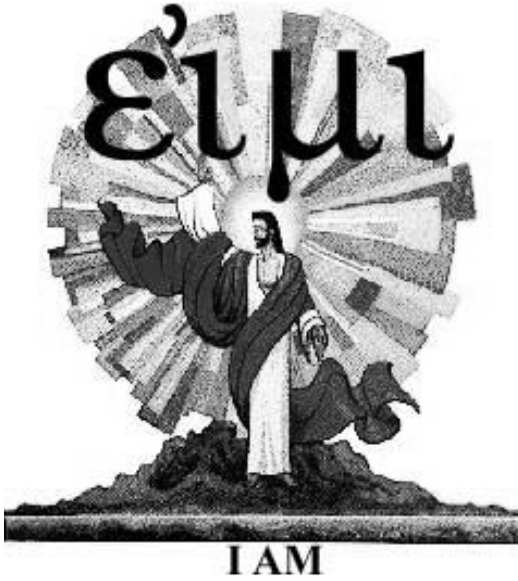


# I AM

SYMBOLS  
JESUS USED  
TO EXPLAIN HIMSELF



Prof. M. M. NINAN

# **I AM: Symbols Jesus Used to Explain Himself**

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# **I AM**

## **SYMBOLS JESUS USED TO EXPLAIN HIMSELF**

**Prof. M. M. Ninan**

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**Dedicated to**

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**My Wife**  
**Ponnu**

בית והון נחלת אבות ומיהוה אשה משכלת:  
House and wealth are inherited from fathers,  
but a prudent wife is from the LORD.  
(Pro 19:14)

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## FOREWORD

How many times have you been talking with someone and have had them say: Jesus never claimed to be God." Or have had them say Jesus is ONLY the "Son of God." Not God. Well Jesus didn't say "I am God" for a good reason. You see he didn't want to be ambiguous. I'll explain why I say this in just a bit.

Jesus was the ultimate master at both allegories and meanings both plain and implied, of sentences and stories obviously simple and yet with deep hidden complexities. But what is more, being God he also knew what was to come in the ages to be. Thus he pre-empted many many heresies and false concepts that people were going to have. Unfortunately not many people take the time to research his sayings and thus they get entrapped into misconceptions and falsities and get led astray by false teachers that speak what they want to hear and not what the truth is.

In line with this, one of the most powerful claims Jesus ever made was the statement "Before Abraham was I AM." Now on the face of it, it looks like a typo or bad grammar.

But to understand what Jesus is talking about we have to go back a few thousand years to the time of Moses and the Burning Bush. Remember when God talks to Moses from the Burning bush. What does God tell Moses to do? Exactly... to go to Pharaoh and say: Let my people go. But Moses gets scared. He says (change to NIV)

**Exodus 3:13** ... Moses said to God, "Suppose I go to the Israelites and say to them, 'The God of your fathers has sent me to you,' and they ask me, 'What is his name?' Then what shall I tell them?"

In other words, Moses asks God: What is your name?

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What does God say?

**Exodus 3:14** God said to Moses, "I am who I am . This is what you are to say to the Israelites: 'I AM has sent me to you.' "

Moses asks God: What shall I tell them your name is? God says: Tell them my name is I AM.

Now I want you to fast forward back again to the time of Christ. Jesus is in a crowd of people and they are arguing with him.

Jesus says: **John 8:56** "Your father Abraham rejoiced to see My day, and he saw it and was glad." **57** The Jews therefore said to Him, "You are not yet fifty years old, and have You seen Abraham?" **58** Jesus said to them, "Truly, truly, I say to you, before Abraham was born I AM." **59** Therefore they picked up stones to throw at Him; but Jesus hid Himself, and went out of the temple.

Note that he didn't say before Abraham was born **I was**. He didn't say before Abraham was, I existed. He said before Abraham existed [I am the] **I AM**. (There is a lot more here -those hidden complexities- note how he didn't use the phrase **I was** the **I AM**, because the **I AM** is timeless and only way to define the ever existing extradimensional atemporal God is to use the present tense all the time).

But wait, what was the name of God? It was I AM. So yes Jesus never said "I am god." He said something much more powerful. He named himself the very name of God.

Let me explain why this is so powerful. A while back during the Iraq conflict, President George W. Bush flew into the middle of the war in Iraq and met personally with the troops. OK let's say that just before he got out in front of the soldiers he was standing around waiting to be introduced and someone walked up to him and asked: Excuse me who are you? Well he could of said: I am the President. But then he could have



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been an old retired President, right? He could have also been the President of another country right? Or he could have just been the President of a private corporation rather than a country, correct? So you could be confused, especially if he looked unfamiliar or you weren't expecting him to be there at that point. But if you'd asked him who he was and he said his full name and title, and it was a name and title that you recognized e.g. "I'm President George Walker Bush of the USA," you'd know immediately that he was claiming to be the current President of the USA himself. The only current president of the USA at that point. And there would be no doubt would there? Now you may doubt that he really was GW Bush, but you couldn't have any doubt about WHO he **claimed** to be. See the difference there? It wouldn't prove he was who he said he was, but we would have no doubt exactly who he was **claiming** to be.

So in the same way, when Jesus claimed to be God, he didn't just say I am god. Because then he could have been any old god. Or that he was part of God, or that he was "godly," or that he had essence of god or whatever. But he instead using the name of the ONE AND ONLY SUPREME GOD that the Jews knew of, made it very clear that he was the "I AM." The One and ONLY I AM.

You see in those few words he said, "OK Folks remember Moses out there in the wilderness? Remember the Burning Bush? Remember that God? Remember the God of Abraham Isaac and Jacob? Remember the God who brought you out of Egypt out of slavery? Remember the God who gave you this land and destroyed all your enemies. Remember the God who said it's punishable by death to claim to be Him? Remember the God who created the entire universe as well as you? Remember the God who says He's the ONLY God. Well guess what, THAT is the GOD I AM. That is the God I am claiming to be. No doubts, no questions, no confusion. I AM."

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And what did the Jews do? Were they confused? Were they puzzled? Not at all, they all knew their history. They understood immediately what he had claimed to be and they tried to what? They tried to stone him. Why? For blasphemy, claiming to be God when you aren't.

**John 8:59** Therefore they picked up stones to throw at Him; but Jesus hid Himself, and went out of the temple.

So if anyone ever says: Well Jesus never said he was God, you can say, well actually he did one better, he not only claimed to be God but he explained exactly which specific precise God he was. You see to be sure there was no confusion he named the one and only God that He was.

Lest anyone say: well this is JUST one example. There are numerous numerous similar examples of Christ claiming to be God. For example when he claimed to be the Son of Man – he was not saying he was human or frail. In actual fact he was claiming to be the person in Daniel's vision from Daniel Chapter 7 verses 13-14 i.e. The Almighty Powerful God.. Or when he claimed to be able to forgive sin and said only God can forgive sin; or when Thomas called him "My Lord and My God" and Jesus did not refute him or rebuke him nor did he say something like: "Actually Thomas – we are ALL gods."

These I AM sayings of Jesus are in fact the core of the claims of Jesus.

**Neil Mammen**

**San Jose, CA**

**June, 2005**

**I AM**  
**Sayings of Jesus**  
**in the Gospel of John**

JESUS HIMSELF

says

"I Am"

**ΕΙΜΙ**

occurs fifty-four times in John's Gospel

Twenty-four of these are more emphatic,  
by explicitly including the pronoun "I"

**ΕΓΩ ΕΙΜΙ**

These emphatic references

are:

John 4:26; 6:20; 6:35; 6:41; 6:48; 6:51; 7:28; 7:29; 7:33; 7:34;  
7:36; 8:12; 8:16; 8:18; 8:23 (twice); 8:24; 8:28; 8:58; 9:5; 10:7;  
10:9; 10:11; 10:14; 10:36; 11:25; 12:26; 13:13; 13:19; 13:33; 14:3;  
14:6; 14:9; 15:1; 15:5; 16:32; 17:11; 17:14; 17:16; 17:24; 18:5;  
18:6; 18:8; 18:37; 19:21

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*To the Samaritan Woman at Jacob's well near the town of Sychar:*

Jn. 4:26

λεγει αυτη ο ιησους εγω ειμι ο λαλων σοι  
- Jesus said to her, "I who speak to you am (he)."



*To his disciples in the boat while Jesus is walking on the Sea of Galilee:*

Jn. 6:20

ο δε λεγει αυτοις εγω ειμι μη φοβεισθε  
but he said to them, "It is I (lit. "I Am"); do not be afraid."



*To "the Jews" in Jerusalem at the Feast of Tabernacles:*

Jn. 8:24

ειπον ουν υμιν οτι αποθανεισθε εν ταις αμαρτιαις υμων εαν γαρ μη πιστευσητε οτι  
εγω ειμι  
αποθανεισθε εν ταις αμαρτιαις υμων

"I told you that you would die in your sins, for you will die in your sins unless you believe that I am (he)."



Jn. 8:28

ειπεν ουν <sup>α αυτοις</sup> αυτοις ο ιησους οταν υψωσητε τον υιον του  
ανθρωπου τοτε γνωσεσθε οτι εγω ειμι και απ' εμου του ποιω ουδεν  
αλλα καθως εδιδασεν με ο πατηρ μου ταυτα λαλω

So Jesus said, "When you have lifted up the Son of man,  
then you will know that I am (he), and that I do nothing on  
my own authority but speak thus as the Father taught me."



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Jn. 8:58

ειπεν αυτοις ο ιησους αμην αμην λεγω υμιν πριν αβρααμ  
γενεσθαι εγω ειμι

Jesus said to them, "Truly, truly, I say to you, before Abraham was, I am."



*To his disciples at the Last Supper in Jerusalem:*

Jn. 13:19

απ αρτι λεγω υμιν προ του γενεσθαι ινα  
πιστευσητε οταν γενηται πιστευσητε οτι εγω ειμι

"I tell you this now, before it takes place,  
that when it does take place you may believe that I am (he)."



*To the soldiers and guards who come to arrest Jesus in the Garden of Gethsemane:*

Jn. 18:5

απεκριθησαν αυτω ιησουν τον ναζωραιον λεγει αυτοις ο ιησους  
εγω ειμι ειστηκει δε και ιουδας ο παραδιδους αυτον μετ αυτων

They answered him, "Jesus of Nazareth." Jesus said to them,  
"I am (he)." Judas, who betrayed him, was standing with them.



Jn. 18:6

ως ουν ειπεν αυτοις οτι εγω ειμι απηλθον εις τα οπισω και  
επεσαν επεσον χαμαι

When he said to them, "I am (he)," they drew back and fell to the ground.



Jn. 18:8

ΑΠΕΚΡΙΘΗ Ο ΙΗΣΟΥΣ ΕΙΠΟΝ ΥΜΙΝ ΟΤΙ ΕΓΩ ΕΙΜΙ ΕΙ ΟΥΝ ΕΜΕ  
ΖΗΤΕΙΤΕ ΑΦΕΤΕ ΤΟΥΤΟΥΣ ΥΠΑΓΕΙΝ

Jesus answered, "I told you that I am (he);  
so, if you seek me, let these men go."

\*

To the crowds in Galilee after the Feeding of the 5000:

Jn. 6:35

ΕΙΠΕΝ ΔΕ ΑΥΤΟΙΣ Ο ΙΗΣΟΥΣ ΕΓΩ ΕΙΜΙ Ο ΑΡΤΟΣ ΤΗΣ ΖΩΗΣ Ο  
ΕΡΧΟΜΕΝΟΣ ΠΡΟΣ ΕΜΕ ΜΕ ΟΥ ΜΗ ΠΕΙΝΑΣΗ ΚΑΙ Ο ΠΙΣΤΕΥΩΝ  
ΕΙΣ ΕΜΕ ΟΥ ΜΗ ΔΙΨΗΣΕΙ ΔΙΨΗΣΗ ΠΩΠΟΤΕ

Jesus said to them,

"I am the bread of life; he who comes to me shall not hunger,  
and he who believes in me shall never thirst.



Jn. 6:41

ΕΓΟΓΓΥΖΟΝ ΟΥΝ ΟΙ ΙΟΥΔΑΙΟΙ ΠΕΡΙ ΑΥΤΟΥ ΟΤΙ ΕΙΠΕΝ ΕΓΩ ΕΙΜΙ  
Ο ΑΡΤΟΣ Ο ΚΑΤΑΒΑΣ ΕΚ ΤΟΥ ΟΥΡΑΝΟΥ  
The Jews then murmured at him, because he said,  
"I am the bread which came down from heaven."



Jn. 6:48

ΕΓΩ ΕΙΜΙ Ο ΑΡΤΟΣ ΤΗΣ ΖΩΗΣ  
"I am the bread of life."



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Jn. 6:51

εγω ειμι ο αρτος ο ζων ο εκ του ουρανου καταβας  
εαν τις φαγη εκ τουτου του αρτου αζησει  
ζησεται εις τον αιωνα και ο αρτος δε ον εγω δωσω  
η σαρχ μου εστιν ην εγω δωσω υπερ της του κοσμου ζωης

"I am the living bread which came down from heaven;  
if any one eats of this bread, he will live for ever,  
and the bread which I shall give for the life of the world is my flesh."



*To "the Jews" in Jerusalem at the Feast of Tabernacles:*

Jn. 8:12

παλιν ουν αυτοις ελαλησεν ο ιησους αυτοις  
ελαλησεν λεγων εγω ειμι το φως του κοσμου ο  
ακολουθων εμοι ου μη περιπατηση περιπατηρει εν  
τη σκοτια αλλ εξει το φως της ζωης

Again Jesus spoke to them, saying,  
"I am the light of the world; he who follows me will not walk in darkness,  
but will have the light of life."



Jn. 8:18

εγω ειμι ο μαρτυρων περι εμαυτου και  
μαρτυρει περι εμου ο πεμψας με πατηρ

"I bear witness to myself  
(lit. "I am the one bearing witness...")  
to myself, and the Father who sent me bears witness to me."



