was called to the subject, he expected to find it treated in some other volume, but he searched in vain. Fragments of the subject he could find, scattered through various works, treating in the main on other subjects, a fragment here, and a fragment there; an incidental allusion to the subject in this volume, and a single direct argument in that, but in no one volume could he find the subject fully and clearly discussed.** To supply this deficiency the present volume has been written, and is now presented to the Christian Public.

Rev. Lee’s booklet spends 27 pages using Reason to prove pagans have immortal souls: For example, he spends 13 pages claiming the immortality of pagan souls is proven by the human ability to think, to reason, to remember, and by human self-awareness and consciousness of identity, and by the desire to live forever. He argues that the thoughts of the mind, which make up the soul, are not physical matter, and are therefore spirit – which is immortal. All humans can think, therefore pagans have immortal souls. He spends 4 pages saying the fact that a number of ancient pagan civilizations thought they were going to their version of heaven when they died is another proof that pagans have immortal souls. Two pages are spent detailing how a number of ancient Jewish writers and writers of the Apocrypha believed they would live beyond the grave – therefore Lee concludes pagans will, too. Four pages are spent arguing that Christians in the “primitive church” believed they would live beyond the grave – therefore Lee concludes pagans will, too. And he spends 4 pages arguing that animals **do not** have souls, only humans do, and since he proved that souls are made up of thoughts, and because thoughts are not material things they must be spiritual – and spirit is immortal...therefore pagans have immortality because all souls are immortal.

Rev. Lee spends 36 pages expounding on Biblical proofs: He spends 7 pages using Bible quotes to prove the human physical body is different from its soul (he routinely alters his Bible quotes by substituting words he chose from among the various definitions in Greek and Hebrew dictionaries). None of his examples, by the way, involves pagans; they all involve God’s saints. He spends 11 pages illustrating from the Bible that the souls of God’s saints live beyond the grave – and then concludes pagan souls probably do, too. He takes 12 pages to show that in the Bible God’s wicked saints go to hell when they die – and concludes pagans do, too. And he spends 6 pages proving that the souls of God’s people are not annihilated when they die, they live on – and from that Lee concludes pagan souls do, too.

I’ll cover his Biblical arguments shortly, although they are the same arguments everybody makes. But some of his Reason-based proofs are interesting; they provide a rare glimpse at how much Christians – back when Natural Law was still “Christian” – openly and publicly depended on the tenets of Greek philosophy, and therefore rejected the Bible verses that say God gave animals mortal souls with the breath of life, which made mortal men and beasts no different because both die.

Rev. Lee knew his saying immaterial thoughts in the mind/soul proves the soul thinking those thoughts is spirit and therefore immortal would cause some to object by claiming his argument would mean animals have immortal souls because animals can think, too. Lee answers: “[In order to provide]...an answer to the supposed objection that the preceding arguments...will prove that brutes have immaterial and immortal minds [and therefore immortal souls]: We would sooner elevate brutes to men **by incorrectly giving brutes souls**, than degrade men to brutes by denying the existence of human souls. **Is there anything more fruitful in supposing that men and brutes are so far alike as to both have souls?** We believe our arguments proving the non-physical nature of human thoughts cannot also be used to prove that beasts have souls. If beasts do exhibit the same mental phenomena as men, then animals must possess the same intellectual and moral character, possess **the same instinctive relation to God’s moral government** [he’s talking about Reason and Natural Law], and therefore be equally entitled to a resurrection and a future existence. When speaking with opponents of the immortality of human souls we admit that **if the minds of men and brutes really are the same** [which would mean beasts have souls] ...only differing in degree, we must [either] give up our belief in the immortality of the human soul, or accept the immortality of [the souls of] brutes. We do not deny that men and brutes have some things in common. They both possess sensation and perception, and brutes possess the first of these in as high a state of perfection as man; they can feel, see, hear, taste, and smell as acutely as men. But these constitute the entire mental powers and susceptibilities [of beasts], and are the

basis of all the mental phenomena they exhibit. However, **in addition to the mental abilities found in animals, God has given man Reason and Conscience, which brutes have not; and these constitute man's unique God-given Moral Agent. It is God-given Reason which distinguishes men from brutes, and Reason is absolutely essential to man's Moral Nature and future accountability for present or past conduct.**"

We learn that Rev. Lee didn't know **THE BASICS** because he didn't even know animals have souls. And you saw that he still believed in the ancient pagan Greek philosophers' theory that God gave all men Reason so they could tap into His Natural Law and know His eternal truths without having to study the Bible.