Jn. 8:23

και ελεγεν ειπεν αυτοις υμεις εκ των  
κατω εστε εγω εκ των ανω ειμι υμεις εκ τουτου  
του κοσμου τουτου εστε εγω ουκ ειμι εκ του κοσμου τουτου

He said to them,  
"You are from below, I am from above;  
you are of this world, I am not of this world."



*To "the Jews"*

*just after Jesus gives sight to the Man Born Blind  
(the "Good Shepherd Discourse"):*

Jn. 10:7

ειπεν ουν παλιν αυτοις ο ιησους αμην αμην λεγω υμιν  
οτι εγω ειμι η θυρα των προβατων  
So Jesus again said to them,  
"Truly, truly, I say to you, I am the door of the sheep."



Jn. 10:9

εγω ειμι η θυρα δι εμου εαν τις εισελθη σωθησε  
ται και εισελουσεται και εξελουσεται και νομην ευρησε  
"I am the door, if any one enters by me,  
he will be saved, and will go in and out and find pasture."





Jn. 10:14

εγω ειμι ο ποιμην ο καλος και γνωσκω τα εμα και  
γνωσκουσι γνωσκομαι με υπο τα των εμα εμων  
"I am the good shepherd; I know my own and my own know me,"



Jn. 10:11

εγω ειμι ο ποιμην ο καλος ο ποιμην ο καλος την  
ψυχην αυτου τιθησιν υπερ των προβατων  
"I am the good shepherd.  
[The good shepherd lays down his life for the sheep."



*To Martha of Bethany,  
just before Jesus raises her brother Lazarus back to life:*

Jn. 11:25

ειπεν αυτη ο ιησους εγω ειμι η αναστασις και η ζωη ο  
πιστευων εις εμε καν αποθανη ζησεται  
Jesus said to her,  
"I am the resurrection and the life;  
he who believes in me, though he die, yet shall he live,"



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*To his disciples at their last meal together (the "Last Supper Discourse"):*

Jn. 14:6

λεγει αυτω <sup>αδ</sup> ο ιησους εγω ειμι η οδος και η  
αληθεια και η ζωη ουδεις ερχεται προς τον πατερα ει μη δι εμου

Jesus said to him,

"I am the way, and the truth, and the life;

no one comes to the Father, but by me.



Jn. 15:1

εγω ειμι η αμπελος η αληθινη και ο πατηρ μου ο γεωργος εστιν

"I am the true vine, and my Father is the vinedresser."



Jn. 15:5

εγω ειμι η αμπελος υμεις τα κληματα ο μενων  
εν εμοι καγω εν αυτω ουτος φερει καρπον πολυν  
οτι χωρις εμου ου δυνασθε ποιειν ουδεν

"I am the vine, you are the branches.

He who abides in me, and I in him,

he it is that bears much fruit,

for apart from me you can do nothing."

## **I AM**

# **SYMBOLS JESUS USED TO EXPLAIN HIMSELF**

## **CHAPTER ONE**

### **I. INTRODUCTION**

In the last days of his life Our Lord Jesus was particularly strained because he knew that his days are coming to an end, and that he had very little time left with his disciples to teach and reveal to them the great mysteries of the incarnation. The communication of the mysteries of heaven is particularly difficult to convey, as they do not usually have terrestrial images. Words that correspond to the concepts are totally or partially missing in human conceptual world. As a result, these messages are shrouded in symbolic language with the hope that his disciples will be able to grasp its significance as they meditated over his words and teachings. These great symbolisms are handed over to us in the gospels. The following studies are an attempt in understanding what Jesus was trying to put across to the human mind.

The importance of the phrase 'I am the' can be understood from the mere fact that out of the total of 218 occasions in the Bible (using NIV) nearly 200 of these are declarations of God which states explicitly "I am the Lord" or "I am the Sovereign Lord" or to such effect. In the Old Testament, the title I AM is considered holy and

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unspeakable. It was the name as given to Moses in his encounter with the sovereign God at the burning bush theophany. In the New Testament "I am the" occurs 25 times out of which Jesus refers to it to himself 9 times during his earthly period and 6 times in the Revelations. That is out of 25 occurrences 16 are spoken by Jesus while 5 times it refers to God himself as quoted by Jesus. Evidently the phrase I AM is directly related to the revelation of God as the great "I AM" - Yhvh. A study of the gospels shows that there are seven basic symbols that Jesus used. These are phrased with the introductory announcement, "I AM THE..." and are found in the Gospel of John. They are:

1. I am the bread of life Jn. 6.35-59
2. I am the light of the world Jn. 8.12; 9.5; 12.35-36
3. I am the door Jn. 10.7-10
4. I am the good shepherd Jn. 10.11-18
5. I am the resurrection and the life Jn. 11.25
6. I am the way, the truth and the life Jn. 14.6
7. I am the true vine Jn. 15.1-11

Evidently, Jesus was emphasizing the fact that he was Yhvh, God. After his Ascension Jesus spoke to John in his vision where he added two other "I am the..." pictures, these are:

8. I am the Alpha and the Omega      Rev. 1.8; 1.17-18; 21.6; 22.13

9. I am the root and the offspring of David, the bright morning star      Rev. 22.16

Apart from these verbal symbols, Jesus also instituted some visible symbols. Two of them occur in the sacrament of the Last Supper and carried over into the institution of the Breaking of the Bread or Lord's Supper or Communion or Mass as are usually referred to by various denominations. These are the Bread and the Vine.

### WHAT ARE SYMBOLS?

We are all familiar with symbols because they pervade all our lives. It is a representation of an idea either in visual or audible form.

Some examples will exemplify them better. Among the Christians, we are familiar with the cross that appears in most churches. The early church used the symbol of fish. Other familiar Christian symbols are the lamb and the open book.



Each religion has a symbol, which represents the core teaching of the religion. Thus, we have the cross for Christianity, the crescent for Islam, the Star of David for Jews, the sign of Om for Hindus. These are visual symbols. Political parties, organizations, institutions etc. also use

visual symbols, while visual symbols are widely used; the audible symbols are not much popular. However, they are found in all walks of life. Command whistles, siren sounds, theme songs of music groups, radio stations etc are examples of these. We shall see why audible symbols are less popular; and the reason is important.

The written word and the spoken word are the ultimate symbols because of their communicative power. An essay or a speech communicates more than a static visual or audible symbol. That is why the title of 'the Word of God', 'Kalimut Allah' is given to Jesus emphasizing the ultimate and clear revelation of God to man in Christ Jesus.

What then is a symbol? A symbol is something, which communicates ideas and concepts of realities, which are otherwise difficult to communicate.

A good symbol is therefore a good expression of a concept and is a means of communication. The use of the symbol gives this effect because of the following process. First, it



**Symbols are the means of communication. All carriers of information use symbols.**



converts an existing reality into a concept, which in turn is converted into the symbol. The receiver, who perceives the symbol through external stimuli, in turn reinterprets it and thereby recognizes the concept contained in it. The receiver thus understands the original concept.

## 1.2 SYMBOLS AS A MEANS OF UNDERSTANDING

Symbols are therefore the means of learning. Writing was one of the first great events in learning, where sounds or concepts were recorded by symbols. In some languages, a phonetic system is used whereas in some other languages a visual concept form is used.

We go on inventing more and more symbols and better and better symbols to express our growing concepts. Language - a growing language - grows in vocabulary. As the need arises new words are coined. For example in some languages, there are only three words for colors because colors are classified only into three groups. In the English language, we have seven color names and many combination color names. In most Indian languages, we have minute details of relationships with people indicated in words. Uncle in English can mean father's brother or mother's brother, whereas in many other languages we have distinct words for these. A study of these words will give us tremendous understanding of the culture of the land.

In science, we have been coining new words. In mathematics we have the commonly understood symbols of  $+$ ,  $-$ ,  $\times$ ,  $/$ ,  $=$  at the lowest level. Then in the higher classes we come across symbols for  $<$ ,  $>$ , tends to, exponent, differential of, integral of, Laplace transform of, sum of etc. New symbols are always developed to present new concepts. They help in handling numbers and algebraic symbols in a faster and better way. The placeholder 0 is one of the greatest contributions of India to Mathematics. But many of the symbols used in advanced mathematics are understood only by the mathematicians.

Thus, a good symbol helps in our understanding of the concepts involved and also in manipulating ideas involving the concept. All symbols are developed from the existing symbols. The symbols get

$$\int_a^b x^2 dx = (b^3 - a^3) / 3$$

their meaning only in the context of the existing symbols. For example, the integral sign developed out of the Sum sign with an elongated S; differential sign was developed from the basic limit concept of incremental signs as ratio of two infinitesimals. The same is true in popular symbols. The cross was abhorrence till Jesus, because it was a symbol of death in a horrible way. But in Jesus, it found a new meaning. A symbol may have different meaning to different people due to their background. A pig is considered a clean animal in the west and a goat is considered an unclean animal. But in all Semitic cultures, the pig is considered a filthy animal and is abhorrent, while a goat or lamb is considered almost sacred. The symbols are therefore culture sensitive.

Thus if we want to understand the meaning of a symbol we have to go back into the context of the person who gives the symbol. In order to understand the symbols Jesus used, we have to do it from within the Jewish context of Jesus' period. We have to ask the question, how did his hearers understand it and what are the additional meaning he might have given to the symbol. In many cases, he had changed the meaning of the symbols considerably as he did with the symbol of cross by his personality and his divinity and his teachings.



**The symbols get their meaning only in the context**



Jesus being God incarnate knew much more than his hearers did. His burden was to load the symbols with as much meaning as he



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could so that his disciples could learn in due course of time as much as possible about him as God incarnate and about the nature of God. That was the purpose of incarnation. He was the ultimate revelation of God to man. Hence his declared symbols of "I am the..." should be considered as the description of God as revealed to Man in Jesus. It tells us who Jesus was, and what was the purpose of the incarnation. It also tells us about the nature of God in a way no others can tell us.

Since the transcendal and spiritual experiences are the most difficult realities that can be communicated, these are usually transmitted through elaborate enacted symbols, commonly known as rituals. Rituals are sacramental, performative, repetitive social symbols, which takes an ordinary word, action, or symbol and gives it a depth of meaning which is extraordinary. The purpose is better communication and realization of the experience that is beyond communication. Rituals receive their meaning only in the context and in the culture in which it is stated, since each component symbol of the ritual has a meaning in that context and culture only. Just as a language is gibberishes to one who do not know the language, rituals will be only a farce or drama to those who do not enter into the meaning of it.



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## CHAPTER TWO

### I AM THAT I AM

The first of the revelation of God after the revelations to patriarchs Abraham, Isaac and Jacob was to Moses in the Mount Sinai at the burning bush theophany. Here Moses expressly desires to know the name of God who is sending him. The reply was in two specific forms.

**אהיה אשר אהיה**

**“I am that I am”**

**“I am who I am”**

**“I am he who exists”**

**“The eternal who passes  
not away”.**

The first response was Ex. 3.14 “I am that I am”, and the second response was Ex. 3.15 “The Lord God of your fathers”. From the name “I am that I am” we get the personal name of God Yhvh. In original, it reads Eheyeh Asher Eheyeh. The Vulgate translates it as, “I am who I am”. The Septuagint translates it as “I am he who exists”. The Syriac, Persic, and Chaldee preserves the original verse

as such without translation. The Arabic paraphrases it as, “The eternal who passes not away”. The meaning here can be interpreted in many different senses.

It means first of all that God is a Personal, Independent Self-existent being. He is without cause, but he is a person - the self-conscious being from the beginning.

Yahweh is not a mere power or an eternal law. He is not a nirgunan - something which does not have any properties. (The terms used here are from the Indian tradition)



**Yahweh is not a mere power or an eternal law. God is a Person.**



A nirgunabrahman is not knowable, because he cannot be described (nir=non, guna=properties Brahman = godhead). A saguna brahman is God with properties (sa= with guna=properties). Properties arise only when there is a relation. There has to be a known and a knower if properties are to exist. Thus, in itself it declares that within the unity of the Godhead is a community of sharing, knowing persons so that God becomes a person with character. A God without a character and a purpose is unthinkable in Yahvite traditions. All life and

consciousness starts from him. This is the metaphysical concept of Brahman or Parabrahman (para= ultimate) in Saguna brahman aspect. The Hindu sages describes him as Sat-Chit-Ananda, which translated means "The Truth, The Life and the Bliss" in this state. Without God, there is neither property for matter nor personality for beings. This is the metaphysical interpretation of the name Yhvh.

Ex.3.15 says, "This is my name forever, Yehovah Elohim" the Lord Gods. This God declares, is the name by which World have known him - the God who was active in history, the God of the fathers. In this context, the declaration, I am that I am may be interpreted as "I am that acts through history or I am who is known through my activity.

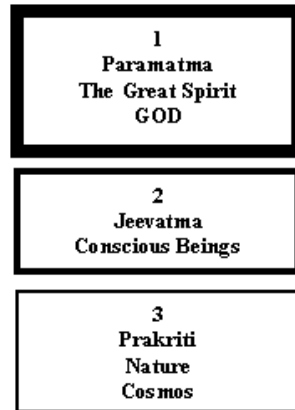
God has no name, his revelation is found in the cosmos and in the history. God reveals himself through history in his dealings with man. You can know him, but you cannot understand him, simply because God is infinite and man is finite. The connotation of the word forever, is that it is true age after age. God is the same yesterday, today and forever; but our understanding of God grows with our experience.

אהיה אשר אהיה  
"I am that I am"

I am who is known through my activity.

**This gives three aspects of God.**

**1. God is the one who provides the character for matter.** The substance of matter is created by God as an act of volition. It was an ex-nihilo creation - created from nothing. The distinctiveness of God from the material world - prakrithi (prakrit = original, in crude form; prakriti= nature) is emphasized in Yahweh. Yahweh is a Purusha (=Person) while Prakrithi is non-Purusha - whose properties arise because of their inter-relations. These properties are because of God. He imposes these properties. In other words, laws of nature are encoded by God. Science therefore declares the majesty and glory of God. He shows himself through nature.



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There are other alternatives, which are also perfectly logical. Some of these possible alternatives are:

= There is nothing but God (Paramatma - Great Spirit). Then all that we are and we see are parts of God - not only consciousness (Jeevatma - Living Spirit) but also non-conscious matter and non-matter (Prakriti). (Act 17:28) for 'In him we live and move and have our being'

= It is God who forms the conscious-ness. All matter and non-matter are created by this God.

= From the coarse human viewpoint, there is God and there is also matter and non-matter. They are the primal duals. Interactions of these are what form the events and experiences. In effect we have all sorts of permutations possible with these basic existence of

- 1) God (Paramatma)
- 2) Non-Gods (Jeevatma)
- 3) Matter in many dimensions (Prakriti).

We can have these possibilities:

A] (1) self existant who creates (2) and (3);

B] (1) and (2) both self existent as a unity of consciousness and this (1,2) unity create (3);

C] (1) and (2) both self existent as separate entities and this (1) and (2) create separately or jointly (3);

D] (1), (2)and (3) coexisting.

There are other possibilities too.

So, we can see that there are many logical possibilities and we cannot really establish or refute the existence of God. Hence, we

only have apologetics for what we believe. We can justify but not prove the existence of God.

So in the Statement "I am that I am", God refuses to give an explanation of himself, simply because God is beyond reason. Out of this ambiguity arise the various philosophical and religious traditions. In India all these forms are equally respected from the Advaitic (Absolute oneness = Only god is reality) and Dvaitic (dual absolutes= both Brahman and Prakriti are absolutes) to Sankhya (Materialistic = only matter is real)

**2. Second God himself being uncreated cannot have inherent properties or character, unless God himself is a community.** An isolated absolute one God cannot exist - however we define existence. God internally is a multiple personality. This is where the Trinitarian aspect of God comes in. This subject area is vast enough to merit a separate treatise.


יהוה אלהים  
YHVH ELOHIM  
The Lord Gods

**3. God can be known by us only through his actions.** God was saying to Moses, that you cannot understand me as I am. You can know me only through my actions. You can know me through my interaction with people, and through my actions in history. You come to me. You experience me. Experience God in history, as God who acts through history. Thus the Bible is a revelation of God, because it is the history of a nation which tells us how God acts through people - how God transformed the lives of those who committed themselves to him; how God dealt with people who refuse to


We can know God only through His actions.

accept God. It is the history, which tells us how god acts through a community and a nation - his methods of dealing with sin, chastisement and restoration. It is the history of the world, where God acts through history and deals with nations and how he leads history to culmination according to his purposes. In all these, we see the unveiling of his character and reveals God. That is why it is the Word of God.

In this sense, history of every nation is the history of God's revelation - only that in secular history, we do not view it as such, and God is veiled by man's interpretation. The historic struggle of the people of every nation for liberation and oppression, their struggle to find fulfillment of life and purpose are part of God's revelation. This unfolding still continues. This unveiling of God continues in the history of the earth, history of the nations, countries, tribes, families and individuals. This is probably the only way to know God - in our lives. God is known through our experience at all dimensions - social, cultural, historical, sensual, intellectual and mental, in body, mind and spirit.



**History of every nation  
or person is  
HIS STORY**




## 2.1 THE CONCEPT OF MANY IN ONE

In a society that is self-centered, where man is considered as an individual, we cannot understand or comprehend the concept of the organism of many in one. The argument of Islam against the trinity is that God cannot be many in one because there will be conflict in personalities. If that occurs there will be a dominant personality who will become the God of the gods. This is actually what is depicted in the pagan gods. The Hindu trinity is always



fighting against each other and Narada is involved in the initiation of conflict, development of crisis and the final resolution. This happens always because each of these gods have an interest of their own which cannot be reconciled with the interest of others. This will then give us a developing and growing God. Hindu God even in its Parabrahma aspect is considered as an evolving God. It would make time beyond ParaBrahman and a goal, which is outside of God and independent. This in fact nullifies the concept of God itself. Is there something outside of god, beyond god, existing independent of God, moral, spiritual or material? So, we can see that an evolving god is a contradiction. This is the fallen nature, which is also seen in mankind.

But in a Godhead, which is truly divine, the Trinity acts as unison. There is no conflict of interest between the persons within the Trinity in time and history. They always have the same interest and support each other.



שְׁמַע יִשְׂרָאֵל יְיָ אֱלֹהֵינוּ יְיָ אֶחָד:

*Sh'ma Yisrael*  
*Adonai Elohaynu Adonai Echad*

**Hear Oh Israel,  
Lord your Gods is One Lord**



They all have the same problem and contribute complementarily to solve the problem. This can happen only if the problem is external to the Godhead itself. The problems are related to the creation and exist only in time, space, and other dimensions.

Notice how Jesus refers to the relationship within the Trinity.

*John 5:19 Jesus gave them this answer: "I tell you the truth, the Son can do nothing by himself; he can do only what he sees his Father doing, because whatever the Father does the Son also does.*

*John 10:30 I and the Father are one.*

*John 14:11 Believe me when I say that I am in the Father and the*

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*Father is in me; or at least believe on the evidence of the miracles themselves.*

*John 14:26 But the Counselor, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, will teach you all things and will remind you of everything I have said to you.*

*John 15:26 "When the Counselor comes, whom I will send to you from the Father, the Spirit of truth who goes out from the Father, he will testify about me.*

Adam is a name for Mankind - not of a person. Eve was certainly in him whom God later separated out and she was the mother of all men. So the creation was plural - many in one. The fall of man was probably this consciousness that I am separate I am not He. When Cain runs off, we meet others. As the image of God, Adam was supposed to be many persons in one Mankind. But this image was shattered by the choice that Eve and Adam made by emphasizing their separateness as against their unity. The immediate effect of this fall was the feeling of isolation and nakedness, which caused Adam and Eve to hide. In the philosophy of Dr. Krishnamurthy he has tried to emphasize this original concept. For him mankind is actually sharing the same universal consciousness that we call Man. The separateness is only a Maya imposed by the willful ignorance of man. As long as man refuses to

**The separateness is only a Maya imposed by the willful ignorance of man. As long as man refuses to accept, this oneness, the samsara will engulf him to ignorance and we will remain in a fallen world.**

**God is a unisonic resonant community of Persons.**

## I AM: M. M. Ninan

accept, this oneness the samsara will engulf him to ignorance and we obtain a fallen world.

In Sound, we have the phenomena of Resonance and beats. When all the sound waves are in unison, they produce the tremendous power of unisonic resonance capable of doing anything. But when they are in dissonance, they produce beats that appear as waxing and waning. The energy has been dissipated, distributed, and limited. Some people think that Yah is probably a whole community of persons in unison forming as one living being. But we certainly have three personalities in one Godhead. To go anything beyond this point cannot be supported by biblical evidence.

In the prehistory, there was an animal, which was serpentine in nature, which had three centers of Consciousness or brains. This animal is now extinct. Did it die out because of internal conflicts? It is called Dinosaurs. We have no problem in accepting this fact. However, our commonsense notions of space and time limit us from understanding this unity in the human communities and cosmic beings. These will destroy themselves when these consciousness conflicts each other and pull the being in different directions. And it is true even of God. This in essence is the teaching of the New Age and Hinduism where Man is nothing but the fallen God, because of the internal conflicts. To them salvation lies in resolving this conflict.

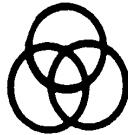
God doesn't have a name. But they can put on one - or put on many. He puts on a name that explains their character at that time. God the Father, God the Son and God the Holy Spirit are names that characterize the activities of these persons. They have distinct functions within the Godhead and have distinct personalities. They are one in essence and one is unity. This unity

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goes far beyond the essence into their activities and purposes. If we explain Godhead as a family organism, or as a community of organism (<http://alandpeters.tripod.com/id19.html>) this will be a better approximation. But then our fallen nature will tend to associate conflicts within the family and society and the true unity of godhead would be missed. When Paul describes church as a bride of Christ, he had this unity in mind.

*Eph 4:-6 There is one body and one Spirit-- just as you were called to one hope when you were called-- one Lord, one faith, one baptism; one God and Father of all, who is over all and through all and in all.*

Conflict is the result of some irrevocable law of logic or state beyond the human mind. Since there is nothing beyond God, there can be no conflict within Godhead.



## CHAPTER THREE

### I AM THE BREAD OF LIFE



John Chapter 6 is a discourse on the picture of Jesus as the bread. This is a very exhaustive treatment on the symbolism where he draws the meaning of the symbolisms to its ultimate limits. John 6: 27-59. Jesus starts his discourse in the context of the feeding of the five thousand. He then proceeds to point out that even though the bread he provided was physical bread, people ought to be looking towards him for the real food. The real food is that sustains life - the food that endures to eternal life. The bread is called the staff of life or the food that sustains life and helps it grow. (Ezekiel 4:16; 5:16; 14:13) Even though Jesus refers to bread, the symbolism is for both food and drink. "I am the bread of life; he who comes to me shall not hunger, and he who believes in me shall never thirst." (Jn.6.35)

Here Jesus is presenting himself as the sustainer of life and not as the giver of life. In the Bible the life giver is the Spirit of God. So, in defining himself as the bread, he implies his function in the Trinity. Food doesn't give

**The bread is the staff of life or the food that sustains life and helps it grow.**

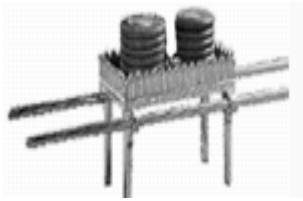
life to the body; it only maintains it to be a healthy body so that it may function perfectly. The body - and I refer to the physical body - cannot function normally unless a man has Jesus within him. Without Jesus, the body decays and death will come. This is simply because without the power of the risen Jesus it is impossible to live a righteous life here and now. Our ability to live a normal healthy life is dependent on Jesus in our life. As James points out, "*Then desire when it has conceived gives birth to sin; and sin when it is fully grown brings death.*" (Ja. 1.15) Jesus is now talking about death. It is commonly told that death is to be understood as spiritual death or separation from God. Such an understanding has come from the western interpretation. But in the Semitic and Asiatic thought, this distinction does not arise. Life is both spiritual and material and death is same in both cases. In both cases, it is a splitting or destruction of man. Death is the result of sin. It is not antecedent to sin, but consequence of sin. So, if death is to be conquered, sin must be defeated. Sin can be defeated only through Jesus. The ultimate salvation of mankind lies in Jesus, the bread of life.

### 3.1 OLD TESTAMENT IMPLICATIONS

To understand what Jesus meant by the "Bread of life" we need to look into the Old Testament concept of bread. The symbolic representation of bread in the Old Testament arises in the context of the Shew bread, or the bread of Presence.

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This is referred in summary in Heb.9.2 and in detail in Lev.24.5-9 and Ex.25.30. In the holies or in the court of the Assembly where the Israel gathered together for worship on the right hand side was a golden table on which were placed twelve bread pieces. Golden table represents the heavenly abodes where the unleavened bread is placed. Unleavened bread represents the sinless body. Thus, Jesus presents himself as the Bread that came down from heaven. He is saying that He is God incarnate and sinless. There were twelve loaves of bread - one for each tribe - and were kept in two rows representing the Jews and the Gentiles, representing the whole mankind. Jesus came down for the whole mankind and for every tribe in the believer's congregation. The priests were to eat it every week in a holy place and the bread were to be renewed.



Jesus is called the Word of God or the Living Word of God. The Scripture is the Written Word of God. Both are alike. Both are bread - food and drink for the body and spirit.

The emphasis here is that for healthy living one should be continuously feeding on the Word of God in the light of the Holy Spirit, to be *“created in Christ Jesus for good works.”* (Eph.2.10), *“by being of the same mind, having the same love, being in full accord and of one mind”* (Phill.2. 2) as Jesus. Then we will be like Jesus.

**For healthy living one should be continuously feeding on the Word of God - Jesus and the Bible**

The bread on the shew table was to be covered and interspersed with incense and necessarily eaten on the Sabbath day by the Levites and renewed every week. The clear indication is that the feeding on the Word must be accompanied by praise and worship and prayer (incense) and a congregational feeding of word must take place every week. The study of the Word of God must be new every week. This is the basis of Sunday services in the present day situation.

### 3.2 PENTECOST

The next important symbolism of bread comes on the day of Pentecost. The details of the Pentecost is given in Ex. 34:21-22 ;Lev. 23.16-17. Pentecost took place on the 50th day after the waving of the first sheave of harvest (which represents the resurrection of Jesus). That day leavened bread is placed on the shew bread table instead of the usual unleavened bread, and that only two of them.

It symbolizes mankind as a whole - both the Jews and the gentiles who are sinful - the leaven symbolizing sin. Thus, bread in general symbolizes life. Pentecost is the celebration of the law giving at mount Sinai. Moses brought down the tablets of law on that day. On that day 3000 apostate Israelites who worshipped the golden calf died. The Sinai tic covenant was the new beginning for the world, when people all over the world were to live by the law and take the consequence of the sin that was committed. However, it was a law based on mercy. In the presence of the holiness of God, all sin brings death. But in the Sinaitic covenant, not all law breaking is punishable by death, because of the presence of the Priestly intercession and the sacrificial atonement built in the law. In this sense, the leavened bread symbolized the new redeemed life of mankind.



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In the land of Canaan the third day after the Passover, the first day of the week, was the celebration of the harvest, when the first fruits of the harvests are brought to the temple as a wave offering. The first sheaves of the wheat were waved in front of the holy of holies. It represents new life and the promise of a full harvest in due course. The presentation of the two leavened loaves therefore symbolized man's hope and promise of redemption through Jesus. On that day Jesus rises again as a first fruit from the dead, and presented before God, as wave offering with the hope and promise of resurrection from the dead for all believers. This is the new beginning of the new creation man.

This is exactly what is promised in Jesus. After the 50th day of resurrection, on the day of Pentecost Holy Spirit came upon both the Jews and gentiles and the church, the beginning of the New Community of Man was born.