You may be wondering why Rev. Lee could not simply acknowledge the Biblical fact that God gave animals souls like He did humans. This gets back to some of the problems that came up in the Dark Ages when Averroes exposed Augustine's "proof" as invalid. You have to be able to think like those who try to use the Bible to prove pagan souls are immortal and go to hell. How do they do it? They do it this way:

1. They quote Biblical examples of God's people having immortal souls that live beyond mortal death...
2. ...and then they use those souls of God's people to "prove" pagans also have immortal souls *because God gave pagans souls, too!*

Did you catch it? If Rev. Lee admitted that God gave animals souls like the Bible says He did, *it would expose the traditional – and only – "Biblical proof" that pagans have immortal souls as specious!* For example, let's reuse the above traditional "proof" – only let's apply it to animals:

1. They quote Biblical examples of God's people having immortal souls that live beyond mortal death...
2. ...and then they use those souls of God's people to "prove" animals also have immortal souls *because God gave animals souls, too!*

That is why Albertus Magnus wisely decided not to use sola Scriptura to prove the immortality of souls; if he used Biblical examples – all of which involve God's people – to conclude pagan souls are immortal, he'd also have to conclude animal souls are immortal *because the Bible says animals also have souls and the breath of life!* That is why I said on page H7-8 that Albertus was in quite a pickle.

And that is why, when Thomas Aquinas looked into the issue, he decided to keep his intelligent mouth shut.

And that is why Rev. Lee could not admit animals have souls – he had just finished using 36 pages of Biblical examples to prove God's people have immortal souls – therefore pagans do, too, because they also have God-given souls. I say again, the reason Rev. Lee and Albertus Magnus and all other serious-minded Bible scholars have never been able to prove heathen and/or animal immortality is there are no Biblical examples of the souls of animals or pagans living beyond the grave, and the fact that the souls of God's people live beyond the grave cannot be used to prove the souls of animals and pagans do, too. The reason there are no examples of animals or pagans going to heaven or hell in the Bible is *because they don't, indeed, they can't!*

Neither Rev. Lee back in 1849 nor today's preachers are trying to deceive anybody – they just don't know any better. Modern preachers would be just as shocked as Rev. Lee was to learn (if they looked into it) that doctrinal proofs for the immortality of the soul simply do not exist – anywhere. When Rev. Lee looked into the issue and he read in the Bible that animals have souls, he rejected it because he thought the Bible was from man but Natural Law was from God – which made Reason more trustworthy than the Bible. Today if Christians discover there are no published proofs for this doctrine and decide to prove it themselves, they can no longer use Natural Law to discredit the Bible like Rev. Lee did. But they still have a Natural tendency to assume their denomination (which has no material on this subject!) already taught them the truth. So they won't study the issue in order to *find the truth*, they will merely try to find Bible verses that *support what they already think*. They don't realize that Bible verses, when used piecemeal, appear to support all false doctrines of all cults, and that learning the truth about doctrines – especially this one – often requires putting together the whole Bible in such a way that none of the verses contradicts any others. Therefore when they read Bible verses like some of those in **THE BASICS** that contradict their traditional beliefs, they stubbornly ignore them by turning to verses about God's saints and applying them to pagans. Their lack of understanding and their lack of faith in the inerrancy of the word of God combine to produce blindness.

Christians no longer try to argue that men are different from beasts because we now know animals, including insects and spiders, think, reason, learn, change tactics based on changing circumstances in ways that show they had previously studied and memorized information, communicate and navigate with incredible sophistication, demonstrate love and compassion, etc. And the study of DNA has shown that humans, fish, giraffes, aardvarks, cows, horses, birds, snails, insects, spiders, and all other members of the animal kingdom come from the same foundational elements of the genetic code. In other words, if you were to examine a string of genes before it started sprouting wings, fins, fingers, or antennae, you wouldn't know if you were looking at man or beast. The only way man becomes significantly different from the physical and mortal animal kingdom is to become spirit and immortal by being born again.