### 3.3 MANNA AS BREAD JN. 6.48-58

*1John 6:48-51 I am the bread of life. Your forefathers ate the manna in the desert, yet they died. But here is the bread that comes down from heaven, which a man may eat and not die. I am the living bread that came down from heaven. If anyone eats of this bread, he will live forever. This bread is my flesh, which I will give for the life of the world."*

In this passage, Jesus compares himself with manna and distinguishes himself as that living bread which came down from heaven. The reasoning is simple, as the manna gave life to the starving Jews in the wilderness; Jesus gives food to the spiritually starved. The manna could not provide life, because it was not spiritual. It is the spirit that gives life; the material is of no use for this.

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*John 6:52-58 Then the Jews began to argue sharply among themselves, "How can this man give us his flesh to eat?" Jesus said to them, "I tell you the truth, unless you eat the flesh of the Son of Man and drink his blood, you have no life in you. Whoever eats my flesh and drinks my blood has eternal life, and I will raise him up at the last day. For my flesh is real food and my blood is real drink. Whoever eats my flesh and drinks my blood remains in me, and I in him. Just as the living Father sent me and I live because of the Father, so the one who feeds on me will live because of me. This is the bread that came down from heaven. Your forefathers ate manna and died, but he who feeds on this bread will live forever."*

### 3.4 NEW TESTAMENT IMPLICATIONS

There is New Testament implication also to this. New testament era differs from the old in that it abrogates law and establishes love in that place. The difference is a change in perspective. One relies on law and duty while the latter relies on a deeper personal relationship. Both are community centered. The Old community was the Jewish nation and the in the new it is the Church. The fact that the new could encompass all nations is because of this change in perspective, which transcends national boundaries and blood relations. The manna was in actual context the binding force within the Israel during their wilderness period. In the same way, Jesus is the binding force within the church during the wilderness period of the Church. The old were culture based and the new is supracultural. As the bread is converted into flesh in nature, Jesus converts into the flesh of the Church and of the believer individually and collectively. Jesus thus becomes the church, the body of Christ.

*1 Cor 12:27 Now you are the body of Christ, and each one of you is a part of it.*

### 3.4 GENERAL IMPLICATIONS

#### 3.41 WHEAT REPRESENTS MAN:



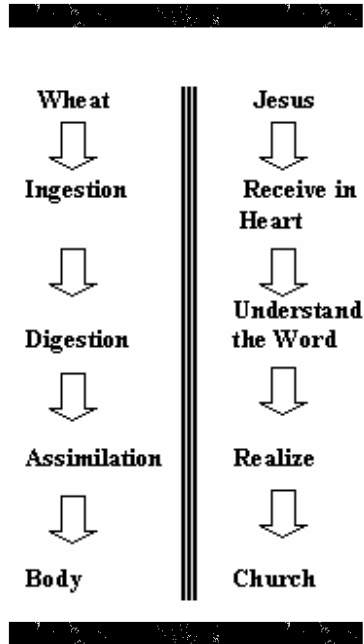
Man was created out of the dust and so is wheat formed out of the dust. Though they are formed out of the dust, there is a lot of difference between the dust, the soil and the minerals and the organic molecules that form the wheat substance and man. Both have life in them.

That is why wheat

is a food for man. The wheat body is transformed into the human body organism by assimilation. In the same way the Jesus, the word of God becomes life to the believer when assimilated and formed part of his daily living. The process of conversion of wheat into body follows the following process.

wheat - ingestion- digestion - assimilation - body.

It is the same with the believer. Believer ingests the word of God and accepts Jesus Christ as personal Savior. This transforms him totally and Jesus becomes



part of his life. The more he ingests more like Jesus he becomes. Each believer then becomes the wheat, which produces the body of Christ within the church.

A grain of wheat remains as it is if left alone. But if it falls down and dies, it will yield much fruit. Other grains are formed, thus increasing the body. Herein lies the message of Cross and resurrection of Christ. There is no resurrection for the fallen man unless he dies and resurrected in newness of life. It regenerates itself

*John 12:24 I tell you the truth, unless a kernel of wheat falls to the ground and dies, it remains only a single seed. But if it dies, it produces many seeds.*

### 3.42 MADE AS BREAD

The process of bread making involves different steps. First it is ground to flour and then mixed with oil and then kneaded fully and is kept a while to form internal changes of bond. Then it is put in the oven at high temperatures to produce the bread. In the same way in the formation of the individual believer, he is processed. He is ground through the suffering.

*1 Pet 4:12-13 Dear friends, do not be surprised at the painful trial you are suffering, as though something strange were happening to you. But rejoice that you participate in the sufferings of Christ, so that you may be overjoyed when his glory is revealed.*



**It is necessary that the individual self be ground into fine powder and be anointed with the Holy Spirit, which produces the cohesive force within the Church. Then it is baked into one body - The Body of Christ**



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Jesus also, as man, went through the suffering, and in that process was made perfect in human nature and became a High Priest for all mankind.

*Heb 5:8-10 Although he was a son, he learned obedience from what he suffered and, once made perfect, he became the source of eternal salvation for all who obey him and was designated by God to be high priest in the order of Melchizedek.*

*1 Pet 2:21 To this you were called, because Christ suffered for you, leaving you an example, that you should follow in his steps.*



It is necessary that the selfishness of individual be ground into fine powder and be anointed with the Holy Spirit, which produces the cohesive force within the Church. Thus in time the individual loses their separate character and forms the church. But to be of use to others as food the church itself will have to go through the hot Oven. This makes the church firm and edible. The church denominationalism and its selfishness will have to be burned. Unity comes only through suffering. Persecuted churches always remained united. Even today, the only country in the world where all denominations from the Pentecostals to Catholics form a united council is the Sudan Christian council for the simple reason that it is a persecuted church. After all, the purpose of the bread is to be eaten by others. If the church is to be a redemptive power and be a rejuvenating force, it has to give itself up. Most churches forget this. The fallacy often perpetuated is that salvation of the individual is the ultimate purpose of the gospel. It is only the beginning. It is then thought that church is the ultimate purpose. It is the body of Christ for a function. This function is the

## I AM: M. M. Ninan

redemption of whole mankind. Mankind (not individuals) is the ultimate purpose of incarnation. More than that, it is the redemption of the whole creation from the bondage of decay.

*Rom 8:18 - 21 I consider that our present sufferings are not worth comparing with the glory that will be revealed in us. The creation waits in eager expectation for the sons of God to be revealed. For the creation was subjected to frustration, not by its own choice, but by the will of the one who subjected it, in hope that the creation itself will be liberated from its bondage to decay and brought into the glorious freedom of the children of God.*

We are called into this priesthood as Jesus himself.

*1 Pet 2:9 But you are a chosen people, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people belonging to God, that you may declare the praises of him who called you out of darkness into his wonderful light.*

Leavened or unleavened (sinful as we are), kneaded, made into loaves, cakes or wafers it is distributed to every city all over the world. Baked in an oven or hearth or coals - it is edible only when baked - made cohesive, and as bound coherent church in oneness is eaten. It then gives strength and life to those who care to eat the bread. So is Jesus. So is the Church today. Before it is eaten, it has to be broken to pieces or cut into slice.

*John 6:54-58 Whoever eats my flesh and drinks my blood has eternal life, and I will raise him up at the last day. For my flesh is real food and my blood is real drink. Whoever eats my flesh and drinks my blood remains in me, and I in him. Just as the living Father sent me and I live because of the Father, so the one who feeds on me will live because of me. This is the bread that came down from heaven. Your forefathers ate manna and died, but he who feeds on this bread will live forever."*

### 3.43 JESUS AS THE WORD

*John 1:1-2 In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was with God in the beginning.*

*John 1:14 The Word became flesh and made his dwelling among us. We have seen his glory, the glory of the One and Only, who came from the Father, full of grace and truth.*

If Jesus is the Word and he is also the bread from heaven, life can be sustained only if we actually feed on it. As the bread can give life only if it is ingested and then digested and infused through the blood streams, the life of the believer and of the Church can be realized only if we continuously ingest, digest and infuse the word of God. Individually we feed on the word of God and live in it. As a church, we feed on it and live on it.

### 3.5 HOLY COMMUNION IMPLICATIONS

This figure of bread is directly translated into the communion of saints through the breaking of bread. Ancient liturgies by early fathers actually declare what I have stated in the earlier portions in clear terms.

Liturgical declarations include the following:

- wheat is brought together from various places, so also he will gather together his people from all nations tribes and geographical areas.

- In the communion we remember all those who labored in it, from the preparation of the field, the sowing, caring and harvesting and then worked through the process of bread making.

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- The whole community of believers from the beginning of the age till now is present at the communion table.

It emphasizes that we are part of everyone who ever lived and died from the beginning of creation. Every breath contains one molecule of air that was breathed by Adam and more of Jesus. Everyone ever lived and is living is part of my breath. They are changing us. We are changing the world. I am my brother's keeper and I am fully responsible for every good and bad thing that happens today

Again we are a part of every creation, every element of universe.

This oneness of humanity, oneness of universe is regained in Resurrected Jesus.

*Eph 2:15-17 by abolishing in his flesh the law with its commandments and regulations. His purpose was to create in himself one new man out of the two, thus making peace, and in this one body to reconcile both of them to God through the cross, by which he put to death their hostility. He came and preached peace to you who were far away and peace to those who were near.*



## CHAPTER FOUR

### I AM THE LIGHT OF THE WORLD

*John 8:12 When Jesus spoke again to the people, he said, "I am the light of the world. Whoever follows me will never walk in darkness, but will have the light of life."*



#### 4.1 1 LIGHT - PHYSICAL

Light is something special in the Physical world. In the olden days it was thought that light travel with infinite velocity. Therefore, it was an apt symbol for the omnipresence of God. The word implies that God is everywhere at all times. Now we know that light travels with finite speed in space as a group wave though it may have any speed in phase wave. A pure frequency light wave without beginning or end can have any speed. However, when it becomes a composite wave, the group velocity becomes

finite. Strange because that is what we have been discussing as the relation between Nirguna-Brahman and Saguna Brahman. Light becomes a Physical reality only in group. Again, with the relativity we have a strange situation. The velocity of light is the maximum speed any material particle can have. As the speed of a body increase, its mass increases and it reduces its width in the direction of motion. If the particle reaches the speed of light, (which is 300000000 m/s) its thickness becomes zero and mass becomes infinitely large. If the speed can increase beyond the speed of light, the dimension of existence of the matter is changed. Mass becomes negative. Physicist calls such particles as Tachyons. However, experiments could not detect any physical particle with such properties. We enter into a different dimension all together. Light is the only reality that exists in all these dimensions. If we can travel on the wings of light then time will cease. There will be no change for us. What a good definition and an excellent symbol for the Unchanging and Everlasting, Omnipresent, and Omniscient God. For God, time does not have any meaning. Man as material being exists in time. Light Person is not in time.

**Unchanging, Everlasting,  
Omnipresent, and  
Omniscient God.**

Light is not a person. If we add personality to the Light, we get the description of God.

#### 4.12 THE BINDING FORCE

Everybody knows of the famous mass energy relation.

$$E = m c^2$$

Energy and mass are related through the velocity of light.

It is the essence of matter and energy.

*Acts 17:28 'For in him we live and move and have our being.'*

*Acts 17:28 'For in him we live and move and have our being.'*

The binding force within the atom is electromagnetic interaction and Light (Photon) is the materialization of this binding energy. It is light that holds together the atoms. Jesus is the creator of the Universe and it is he that holds the universe together. The immanence of God is depicted in this picture.

*John 1:3 Through him all things were made; without him nothing was made that has been made.*

*Col 1:17 He is before all things, and in him all things hold together.*

*Heb 1:3 The Son is the radiance of God's glory and the exact representation of his being, sustaining all things by his powerful word.*

Just as light holds together matter, love holds together all life. When love is removed and selfishness comes in, it becomes evil and this destroys man.

*John 1:1 –9 In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was with God in the beginning. Through him all things were made; without him nothing was made that has been made. In him was life, and that life was the light of men. The light shines in the darkness, but the darkness has not understood it.*

*There came a man who was sent from God; his name was John. He came as a witness to testify concerning that light, so that through him all men might believe. He himself was not the light; he came only as a witness to the light. The true light that gives light to every man was coming into the world.*

Here light is put in conjunction with life. Light is the energy that binds together that brings forth life. If the directed activity of binding is not there, atoms are not formed, atoms do not form molecules, molecules do not form organisms and there will be no life. Creation cannot take place without Jesus. As it was true in the beginning, so is it true in the new creation of New Man.

**Just as light holds together matter, love holds together all life.**

#### 4.13 THERE IS NONE BESIDE ME.


Another uniqueness of light particle, which is called Photon is that, it has no opposite. There are no antiphotons. There is no antilight. "I am God, there is none beside me." There is no other God.

*1John 1:5 This is the message we have heard from him and declare to you: God is light; in him there is no darkness at all.*


**There is no antiphoton.  
"I am God, there is none beside me."**

Here the comparison is to emphasize the fact that there is no darkness in God

Darkness - is not real. Darkness is the absence of light. Darkness is not the opposite of light. It is not a real entity. Evil is not a reality -- it is only a moral reality. It is lack of goodness. God did not create evil -- indeed by nature, he cannot. Then how come it is there? Evil is the misuse of ourselves, of things given to us, misuse of our privileges etc. Satan is not a negative God. God does not fight with Satan. Satan is an evil being -- a person who is evil. Satan is a creature of God who went against God and is the leader of the disobedient. Most of us have the mistaken notion that God has to fight Satan to defeat him. God does not have to. God wants us to defeat Satan because the evil is in us. We have to overcome it for ourselves.



**Evil is not a reality -- it is only a moral reality. It is lack of goodness.**



*Rom 16:20 The God of peace will soon crush Satan under your feet. The grace of our Lord Jesus be with you.*

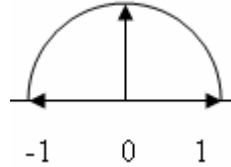
*James 1:13-14 When tempted, no one should say, "God is tempting me." For God cannot be tempted by evil, nor does he tempt anyone; but each one is tempted when, by his own evil desire, he is dragged away and enticed.*

How do we defeat Satan? How do we bring light in dark place?

You cannot remove it by hand. You have to bring light into that area. Bring God into all the areas of life so that evil is overcome. Satan is defeated when the Mafia leader Satan cannot get his way.

#### 4.14 THE TRINITY

There is however another striking similarity between God's dimensional property and the Photon's dimensional property of spin. The spin of the Photon (We really do not know what this means.) is 1 and it is a Boson. This means that for someone outside of it looking at



the photon it can have any of the following spin states: +1, 0 or -1 with reference to his own system of reference. This is a Trinitarian comparison. However for a massless particle, we cannot go to a rest frame. For a spin 1 particle there should be three possible values, along the direction of motion, away from it and zero. But Photons have spin 1, yet they only show two possible spin values +1 and -1 along the direction of travel. The gauge invariance forces the other state inaccessible for observation. The Zero spin state cannot be observed directly. In a photon we start with a vector field, which actually has 4 degrees of freedom, but gauge invariance forces 2 of these degrees of freedom to be unphysical. Thus the two persons that interact with physical beings in the Godhead are Son and the Holy Spirit. Father and the Godhead aspect of Nirguna Brahman are not viable to interaction directly.

The fact that it is a Boson means that we cannot really distinguish between one photon from another. They are identical in character, nature and indistinguishable. I may be stretching the symbolism too far. But one cannot over look this striking fact.

#### 4.15. MULTIDIMENSIONALITY

Light is the only massless particle that we know. Indeed, it cannot stop moving because of this. Particles that travel with speeds less than light form the material world. Particles that travel with speeds greater than light cannot exist in this material world. They exist (at least theoretically) in their world of negative mass and their own laws. They travel backwards in time, if time has any many there. But light exists in both these worlds.


But we should be careful not to equate light with God. God is not light -- the physical entity. It is a good symbol of God. God is beyond light. Light was created by God.

*Gen 1:3 And God said, "Let there be light," and there was light. Darkness destroys us because we do not know where we are and where we are going -- the works of darkness*


#### 4.2 GOD BEYOND LIGHT

##### 4.21 GOD WHO DWELL IN A DARK CLOUD

Physical light is a creation of God. God is beyond any of his creations. One cannot understand God. Man is incapable of understanding God. This is expressed in symbolic terms as follows. God is not knowable.



**God is not light -- the physical entity.**  
**It is a good symbol of God**



*2Chr. 6:1 Then Solomon said, "The LORD has said that he would dwell in a dark cloud;*

*1Kgs. 7:12 Then Solomon said, "The LORD has said that he would*

*dwell in a dark cloud;*

*2Sam. 22:10 He parted the heavens  
and came down; dark clouds were  
under his feet.*

*Ps. 18:11 He made darkness his  
covering, his canopy around him--  
the dark rain clouds of the sky.*

*Ps. 97:2 Clouds and thick darkness  
surround him; righteousness and  
justice are the foundation of his throne.*

**Light makes us see things:  
Enlightenment**

#### **4.22 LIGHT IS ENERGY.**

Light makes us see things clearly so that we may be able to walk without falling. It gives us knowledge. It is one of the means of perception. It is the major means of communication.

*2Cor. 4:6 For God, who said, "Let light shine out of darkness," made his light shine in our hearts to give us the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Christ.*

Laser beams are well known today. They are light beams with limited frequency range and have large amplitudes. These can be used to cut matter very finely and are used in cutting diamonds and used in surgery as a micro knife and also used to clean surfaces from dirt. However if misused it can destroy.

4.3 Jesus as Light: that which shows the true nature.

*John 9:5 While I am in the world, I am the light of the world."  
Here Jesus is referring to the fact that he came into the world to show how sinful mankind is and to show the way. This is how he explains this in John 3*



*John 3:19-21 This is the verdict: Light has come into the world, but men loved darkness instead of light because their deeds were evil. Everyone who does evil hates the light, and will not come into the light for fear that his deeds will be exposed. But whoever lives by the truth comes into the light, so that it may be seen plainly that what he has done has been done through God."*

*This is what Jesus did while he was on the earth. When Jesus left the world he did send another counselor who does the same thing.*

*John 16:7-11 But I tell you the truth: It is for your good that I am going away. Unless I go away, the Counselor will not come to you; but if I go, I will send him to you. When he comes, he will convict the world of guilt in regard to sin and righteousness and judgment: in regard to sin, because men do not believe in me; in regard to righteousness, because I am going to the Father, where you can see me no longer; and in regard to judgment, because the prince of this world now stands condemned.*

#### 4.4 JESUS AND LIGHT

All life depends on light from the sun (with the possible exceptions of a few organisms near deep sea vents). Photosynthetic organisms are at the bottom of the food chain and provide the chemical energy that the rest use. They also provide the oxygen needed for respiration.

Given how important light is to life, it is no wonder that there are many types of interactions between light and living organisms. Broadly speaking, these interactions can be divided into three functional groups:



### Life depends on Light



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1. Visualization and Spatial orientation. Plants and microorganisms use light to orient themselves spatially and to guide their movements or growth. Higher animals are capable of using light to image their surroundings. Nature has developed sensitive photoreceptors, such as the rhodopsin in your eye, which can convert light energy into a chemical signal.

Without Jesus, we become disoriented, incapable knowing the direction of our movement. We become random and blind.

2. Temporal orientation. Most animals and plants (including people) also use light to set their internal clocks. From the way that the light changes with time, organisms can not only tell whether it is night or day but also what time of year it is. For example, many plants use this to determine when to flower. Again, sensitive biological photoreceptors are used for this purpose.

Time and existence itself will have meaning only in Jesus

3. Conversion of light energy to chemical energy. The dominant biological process, which converts light energy into chemical energy, is photosynthesis. In addition, there are other light-powered processes in nature. For example, the enzyme DNA photolyase uses light energy to power the chemistry required for the repair of UV-damaged DNA.

Jesus is the strength and energy giver of life.

The true nature of Jesus is somehow connected with light as is seen in the following theophanies.

#### 4.41 AT TRANSFIGURATION

*Matt. 17:2 There he was transfigured before them. His face shone like the sun, and his clothes became as white as the light.*

#### 4.42 APPEARANCE TO SAUL

*2Cor. 4:6 For God, who said, "Let light shine out of darkness," made his light shine in our hearts to give us the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Christ.*

#### 4.43 THE WORD OF GOD AS LIGHT - SCRIPTURE

*2Pet. 1:19 And we have the word of the prophets made more certain, and you will do well to pay attention to it, as to a light shining in a dark place, until the day dawns and the morning star rises in your hearts.*

#### 4.5 PURPOSE OF JESUS IN INCARNATION:

*Isa. 9:2 The people walking in darkness have seen a great light; on those living in the land of the shadow of death a light has dawned.*

*Lk.1.79 "To give light to them that sit in darkness in the shadow of death, to guide our feet into the day of peace." Connection with birth of Jesus*

Purpose of light is to make us see -- to see the defects, pitfalls, mistakes, to see us as we are, to see others as they are and the world clearly. But light does not in itself condemn us- we condemn ourselves. Many people do miss this point. God is not a killer. He is gracious, compassionate and full of mercy. It this aspect that is revealed in Jesus.

*John 3:19 – 21 This is the verdict: Light has come into the world, but men loved darkness instead of light because their deeds were evil.*

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*Everyone who does evil hates the light, and will not come into the light for fear that his deeds will be exposed. But whoever lives by the truth comes into the light, so that it may be seen plainly that what he has done has been done through God."*

*Acts 26:18 to open their eyes and turn them from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan to God, so that they may receive forgiveness of sins and a place among those who are sanctified by faith in me.'*

The purpose of his incarnation is to redeem mankind from the power of Satan--to show the path, the way out

*John 8:12 When Jesus spoke again to the people, he said, "I am the light of the world. Whoever follows me will never walk in darkness, but will have the light of life."*

*John 12:35-36 Then Jesus told them, "You are going to have the light just a little while longer. Walk while you have the light, before darkness overtakes you. The man who walks in the dark does not know where he is going. Put your trust in the light while you have it, so that you may become sons of light." When he had finished speaking, Jesus left and hid himself from them.*

### 4.6 YOU ARE THE LIGHT OF THE WORLD

Jesus goes on to say that those who believe and follow him are the light of this world. He was the light while he was on the earth. When Jesus left the earth, he has anointed his elect to be the light of this world

Jesus is the source of light -- you are the light by reflection

*Matt. 5:14 -16 "You are the light of the world. A city on a hill cannot be hidden. Neither do people light a lamp and put it under a bowl. Instead they put it on its stand, and it gives light to everyone in the house. In the*

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*same way, let your light shine before men, that they may see your good deeds and praise your Father in heaven.*

*1Pet. 2:9 But you are a chosen people, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people belonging to God, that you may declare the praises of him who called you out of darkness into his wonderful light.*

There are two types of reflection:

1. Scattering: Here light falls on the object and object scatters it in all directions. We see objects by their scattered light. We can see the paper because it scatters the light.

2. Specular reflections. Here the light falling on it is reflected in an orderly fashion. It is not mixed one into the other. We do not see the reflecting object, but we see the light source. This is what a mirror does.

You can become a mirror so that Jesus can be seen in you. When you project yourself it ceases to be a mirror, you are scattering the light. When you become the object seen through your



**You can become a mirror, so that Jesus can be seen in you.**



ministry people will rarely see Jesus through you. The more orderly you reflect Jesus in your life; others will be able to see Jesus more clearly. The less light you scatter, the more you are filled with the word and transformed into the image of Jesus, the more of Jesus will be seen by others. Transformation from an opaque, rough surface to the smooth, polished mirror is accomplished by abiding in the word of God and living in the Spirit.

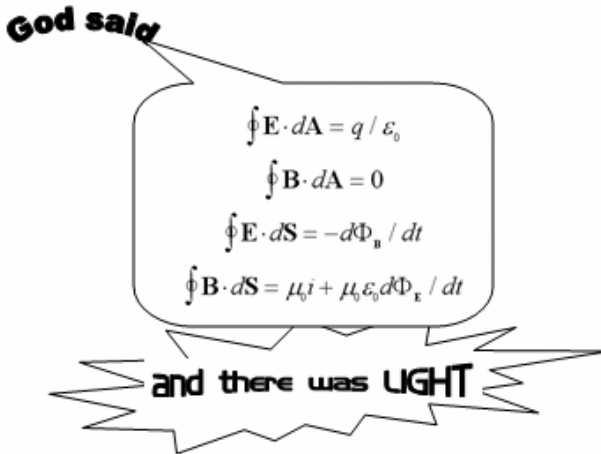
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If you are blind, light does not work for you. Those who are spiritually blind can never see the beauty of Jesus. In fact, they are so self-centered that they cannot see others at all.

*Luke 11:34 Your eye is the lamp of your body. When your eyes are good, your whole body also is full of light. But when they are bad, your body also is full of darkness.*

*Spiritual discerning*

*1Cor. 1:18 -20 For the message of the cross is foolishness to those who are perishing, but to us who are being saved it is the power of God. For it is written: "I will destroy the wisdom of the wise; the intelligence of the intelligent I will frustrate." Where is the wise man? Where is the scholar? Where is the philosopher of this age? Has not God made foolish the wisdom of the world?*



### A HERMENEUTICAL NOTE:

I have used our modern understanding of Light to interpret the meaning of "I am the light of the world". These interpretations are feasible provided we agree that Jesus being God he knew about

these facts and intended to be understood in time. At least in some cases of parables he did clearly state that. This can be seen in Matthew 13 Kingdom Parables where Jesus says:

*Mat 13:35 So was fulfilled what was spoken through the prophet: "I will open my mouth in parables, I will utter things hidden since the creation of the world."*

Was he in this place speaking the wonderful things hidden since the creation of the world?

*Mat 13:52 He said to them, "Therefore every teacher of the law who has been instructed about the kingdom of heaven is like the owner of a house who brings out of his storeroom new treasures as well as old."*

Are we privileged to bring out these hidden truths in this last age? But it is quite possible that this is not the case for every parable.

Parables and similes are used in teaching to explain a concept. These similes should not be pressed too far the extend of allegory. This will be dangerous, as we will be imposing new meanings not meant in the situation. This is particularly true of the didactic parables. Most parables are culture sensitive and context sensitive and will yield very disastrous results if interpreted out of the cultural and historical context.

Did Jesus really mean these when he said these things to his disciples at that time? Did he intend us to reinterpret it the way we do now? I leave it to the reader. But they are certainly interesting and encouraging to the believer.

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## CHAPTER FIVE

### I AM THE DOOR OF THE SHEEP

JOHN 10:7- 16



Jesus used a lot of symbols from the nomadic traditions of the Jews.

These traditions were ingrained in the Jews through the Bible.

#### 5.1 DOOR AS A SYMBOL OF ENTRY TO SAFETY

Home in all cultures symbolizes a place of safety. Going in and closing the door behind gives the members of the household security. The outside world with its hate and competition rages with violence and cruelty. At the end of this mad race, one get back home and closes the door. You are surrounded by love, protection, and care.

Traditional Arab rule is that one is beyond the law beyond the door. You can do anything inside your house. The law can wait for you outside the door. This is depicted beautifully some of the Old Testament symbolisms

## 5.2 DOOR IN PASSOVER

When Jesus spoke to the Jews about the door, the first picture that came to their mind was probably the door of the Passover night.

*Exo 12:22-23 Take a bunch of hyssop, dip it into the blood in the basin and put some of the blood on the top and on both sides of the doorframe. Not one of you shall go out the door of his house until morning. When the LORD goes through the land to strike down the Egyptians, he will see the blood on the top and sides of the doorframe and will pass over that doorway, and he will not permit the destroyer to enter your houses and strike you down.*

A door that is marked with blood, providing a blood covering.