(Note: I just want to remind you that, no matter how I may word things in different arguments, I do not believe born-again Christians technically have immortal souls. All souls are mortal – even ours. All souls will die when the body does. All pagans, animals, and Christians have mortal bodies that die. But when those mortal bodies die only the souls of pagans and animals die with them. The souls of Christians would die, too – *if* they hadn't been born again. The second birth gives us a second body, the spirit body. That spirit body is immortal; it can never die a mortal-like death. Therefore Christian souls live beyond the death of the mortal body because Christians have a spirit body that will live forever – in heaven or in hell.)

Today people only casually venture to prove the unregenerate have immortal souls, and they always use three types of arguments, 1) secular Reason, 2) examples of God's people surviving mortal death, and 3) tradition-based arguments that claim the Scriptures discussed above under **THE BASICS** mean the opposite of what they say.

**1) Reason:** Here's a concise example of the use of Reason to prove all humans, saved and unsaved, have immortal souls:

I think the immortality of the human soul can be established by using philosophical reason to analyze intellectual knowledge, free will, and disinterested feelings – such as the "immortal instinct for beauty" that Plato made famous in his "proof." The underlined are part of human thought, which is *spirituality*, which is defined as *anything that is not physical matter*. And this non-physical spirituality is characteristic of the soul/mind. Things that are spiritual – like the thoughts of the soul – are indestructible, from which we may conclude the souls of all men are immortal. Interestingly, *religious faith*, which is the opposite of Reason, has historically strengthened

and validated Reason by *going along* with those truths that have been revealed by Reason alone. For example, the Reason-based belief of the Greek philosophers that an immortal soul exists in our mortal bodies was later supported by Christians who claimed they were using faith alone to reach the same conclusion. Therefore Christians and non-Christians must have access to the same universal truths with or without the Bible because secular humanism and Christian faith are equally valid when properly applied.

That argument is fairly common and is similar to this one:

The Rational soul of man has supernatural, infinite aspirations that go beyond this life. If the Rational soul were mortal, and therefore died when the physical body died, it would logically follow that the law of self preservation would cause the soul/mind to always submit to the body's desire to avoid death. In reality, however, the soul subjugates the passions of the body and directs the body. This mastery of the soul over the body is proven by the obedience of the body when it is being led to sacrifice itself for the sake of abstract ideas of the soul. But if the soul were mortal and it died along with the body, the law of self preservation would never have allowed the soul to condemn itself to death for abstract ideas that would lose relevance as soon as the soul died. Therefore, because noble-but-self-condemning ideals have no logical and lasting meaning for a mortal soul, we must conclude that any soul that is capable of such laudable deeds must be immortal.

Those Reason-based arguments need no rebuttal: we're discussing whether a doctrine comes from the Bible or not – and philosophy-based arguments are never based on the very Book that outlaws Reason. We'll stick with *thus saith the Lord*.