If you are familiar with the Passover traditions and the traditions of the Middle Eastern nations one can see the similarity very easily. There are two doors to the eastern homes. One door is the door leading to the inner rooms of the house and the other door is the door that leads into the compound. The lamb is sacrificed (killed) just outside of the gate and is hung on the wooden beam of the outer gate. In the sacrifice of the Passover lamb, they were instructed to dip a bunch of hyssop and put blood



on top and on either side of the post. The bleeding of the lamb will mark the bottom of the door forming a cross. The lamb as it is being killed is the exact picture of Jesus on the cross. It is this blood that covers the sinners. All first born of the Egypt were to die. But the blood covering protects those who are within the gate with blood mark. The destroyer will not enter the gate and strike you down.

### 5.3 THE CITY GATE

Another meaning of the door that was brought to the memory of the hearer was that of the door of the city gates. All ancient cities were walled all round to protect it from invaders. These were huge towering walls several feet high so that no man can climb on it. The city gates were large massive wooden structures. These were the protection of the dwellers inside the city. Jesus is simply implying that I am the door that keeps enemies outside and keeps you alive. The most vulnerable point of the city is the gate. If that is safe, it is easy to guard the city.



### 5.4 THE CITY OF REFUGE

This concept is further strengthened by the establishment of the cities of refuge.

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*Num 35:11 select some towns to be your cities of refuge, to which a person who has killed someone accidentally may flee. Num 35:12 They will be places of refuge from the avenger, so that a person accused of murder may not die before he stands trial before the assembly.*

*Num 35:15 These six towns will be a place of refuge for Israelites, aliens and any other people living among them, so that anyone who has killed another accidentally can flee there.*

*Num 35:26-28 "But if the accused ever goes outside the limits of the city of refuge to which he has fled and the avenger of blood finds him outside the city, the avenger of blood may kill the accused without being guilty of murder. The accused must stay in his city of refuge until the death of the high priest; only after the death of the high priest may he return to his own property.*

The door of the city of refuge keeps the avenger away. Jesus is that door. He is also the High Priest who will never die. As long as we are within the city ruled by Jesus we are safe.

### 5.5 DOOR OF THE SHEEPFOLD

The imagery in the door of the sheep is directly taken from the nomadic life style. Nomads tend their sheep and move from place to place seeking supplies of water and grass. These sheep do not have a sheepfold that is permanent. They move into areas infested by wild animals that prey on the sheep. In the night, the shepherds make a fold with thorn bush in circle over a yard wide, thorny and impenetrable even by the wildest and agile of all animals. There will be a small opening through which the sheep is herded into the Kraal. This then is the only door through which the sheep may enter into the sheepfold and into safety. Then the shepherd lights a pyre of thorn and wood in front of this opening and he will himself

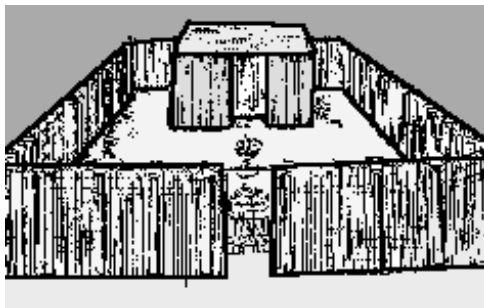
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lie down as the door. Jesus was simply describing that there is only one way to heaven and that lies through his body. Those who enter through him will find peace



The same picture can be seen in the wilderness sanctuary. The sanctuary was fully cordoned off with curtains with only one entrance. At the entrance is the altar of sacrifice. A person may enter into the house of the Lord only after sacrifice. This door is Jesus.

*Heb 10:19-20 Therefore, brothers, since we have confidence to enter the Most Holy Place by the blood of Jesus, by a new and living way opened for us through the curtain, that is, his body,*



As the sheep come in to the fold the shepherd will count them with his rod and in the morning, he will count them as they go out.

None should be found missing. No wild animal can enter inside unless the shepherd himself is killed first.

Jesus said

*John 14:6 "I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me."*

Those who enter in through Jesus the gate are safe.

*Rom 8:1-2 Therefore, there is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus, because through Christ Jesus the law of the Spirit of life set me free from the law of sin and death.*

But outside this door, there is danger.

*Gen 4:6-7 Then the LORD said to Cain, "Why are you angry? Why is your face downcast? If you do what is right, will you not be accepted? But if you do not do what is right, sin is crouching at your door; it desires to have you, but you must master it."*

Safety lies inside this door.

## **5.6 DOOR WHERE A SLAVE BECOMES A MEMBER OF THE FAMILY.**

To the settled Israel however the door meant something more than that.

*Exo 21:5-6 "But if the servant declares, 'I love my master and my wife and children and do not want to go free,' then his master must take him before the judges. He shall take him to the door or the doorpost and pierce his ear with an awl. Then he will be his servant for life.*

This is connected with the seventh year, the year of jubilee when every person who sold himself to slavery because of his debt will go back to his own. However, if during the period, he has endeared himself to the family and becomes part of the family, he can become a member of the family. This ceremony involved piercing the ears with an awl to the doorpost. He becomes a slave in the family forever.

The imagery of Jesus as the door is that you are outside the family of God where there is pain, suffering, and death that sway all the time. David once said

*Psa 84:10 Better is one day in your courts than a thousand elsewhere; I would rather be a doorkeeper in the house of my God than dwell in the tents of the wicked.*

It is better to be a servant of the Lord all our lives than is a free person into this decaying world. But then the door is the way in to become part of this Kingdom of God.

## 5.7 EARTHIANAS AS QUARANTINED

Earthians are quarantined because of deadly sin. There is another world outside of this world -- the Kingdom of Heaven where there is no sin, where there is no decay, pain, suffering or death.

There the laws of Physics are different. There everything grows from order to greater order, glory to glory. We cannot get into the city of heaven because we are bound

**The only door beyond this  
decaying physical world into the  
undecaying physical world is  
Jesus**

to this material dimension. We have been trying to get out of this

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world all the time. In the earlier days, great many sailors tried to find the end of the earth. They expected a cliff from where they could jump into another world. But there were no edge for the earth. Earth's surface has no edge, because it is closed in the third dimension. A sphere does not have any edge. We have heard the great story of the Russian astronauts last century that tried to find God in the space. They were trying to get out of this world. They went into the third dimension. There are no doors. The only door beyond this world is the door that is Jesus.

*John 10:7-9 Therefore Jesus said again, "I tell you the truth, I am the gate for the sheep. All who ever came before me were thieves and robbers, but the sheep did not listen to them. I am the gate; whoever enters through me will be saved. He will come in and go out, and find pasture.*

*John 14:6 No one comes to the Father except through me.*



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## CHAPTER SIX

### I AM THE GOOD SHEPHERD

JOHN 10.11-18



This is in fact a continuation of the pastoral symbolism of the door of the sheep. The door of the sheep is the shepherd. It is the shepherd who lies down in front of the only one door. In so doing he is laying down his life for the sheep. No wild animal can enter or even come near the camp unless the shepherd is first killed. This was a common experience of every shepherd of the time.

It was natural for the nomads to think of God as their shepherd - the Great Shepherd

So, Jacob when he blessed Joseph looks upto God as his shepherd.

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*Gen 48:15 Then he blessed Joseph and said, "May the God before whom my fathers Abraham and Isaac walked, the God who has been my shepherd all my life to this day,*

So, in the Psalm of Asaph the Choirmaster, he addresses God as the Great Shepherd who sits enthroned.

*Psa 80:1-3 Hear us, O Shepherd of Israel, you who lead Joseph like a flock; you who sit enthroned between the cherubim, shine forth before Ephraim, Benjamin and Manasseh. Awaken your might; come and save us. Restore us, O God; make your face shine upon us, that we may be saved.*

When the shepherds go from place to place, the head of the household, the Father Patriarch usually stays at one central place where there is water all the time and tracks the journey of the children, guide them, sent provisions and help as needed. This is the picture we have in Jacob's family. It was easy for the Jews to visualize God as the Father Shepherd who sits enthroned among the cherubim. This is reflected in the Hebrew author's picture:

*Heb. 13:20-21 May the God of peace, who through the blood of the eternal covenant brought back from the dead our Lord Jesus, that great Shepherd of the sheep, equip you with everything good for doing his will, and may he work in us what is pleasing to him, through Jesus Christ, to whom be glory for ever and ever. Amen*

God is the one who supplies all our needs while we who are laboring in the field requires.

When Jesus ascribed himself as the Shepherd, he was claiming also the root of David's ancestry.

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*Psa 78:70-72 He chose David his servant and took him from the sheep pens;  
from tending the sheep he brought him to be the shepherd of his people Jacob, of Israel his inheritance. And David shepherded them with integrity of heart; with skillful hands he led them.*

Much more than that there is a direct reference to the ordination of Joshua.

*Num 27:15 -17 Moses said to the LORD, "May the LORD, the God of the spirits of all mankind, appoint a man over this community to go out and come in before them, one who will lead them out and bring them in, so the Lord's people will not be like sheep without a shepherd."*

*Num 27:18 So the LORD said to Moses, "Take Joshua son of Nun, a man in whom is the spirit, and lay your hand on him".*

The Hebrew name of Jesus was same as Joshua - Yeshiva. As Joshua was ordained to lead the people from the wilderness into Canaan, so God has ordained Jesus to lead mankind from the wilderness of this life to the Kingdom of Heaven.

These are some of the subtle tones that reverberated in the minds and spirits of those who heard Jesus' claim "I am the Good Shepherd".

### **6.1 GOOD SHEPHERD LAYS DOWN HIS LIFE FOR THE SHEEP**

But then Jesus explained that he is not just the Great Shepherd Patriarch who sits in comfort at home with all the servants and pomp and splendor, but also one who came down to the earth, in the field to search, to care and tend the young and the old.

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David was a shepherd and he knew exactly what it meant to be a good shepherd. Read what he says about himself.

*1 Sam 17:34 -35 But David said to Saul, "Your servant has been keeping his father's sheep. When a lion or a bear came and carried off a sheep from the flock, I went after it, struck it and rescued the sheep from its mouth. When it turned on me, I seized it by its hair, struck it and killed it.*

So, Jesus explains himself:

*John 10:11-13 "I am the good shepherd. The good shepherd lays down his life for the sheep. The hired hand is not the shepherd who owns the sheep. So when he sees the wolf coming, he abandons the sheep and runs away. Then the wolf attacks the flock and scatters it. The man runs away because he is a hired hand and cares nothing for the sheep.*

*Isa 40:11 He tends his flock like a shepherd: He gathers the lambs in his arms and carries them close to his heart; he gently leads those that have young.*

In contrast we have the characteristics of a bad shepherd who is a hireling is described for us in Ezekiel:

*Ezek 34:2-4 "Son of man, prophesy against the shepherds of Israel; prophesy and say to them: 'This is what the Sovereign LORD says: Woe to the shepherds of Israel who only take care of themselves! Should not shepherds take care of the flock? You eat the curds, clothe yourselves with the wool and slaughter the choice animals, but you do not take care of the flock. You have not strengthened the weak or healed the sick or bound up the injured. You have not brought back the strays or searched for the lost. You have ruled them harshly and brutally.*

This is repeated again in Zechariah:

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*Zec 11:16 For I am going to raise up a shepherd over the land who will not care for the lost, or seek the young, or heal the injured, or feed the healthy, but will eat the meat of the choice sheep, tearing off their hoofs.*

Notice the characteristics

He will not care for the strayed or search for the lost

He will not seek the young

He will not strengthen the weak or heal the sick or injured

He will not feed the healthy instead

He eats the meat of the choice sheep, tearing off their hoofs.

One characteristic of all shepherd tribes (this applies also to cowherd tribes also) is that they will not eat the meat of the sheep. This may sound queer. It is a taboo among all shepherding tribes to kill a sheep for meat, even when they are dying of hunger. Only an unethical shepherd will kill to eat. The only time they normally have meat for food is when there is a sacrifice. Then the meat is to be shared among all the members of the tribe. They may eat the meat of a sheep who is dying or who cannot walk and therefore follow the pasture as the group move from place to place. If an animal falls down while in transit and it is not a lamb, the shepherds may eat its flesh instead of leaving the animal behind and wild animals preying on it. That is why the bad shepherd tears off the hoof of the sheep - so that the sheep may fall down and it may become an excuse.

So, when Jesus said I am the good shepherd he meant all these:

He will care for the strayed or search for the lost

He will seek the young

He will strengthen the weak or heal the sick or injured

He will feed the healthy

## 6.2 TO SEEK AND TO FIND

Our Lord in the story of the lost sheep beautifully paints the picture of the good shepherd. He cares for the lost. It does not matter whether the losing was the mistake of the sheep or of anybody else. The good shepherd goes after it. One of the major differences between other religions and Christianity is that gods of all other religions want men to seek after God. Jesus gives us a totally different picture of God. Man cannot really seek God nor can he find God of his own. This is simply because he is dead spiritually and cannot spiritually discern. Man does not even know that he is lost and caught up in a bush. Man is dead spiritually and dead cannot get up and run after the shepherd. So, we have the picture of a God who comes down in search of man.

Man cannot, of his own, understand God. How can a finite being comprehend the infinite? The only way man is able to know God is when God reveals himself to man. God being infinite is able to reveal himself to man. This he did through Jesus.

*Mat 18:12-14 "What do you think? If a man owns a hundred sheep, and one of them wanders away, will he not leave the ninety-nine on the hills and go to look for the one that wandered off? And if he finds it, I tell you the truth, he is happier about that one sheep than about the ninety-nine that did not wander off. In the same way your Father in heaven is not willing that any of these little ones should be lost."*

## 6.3 SHEPHERD KNOWS HIS OWN AND SHEEP KNOWS HIS VOICE

*John 10:2-5 The man who enters by the gate is the shepherd of his sheep. The watchman opens the gate for him, and the sheep listen to his voice. He calls his own sheep by name and leads them out. When he has brought out*

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*all his own, he goes on ahead of them, and his sheep follow him because they know his voice. But they will never follow a stranger; in fact, they will run away from him because they do not recognize a stranger's voice."*



In actual practice, this indeed is the case. The shepherd knows each one of his sheep in person. He can call them by name. As he leads the group, they follow the call of the shepherd. They distinguish the call of the shepherd from other.

Do you know your shepherd?

*John 10:8 All who ever came before me were thieves and robbers, but the sheep did not listen to them.*

There have been messiahs before Jesus. There have been messiahs after Jesus. Even today, there are many who claim to be God. This is what Jesus emphasizes. Jesus is the Shepherd. Those who came before him and there who claimed after him and still claiming godhead are thieves and robbers. The proof is the ultimate sacrifice. They have not laid down their lives for the sheep. Indeed, they cannot. They simply feed on the meat of the choice sheep.

*John 10:10 The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy; I have come that they may have life, and have it to the full.*

#### 6.4 I HAVE OTHER SHEEP

In his high priestly prayer just before he was laying down his life for many, he declared the universality of his sheepfold. Until then messiah was the King of the Jews only. Now Jesus declares that his mesiaship is far beyond the narrow nationalistic boundaries that were set by the Jews. The call of the Jews was for the redemption of mankind. So, he declares to the puzzled disciples:

*John 10:16 I have other sheep that are not of this sheep pen. I must bring them also. They too will listen to my voice, and there shall be one flock and one shepherd.*

*Eph 2:15-18 His purpose was to create in himself one new man out of the two, thus making peace, and in this one body to reconcile both of them to God through the cross, by which he put to death their hostility. He came and preached peace to you who were far away and peace to those who were near. For through him we both have access to the Father by one Spirit.*

But this was realized painfully through the calling of a new Apostle - Saul turned Paul.

*Eph 3:2-7 Surely you have heard about the administration of God's grace that was given to me for you, that is, the mystery made known to me by revelation, as I have already written briefly. In reading this, then, you will be able to understand my insight into the mystery of Christ, which was not made known to men in other generations as it has now been revealed by the Spirit to God's holy apostles and prophets. This mystery is that through the gospel the Gentiles are heirs together with Israel, members together of one body, and sharers together in the promise in Christ Jesus. I became a servant of this gospel by the gift of God's grace given me through the working of his power.*



## 6.5 SONG OF THE SHEEP PS. 23

*Psa 23:1-4 The LORD is my shepherd, I shall not be in want He makes me lie down in green pastures, he leads me beside quiet waters, he restores my soul. He guides me in paths of righteousness for his name's sake. Even though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil, for you are with me; your rod and your staff, they comfort me.*

*To the elders among you, I appeal as a fellow elder, a witness of Christ's sufferings and one who also will share in the glory to be revealed:*

*Be shepherds of God's flock that is under your care, serving as overseers-- not because you must, but because you are willing, as God wants you to be; not greedy for money, but eager to serve; not lording it over those entrusted to you, but being examples to the flock. And when the Chief Shepherd appears, you will receive the crown of glory that will never fade away. 1 Pet. 5:1-4*

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## CHAPTER SEVEN

### I AM THE RESURRECTION AND THE LIFE

#### 1 INTRODUCTION

*John 11:24 Martha answered, "I know he will rise again in the resurrection at the last day."*

*John 11:25 Jesus said to her, "I am the resurrection and the life. He who believes in me will live, even though he dies;*

*John 11:26 and whoever lives and believes in me will never die. Do you believe this?"*

The context is the occasion of the death of Lazarus. Jesus himself cried when he was faced with the death of one his close associates. He was touched by the gruesomeness of the fact of death. If it was not a serious thing, there was no reason for Jesus to cry. He could have explained to Mary that it is only a passing body. Let it rot. Lazarus is still there, though you cannot see him now. No. That is not what Jesus said. He went on to do something to restore Lazarus. Evidently, this was not the resurrection, since resurrection cannot take place until the power of resurrection is released by Jesus' resurrection. Lazarus died again declaring that the power of death is still present. Resurrection is not accomplished yet. But we do look forward to it.

#### 1.2. THE OLD TESTAMENT CONNECTION

The Old Testament in their earlier part does not specifically mention anything about resurrection. But allusions to it may be

found scattered all over, so that we may assume that it was tacitly acknowledged.

For example:

*Gen 22:5 Abraham said to his servants, "Stay here with the donkey while I and the boy go over there. We will worship and then we will come back to you."*

Author of Hebrew explains this statement as Abraham's faith in God's ability to bring back dead.

*Heb 11:19 Abraham reasoned that God could raise the dead, and figuratively speaking, he did receive Isaac back from death.*

Psalmist declares this concept of resurrection:

*Psa 49:15 But God will redeem my life from the grave; he will surely take me to himself.*

Isaiah prophesied about the resurrection of the dead at the end time before the day of the Lord, the judgment day.

*Isa 26:19 But your dead will live; their bodies will rise. You who dwell in the dust, wake up and shout for joy. Your dew is like the dew of the morning; the earth will give birth to her dead.*

The latter verses go on to the description of the Judgment day indicating a time frame for resurrection.

Another clear reference to the resurrection at the end is given in Daniel.

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*Dan 12:13 "As for you, go your way till the end. You will rest, and then at the end of the days you will rise to receive your allotted inheritance."*

But Job made the greatest declaration of faith in resurrection:

*Job 19:25-27 I know that my Redeemer lives, and that in the end he will stand upon the earth. And after my skin has been destroyed, yet in my flesh I will see God; I myself will see him with my own eyes--I, and not another. How my heart yearns within me!*

It was however clearly taught in the Apocryphal books of the Old Testament especially in the Book of Wisdom 3:1 and 4:15 and also in the II Maccabees 7:14,23, and 29)

The doctrine of resurrection was believed by the common Jew and this can be inferred from the reference in the Gospel.

Among the devout Jews, there were two groups of people Sadducees and the Pharisees. Pharisees firmly believed in the resurrection of man in flesh - i.e., the bodily resurrection. However, Sadducees did not believe in that. They were the rationalists-- liberal theologians of the time. Among them were varying shades of teachings -- starting from the pure materialistic interpretation of annihilation of man with death to the resurrection of the spirit of man. This they achieved by clever hermeneutics. Sadducees did not give much authority to the prophets any way. In a liberal interpretation of the text, scripture that alludes to resurrection could be laid off either as poetic utterances or imagination of a pious man or wishful thinking and or as contextually untenable. However, every Jew reiterates the concept in his morning and evening prayers that repeats such terms as "from age to age", "In ages to come" and "world without end." Pharisees on the other

hand believed that even the denial of the doctrine of resurrection of the dead would bring eternal damnation.

So, the Sadducees raised the question before Jesus. The problem presented was typical of the Saduceean approach. It was more a ridicule than inquiry.

*Mat 22:23-31 That same day the Sadducees, who say there is no resurrection, came to him with a question.*

*"Teacher," they said, "Moses told us that if a man dies without having children, his brother must marry the widow and have children for him. Now there were seven brothers among us. The first one married and died, and since he had no children, he left his wife to his brother. The same thing happened to the second and third brother, right on down to the seventh. Finally, the woman died. Now then, at the resurrection, whose wife will she be of the seven, since all of them were married to her?"*

*Jesus replied, "You are in error because you do not know the Scriptures or the power of God. At the resurrection people will neither marry nor be given in marriage; they will be like the angels in heaven. But about the resurrection of the dead--have you not read what God said to you, 'I am the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob' ? He is not the God of the dead but of the living."*

*Luke 20:34-36 Jesus replied, "The people of this age marry and are given in marriage. But those who are considered worthy of taking part in that age and in the resurrection from the dead will neither marry nor be given in marriage, and they can no longer die; for they are like the angels. They are God's children, since they are children of the resurrection.*

Reply of Jesus was cleverer than their question. He points out to their ignorance of the other world. It was their inability to rise above the fallen nature that made them incapable of seeing the greater truth. Mathew's version emphasizes the immortality of the

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soul. Abraham, Isaac and Jacob are not dead. They are still living. Luke's version points out to the bodily resurrection that is to come in a later time. Yes man will be resurrected in body. But the relationships between man and woman and man and man are different, because they are the children of resurrection. They are like angels because they do not reproduce any more. Therefore, the question of marriage does not arise.

Paul was a Pharisee and he claimed it to the end. So there is no question of interpreting any of his statements regarding resurrection other than bodily resurrection. In fact, at least in one occasion he used his pharisaic faith in resurrection to win over the Pharisee group against the Sadducees in his trial.

*Acts 23:6-8 Then Paul, knowing that some of them were Sadducees and the others Pharisees, called out in the Sanhedrin, "My brothers, I am a Pharisee, the son of a Pharisee. I stand on trial because of my hope in the resurrection of the dead." When he said this, a dispute broke out between the Pharisees and the Sadducees, and the assembly was divided. (The Sadducees say that there is no resurrection, and that there are neither angels nor spirits, but the Pharisees acknowledge them all.)*

Then Paul unequivocally states that he has the same hope as that of the Pharisees.

*Acts 24:15 and I have the same hope in God as these men, that there will be a resurrection of both the righteous and the wicked.*

Any attempt to distort Paul's teachings to mean anything other than bodily resurrection would be a distortion of historical reality.

## **2. WHAT IS DEATH AND WHAT IS RESURRECTION?**

The Greek word for resurrection is 'anastasis which when translated means to make to stand or rise up. The evident meaning is to revert back or bring back to the original form.

### **2.1 RATIONALISM AND CAUSE EFFECT CONFUSION**

In the recent years rationalists have come up with the interpretation that "raised from the death does not mean actual bodily resurrection." The question is certainly critical and the Apostles actually grappled with those questions. This modern attempt is based on three tendencies.

#### **2.11 HOW CAN THE BODY BE RESURRECTED?**

First, it is based on skepticism regarding bodily resurrection. How can a body that is decayed be formed again into the same original form? We see death around. We bury our dead. Some are burned or even eaten by animals, birds and fishes. How are we to expect a reformation of these bodies back to human form?

The whole universe we know is in a flux. The external world of matter consists of matter in incessant motion. We know that body changes with time. The cells die and are replaced constantly. Living organisms grow in size, while they retain the essential form. But each individual has his or her unique form. What form each individual has is determined by two factors. The first factor decides the species form and the second is unique to each individual. If molecules are constantly changing, body is constantly changing. It is said that our body is completely changed every three years. Almost all our molecules are replaced by another similar one at the right place. After 60 years after 20 such cycles of change, we still



have our eyes, ears, noses, and vital organs in the same relative place. There are changes in size and slight variations in shape. I have developed a bulging abdomen, while my athletic friend has very strong muscles.

What makes this constancy of form with variations? Evidently our body is programmed somewhere so that cells are produced in exactly same way as and when required and placed in the right place. Such data is not body but it produces the body. It is a code. The body can be regenerated or recreated from the code. The code changes to some extent from person to person and is actually determined by the person. It is decided by the life style and thought pattern and state of a person in his interaction with the material world and the spiritual world. This is unique to every person in that sense. The body code therefore is in the soul. Body is essentially relational and positional matter. Evidently our body is programmed somewhere so that cells are produced in exactly same way as and when required and placed in the right place. Such data is not body but it produces the body. It is a code. It is part of his personality genetically started and developed by the uniqueness of person. Even if the body is totally destroyed, the soul will be able to recreate the body. This explains the Christian concept of resurrection.


*"God will bring with him those who have fallen asleep.....And the dead in Christ will rise first, then we who are alive, who are left shall be caught up together with them in the clouds" (2 Thess. 13-18)*

Pharisees explained this in a mythical form in the following way. There is a small bone in the spine that is indestructible, and from this the whole man can be reconstructed. This may seem ridiculous. But we know today that the entire body can be


reconstructed from one cell from a dead body. All information necessary are encoded in every human cell.

## 2.12 MAN WITHOUT BODY?

Second, it is the influence of the New Age, which is nothing but the modern version of Hinduism. There are several variations in this group. Basically, they consider that man is not his body. Man is the person or the personality or soul (Atma) that reside in the body. Body is only a garment. The soul may therefore change their outer garment and take another form. In fact, the form of the body is selected according to the state of the soul. They therefore consider man a spirit being. All other outer forms are embellishments that the soul brings on due to his ignorance of his real state, which is the identity with Godhead.



**Man is a Trinity: Body, Soul and Spirit. Only when all the three are joined together he is Man. Man cannot exist apart from all these three parts, even if each part can exist separately.**




This is contrary to the basic Christian understanding of what man is. Man was created as a result of and consequent to the creation of the body. Human form is fundamental to man. Person is Body, soul and spirit. Only when all the three are joined together he is man. Any one part kept apart is not man. You may keep the dead body preserved for years. But that is not man. You may have the soul kept separate in its own dimension, but that is not man.

## 2.13 IS MATTER EVIL?


Third, it is based on the misunderstanding of the nature of Matter as understood by the scripture. Matter is not considered evil in Christian thought. Far from it. It is considered good.

After the creation of matter and all things, God looked at them and said, "They are good". *"And God saw that it was good."*

But matter is now under bondage of decay.



**God placed the Human body - hence the material realm - under the bondage of decay and death, because of Sin. He has subjected it with a hope that He will redeem them, some day.**



*Gen 3:17-19 To Adam he said,*

*"Because you listened to your wife and ate from the tree about which I commanded you, 'You must not eat of it,' "Cursed is the ground because of you; through painful toil you will eat of it all the days of your life It will produce thorns and thistles for you, and you will eat the plants of the field. By the sweat of your brow you will eat your food until you return to the ground, since from it you were taken; for dust you are and to dust you will return."*

The direct and emphatic teaching of the bible is that earth and all matter is kept in bondage of decay and death because of the sin of man.

## 2.2 DID ADAM DIE THAT DAY?

The contention that the Biblical concept of the resurrection involves a spiritual rising of man out of sin-death, [i.e. separation from God caused by sin]; a restoration of man to the presence of God

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But we need to go a step further. Sin has alienated man from God. It is this alienation that eventually leads to death.