**2) Bible:** The Bible-based “proofs” that pagans have immortal souls use these examples:

- **Lk 16:22,23:** ARGUMENT: When the rich man died he went to hell to be tormented. When Lazarus died he went to Abraham's bosom. Therefore both God's people and pagans have life after death via immortal souls. REBUTTAL: Both men were God's people, Hebrew descendants of Abraham. The rich man in hell addresses Abraham as “father” twice, and Abraham calls him “son.” And the rich man has brothers who are able to consult the Hebrew Bible. This Scripture only proves God's born-again people go to the spirit realm of hell and Abe's bosom. Because pagans are not mentioned, this proves nothing about them.
- **1 Sa 28:10-15:** ARGUMENT: Samuel, as a spirit, appeared after his death to King Saul. Therefore pagans have spirit life and immortal souls. REBUTTAL: Samuel was a son of Abraham, a Hebrew, one of God's people. This only says Samuel was a spirit, and Christ said, “That which is born of the flesh is flesh; and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit. Marvel not that I said unto thee, Ye must be born again.” Samuel and Lucifer and Judas and Isaac were born-again children of the Father of spirits, so this does not prove flesh-only unregenerate dogs have the spiritual ability to see and enter the spirit realm of hell.
- **Jude 6,7:** ARGUMENT: We know bad angels go to hell. These verses say the residents of Sodom and Gomorrah also go to hell. Therefore those who are unsaved have immortal souls, and even though God *originally* created hell exclusively for His angel children (Mt 25:41), this shows that *now* both angels *and* pagans go to hell, which must mean God changed His mind about who goes to hell. REBUTTAL: First, the inhabitants of Sodom and Gomorrah were God's people who were descendants of Adam. All descendants of Adam were God's people – until God divided the human race into saints (Abe's descendants) and pagans (non-Hebrews). Second, God has not changed His mind about who goes to hell: the Devil and his angels go to hell. When God gives the second birth to a human, he becomes a spirit, an angel. If that servant of God's walks in the flesh, however, he becomes Satan's angel, Satan's servant – and will go to everlasting fire created for the Devil and his angels. “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?” (**Ro 6:16**). Third, the above argument completely ignores the fact that Jesus Christ taught His audiences that a person must acquire the second body via the new birth before he can see or enter the spirit realm of hell (Mt 10:28; Jn 3:3,5; 1 Co 15:44-47). Only God's spirit-children can become the Devil's angels and go to hell (Jn 6:70).
- **Mk 16:15,16:** ARGUMENT: We must preach the gospel to the unregenerate because this verse disproves 1 Co 2:14 and Ro 8:5-8 by implying the unsaved can receive the spiritual things of God. Furthermore, this proves the unregenerate have immortal souls because they go to hell if they aren't born again. REBUTTAL: There are three reasons the verse has always been rejected by Bible believers as a valid doctrinal proof: First, there are lots of places in the Bible, like **1 Ti 5:12** and **He 3:12**, that say faithful Christian believers can abandon their faith and belief – and be damned for their faithless unbelief. That means Mk 16:16 cannot dogmatically be said to refer to both saved *and* unsaved; it appears to be warning Christians not to stray from faithful obedience like Lucifer did: *Christians that remain faithful believers who are baptized by being doers of the word shall be saved; but Christians that don't remain faithful believers shall be damned*. Second, even if v.16 is referring to both Christians and pagans (which is unlikely, because the Bible never concerns itself with the fate of animals and pagans), it still doesn't necessarily support the immortality of the soul: *Christians (believers) who are doers (baptized) shall be saved from the second death; but unsaved pagans will be damned by the curse of the first death in the grave*. Third, the above completely ignores the Biblical fact that Jesus Christ taught His audiences that a person must acquire the second body via the new birth before he can see or enter the spirit realm of hell (Mt 10:28; Jn 3:3,5; 1 Co 15:44-47).
- **Jn 3:15,16:** ARGUMENT: Same argument as the one above. REBUTTAL: The context has to do with the new birth, which means this passage, like the entire Bible, is written for those who have been born again (like Nicodemus) and therefore have the spiritual capability to receive and know the spiritual things of God. Jn 3:15,16 therefore is saying those born-again Christians who don't “take heed, brethren, lest there be in any of you an evil heart of unbelief, in departing from the living God” have “damnation, because they have cast off their first faith.”

**3) Tradition:** The third type of argument proving the unregenerate have immortal souls depends upon your letting tradition make the word of God of none effect:

- Tradition has you ignore the fact that there are no examples of pagans ever going to hell in the Bible because that would cast doubt upon the modern frenzy to “save the unregenerate from hell.”

- Tradition has you ignore the fact that God created hell for His spirit children who go bad. Nowhere does the Bible say hell was created for the unregenerate people God calls *dogs*.
- Tradition has you ignore the Scriptures that say unregenerate people are no different from animals because both are mortal. The reason unregenerate humans and animals do not go to the everlasting spirit realm of hell is because only spirits can see and enter the spirit kingdom of the Father of spirits.
- Tradition has you ignore Romans 5, which proves the curse mankind inherited from Adam is mortal death, not damnation in hell.
- Tradition has you ignore the fact that the death of the Testator, Jesus Christ, made His two Testaments/Laws irrevocable and everlasting. That makes the Law of damnation inescapable and the Law of grace inescapable, which means we were not damned to hell as a result of Adam's fall.
- Tradition has you ignore what God taught us about the complete unsuitability of animals/unregenerate humans as His bride-servants. That means God selects His brides from among His own spirit children: the faithful servants are put under the Law of grace and go to the marriage supper of the Lamb, and the unfaithful are put under the Law of sin and death and go to the lake of fire.
- Tradition has you ignore the fact that immortality comes only from Christ via being born again of the Spirit. The Bible never says immortality comes from being born of the flesh of human parents.
- Tradition has you ignore the fact that the unregenerate are born merely of the flesh and are, by definition, 100% carnal.
- Tradition has you ignore the Scriptures that say carnal humans (this includes unregenerate dogs who have no choice but to walk after the flesh, and born-again saints who choose to walk after the flesh rather than after the Spirit) are at enmity against God, cannot receive the spiritual things of Him because they are spiritually discerned, cannot be subject to His laws, and cannot please Him.
- Tradition has you think we are made in the image of God (we're not) – which is somehow supposed to prove the unregenerate are immortal.
- Tradition has you ignore the fact that God made the animals living souls with the breath of life just like He did mortal humans. And you are supposed to ignore the fact that a “living soul” and a “natural body” are synonyms (cp. 1 Co 15:44 and 45). And that anything with a “natural body” (humans and animals that are “flesh and blood” – 1 Co 15:50) cannot inherit the Kingdom of God; only those with a “spiritual body” (1 Co 15:44) can see and enter the Kingdom of God (Jn 3:3,5).
- Tradition has you ignore the fact that all the Bible verses that prove a special group of souls live forever (those of born-again saints) cannot be used to prove unregenerate souls live forever (animals and pagans).
- Tradition has you ignore the fact that God's people in the Old Testament era, such as Isaac (Ga 4:22-29), were born again, could fall from grace and be damned devils (Jn 6:70) who go to the lake of fire created for devils (Mt 25:41), and had the second birth's spiritual body with them when they left their first body in the grave and went to Abraham's bosom (Mt 10:28).
- Tradition has you think **Ro 1:16-32** is talking about the unregenerate...even though that incorrect interpretation makes verses like 19-21,28,32 directly contradict verses like 1 Co 2:14 and Ro 8:5-8.
- Tradition has you think God used Ro 1:16-32 to compensate for the seemingly-cruel fact that He didn't issue the Great Commission to preach to everybody until the New Testament era.
- Tradition has you disavow/disbelieve 1 Co 2:14 and Ro 8:5-8 by leading you to think they *do not apply to any human being on earth* because your ignorant pastor told you all unregenerate humans do have the ability to receive the spiritual things of God because they are not spiritually discerned, and they can be subject to His laws and please Him and be His wives/servants.

I didn't really grasp this topic and its importance until my understanding of the rest of the Bible made me realize believing in the immortality of pagan souls contradicts – and thereby causes Christians to ignore – Scripture. Whenever doctrines don't fit all verses the fault lies with the student of the Bible not the Author of the Bible. Serious Bible study reveals these contradictions and raises questions. Tradition-based churches ignore the contradictions and therefore cannot answer the questions. The resulting embarrassment and insecurity are why this topic is absent from theology courses, texts on Christian doctrine, published Bible studies, church sermons, and Sunday school lessons. It is much easier to continually steer Christians onto less-important doctrines than it is to preach, teach, and field questions about the fate of the souls of Spirit-born saints and the souls of flesh-born pagans and animals.

In short: The reason the immortality of pagan souls has *never* been proven by well-intentioned men such as Plato, Augustine, Albertus Magnus, Thomas Aquinas, and Rev. Luther Lee, is because it is false. And the reason no Bible teacher (assuming he acquires a proper and thorough knowledge of the Scriptures) will be very successful teaching the truth of this advanced topic to others is the sad fact that *very few* Christians have the love-based discipline and interest – indeed, the *zeal* – to master the Bible to the high degree necessary to understand all of the pieces at once. I pray that my book, by emphasizing the need to feed on the word of God, is helping you grow into that kind of maturity.