In Genesis 2:15-17 God told man concerning the fruit of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil "in the day you eat thereof you will surely die." Man and woman ate of the fruit; did they die that day? Amazingly, most people will say "No!" because Adam and Eve did not die physically after they ate the forbidden fruit. But this is not the whole story.

The Argument usually presented is: " If Adam and Eve did not die the day they ate, then Satan told the truth and God lied! God said you would die in the day you eat, Satan said you will not surely die, Genesis 3:1ff. Who told the truth to Adam and Eve? Unless one can find Adam and Eve physically dead in Genesis 2-3 then the death they died was spiritual and not physical!" This may sound simple logic. But is it?

For one thing, "on that day " does not even imply a 24-hour day. Even today Arabic word "Yom" is used to denote a time span. Even in English language common use, it implies a period only. It simply means because of the disobedience, death will come on you. Only a legalistic hermeneutics will permit a 24-hour day period. Elsewhere Peter makes this concept clear.

*2 Pet 3:8 But do not forget this one thing, dear friends: With the Lord a day is like a thousand years, and a thousand years are like a day.*

Peter was talking about the second coming of our Lord.

How long did Adam live?

*Gen 5:5 Altogether, Adam lived 930 years, and then he died.*

Did Adam die in that day? In fact, death came the instant Adam disobeyed. Decay and death started with disobedience. The fact that Adam and Eve were driven out of the Garden of Eden and were kept from entering it was only the great mercy of God.

A sinful person with a decaying body will be living in death if dissolution did not come and release man from this body.

*"He must not be allowed to reach out his hand and take also from the tree of life and eat, and live forever."*

*Gen 3:23-24 So the LORD God banished him from the Garden of Eden to work the ground from which he had been taken." After he drove the man out, he placed on the east side of the Garden of Eden cherubim and a flaming sword flashing back and forth to guard the way to the tree of life.*

There is an interesting story of a situation when the god of death went on strike in Hindu mythology. People were getting old and feeble. But death would not come.

To live in decay even under regeneration that continues to decay will be a life of pain, suffering and misery. The situation is one that we face even today. We could prolong the life to



**God in his mercy provided death for Man.**



a great extent with medicines. But does that help in alleviation of suffering? It brings back to memory the science fiction that I have read where an elixir of immortality was discovered. Elixir of immortality is not a solution to the dissolving decaying world. It will only aggravate the situation. Was it mercy or punishment that God drove Adam and Eve out of Eden?

Even after the disobedience, we see God seeking Adam. It was God who provided the garment of skin for Adam and Eve. God even talked to Cain and gives him counsel. God was not separated from man. Adam was still God's son. But he has subjected himself to death by sinning. God unlike a spoiling father refused to condone the sin and live with it. Adam has to take the consequence of his own action. Adam created his own environment. We all build our own bodies the way we eat, act and behave. We take the consequence of our own actions in our bodies as well as in our spirit and soul.

### 2.3 WHAT IS DEATH IN THE BIBLICAL SENSE?

Death therefore in the biblical sense is the process of decay leading to the dissolution of body from soul and spirit. This is the consequence of disobedience and sin. Hence, we have the emphatic statement.

*Rom 6:23 For the wages of sin is death.*

Separation and assertion of independence from God is not death in itself, it is the cause of death that finally brings to the end a moral death, a spiritual death and finally bodily death. Wages are paid at the end of the service period not before. This death is in the total man - body, soul and spirit.

James summarizes this in the most beautiful way thus:

*James 1:14-15 but each one is tempted when, by his own evil desire, he is dragged away and enticed. Then, after desire has conceived, it gives birth to sin; and sin, when it is full-grown, gives birth to death.*

So also, Paul reiterates thus:

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*Rom 7:5 For when we were controlled by the sinful nature, the sinful passions aroused by the law were at work in our bodies, so that we bore fruit for death.*

*Rom 7:24 What a wretched man I am! Who will rescue me from this body of death?*

(Evidently Paul refers to the death in the body and not of spirit)

*1 Cor 15:56 The sting of death is sin, and the power of sin is the law.*

### **3. CREATION ITSELF WILL BE LIBERATED:**

#### **Full implication of resurrection**

It is this wholesome manhood that Jesus regained through his cross and resurrection.

In Jesus we not only have the resurrection and redemption of our bodies, he also obtained the redemption of the law of decay and death on the material world.

Let me make this point clear.

*Rom 8:19-25 The creation waits in eager expectation for the sons of God to be revealed. For the creation was subjected to frustration, not by its own choice, but by the will of the one who subjected it, in hope that the creation itself will be liberated from its bondage to decay and brought into the glorious freedom of the children of God. We know that the whole creation has been groaning as in the pains of childbirth right up to the present time. Not only so, but we ourselves, who have the firstfruits of the Spirit, groan inwardly as we wait eagerly for our adoption as sons, the redemption of our bodies. For in this hope we were saved. But hope that is seen is no hope at all. Who hopes for what he already has? But if we hope for what we do not yet have, we wait for it patiently.*

The appearance of the sons of God - i.e. the redeemed people with redeemed bodies is a prerequisite to the material world to be liberated from the law of decay. See that these two are directly related. Because of the sin of man, the universe where we live in is subjected to decay and dissolution. The reverse action will take place when mankind is redeemed.

**Jesus will one day redeem, not only mankind, but also the whole creation from the bondage of decay.**

What is this body that Paul talks about?

What is this law that Paul talks about?

He is talking about the bodies that we now possess since we are eagerly waiting for the redemption of this body. The context is the creation - material, physical matter, the corporeal flesh and blood.

Creation itself will be liberated from its bondage to decay

One fundamental law of Physics, which is not a priori, but is empirical and is not found violated, is the second law of thermodynamics. This law in simple layman terms is that everything goes from order to disorder. We can build a highly ordered system - a car, a machine, a computer anything - but in time it will decay and nothing other than an intelligent being can restore order from this disorder. That is a universal law today. In scientific terms, the movement from order to disorder is called increase in Entropy. Decrease in entropy means it goes from order to greater order. If entropy remains same, no order is created nor any disorder is created in any change. In that case, changes can



only be effected by the intervention of intelligence. In the current universe where we live entropy is always increasing. But it need not be so. There is no reason why it should not have been the other way round. The world could have gone from order to greater order by itself without the intervention of an intelligent agency. It must have been that way before the fall of Adam. Or at least the entropy would have remained constant when Adam entered the scene and Adam had the ability to choose the law of his universe. He favored the increase in entropy bringing in dissipation of energy and decay and death. It is this reversion that Paul refers to as "creation was subjected to frustration"; "that the creation itself will be liberated from its bondage to decay"

Notice again that Paul speaks of redemption of our bodies as the sign of becoming sons of God by adoption.

When Jesus said, "I am the resurrection and the life" he was talking about the resurrection of man as a wholesome being. Instead of "death reigning in our bodies" i.e. on the matter as it does today, Jesus brings life to the mortal bodies.

*Rom 6:9-10 For we know that since Christ was raised from the dead, he cannot die again; death no longer has mastery over him. The death he died, he died to sin once for all; but the life he lives, he lives to God.*

Did Jesus bring life? We do not see it. As it was with death, so it is with life. The resurrection power is released and it started at the tomb of Jesus. According to normal law of decay, Jesus' body would have been decayed. But it did not. What happened in that tomb was the greatest violation of the second law of thermodynamics - the law of order to disorder. Instead, it went from a decaying body into a non-decaying imperishable body. There was a reversal of the inviolable law of entropy in the tomb of

Jerusalem 2000 years ago. It is this resurrection power that Jesus offers to every believer. A believer is not resurrected immediately. But the force of decay is abated. But for the realization of this into reality - we have to wait for it. Resurrection is not an accomplished fact for man yet. It is an offer. It starts the minute one puts his faith in Jesus Christ.

*1 Cor 15:22 For as in Adam all die, so in Christ all will be made alive.*

The same choice that Adam had is still with man. Will you choose life?

*John 11:25-26 Jesus said to her, "I am the resurrection and the life. He who believes in me will live, even though he dies; and whoever lives and believes in me will never die. Do you believe this?"*

#### **4. REALIZATION OF RESURRECTION.**

We are still awaiting this realization, even though we have the Holy Spirit within us.

Don't be led astray by those who profess that the resurrection has taken place. Paul has clearly warned us against such false teachers.

*2 Tim 2:15-18 Do your best to present yourself to God as one approved, a workman who does not need to be ashamed and who correctly handles the word of truth.*

*Avoid godless chatter, because those who indulge in it will become more and more ungodly. Their teaching will spread like gangrene. Among them are Hymenaeus and Philetus, who have wandered away from the truth. They say that the resurrection has already taken place, and they destroy the faith of some.*

We wait for this even today.

*Rom 8:23-25 Not only so, but we ourselves, who have the firstfruits of the Spirit, groan inwardly as we wait eagerly for our adoption as sons, the redemption of our bodies. For in this hope we were saved. But hope that is seen is no hope at all. Who hopes for what he already has? But if we hope for what we do not yet have, we wait for it patiently.*

There are today a large number of realised eschatologists. These are essentially people who have been led astray by the interpretations of times and periods. They were trying to predict the coming of Christ and they failed every time. If Christ did not come when they predicted it what are they to do. Reinterpret the coming of Christ to fit their timing. So, they declared that Jesus has come. But where is he? The answer is "You can't see him. He has come in the spirit. He will not come in person. Resurrection has been achieved. Resurrection is not bodily resurrection but spirit." They reinterpret scripture to fit their failures.

## 5. RESURRECTED JESUS

### 5.1 DID JESUS RESURRECT IN BODY?

Ultimately the resurrection is to be related and understood in terms of the resurrection of Jesus. Jesus was the New Adam. He is the first fruit of resurrection.

The first evidence of resurrection was the empty tomb.  
He is Risen

*Mat 27:63-64 "Sir," they said, "we remember that while he was still alive that deceiver said, 'After three days I will rise again.' So give the order for the tomb to be made secure until the third day.*

The priests and the Pharisees understood the resurrection as bodily resurrection as they secured the tomb.

*Acts 1:3-4 After his suffering, he showed himself to these men and gave many convincing proofs that he was alive. He appeared to them over a period of forty days and spoke about the kingdom of God.  
On one occasion, while he was eating with them,....*

Basic thrust of Apostolic teaching was based on the bodily resurrection. Otherwise, they were basing their appeal on hallucination. Or if Jesus took up the body and showed it to them to prove his resurrection, Jesus was lying to them, end justifying the means, something which Jesus vehemently objected to. Was Jesus fooling his disciples; when he showed his hands; or when he ascended into heaven before his disciples? What is the significance of the empty tomb and the winding clothes left behind?

*John 20:20 After he said this, he showed them his hands and side. The disciples were overjoyed when they saw the Lord.*

He showed them his hands and his sides

*John 20:24-27 Now Thomas (called Didymus), one of the Twelve, was not with the disciples when Jesus came. So the other disciples told him, "We have seen the Lord!" But he said to them, "Unless I see the nail marks in his hands and put my finger where the nails were, and put my hand into his side, I will not believe it." A week later his disciples were in the house again, and Thomas was with them. Though the doors were locked, Jesus came and stood among them and said, "Peace be with you!" Then he said to Thomas, "Put your finger here; see my hands. Reach out your hand and put it into my side. Stop doubting and believe."*

## 5.2 WHAT TYPE OF BODY WAS IT?

We notice that the resurrected body was more than the natural body with which he died.

First Jesus could never die. This body is not a decaying body. It is immortal, imperishable. When we say a body is imperishable, it simply means that the order in it could never become more disorder. It could grow from order to order. Indeed, it is this that Jesus gives to every believer through the abiding of His Spirit within us.

*2 Cor 3:18 And we, who with unveiled faces all reflect the Lord's glory, are being transformed into his likeness with ever-increasing glory, which comes from the Lord, who is the Spirit.*



**The resurrected body is not only free from decay and death, but also exists in super dimensions beyond the material dimension.**

**Being transformed into his likeness**



Jesus' body after resurrection was not ordinary three-dimensional body. He could enter the closed rooms and appear and disappear. Yet, the body was material and real. This we know is possible only when the body exists in multidimensional. Scripture uses the term spiritual dimension. The resurrected body exists not only in material dimension but also in the spiritual dimension. This transformation is what Paul describes.

*1 Cor 15:35-50 But someone may ask, "How are the dead raised? With what kind of body will they come?" How foolish! What you sow does not*

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*come to life unless it dies. When you sow, you do not plant the body that will be, but just a seed, perhaps of wheat or of something else. But God gives it a body as he has determined, and to each kind of seed he gives its own body. All flesh is not the same: Men have one kind of flesh, animals have another, birds another and fish another. There are also heavenly bodies and there are earthly bodies; but the splendor of the heavenly bodies is one kind, and the splendor of the earthly bodies is another. The sun has one kind of splendor, the moon another and the stars another; and star differs from star in splendor.*

*So will it be with the resurrection of the dead. The body that is sown is perishable, it is raised imperishable; it is sown in dishonor, it is raised in glory; it is sown in weakness, it is raised in power; it is sown a natural body, it is raised a spiritual body. If there is a natural body, there is also a spiritual body. So it is written: "The first man Adam became a living being" ; the last Adam, a life-giving spirit. The spiritual did not come first, but the natural, and after that the spiritual. The first man was of the dust of the earth, the second man from heaven. As was the earthly man, so are those who are of the earth; and as is the man from heaven, so also are those who are of heaven. And just as we have borne the likeness of the earthly man, so shall we bear the likeness of the man from heaven. I declare to you, brothers, that flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God, nor does the perishable inherit the imperishable.*

This transformation happens as a translation, in a twinkling of an eye.

*1 Cor 15:51-57 Listen, I tell you a mystery: We will not all sleep, but we will all be changed-- in a flash, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet. For the trumpet will sound, the dead will be raised imperishable, and we will be changed. For the perishable must clothe itself with the imperishable, and the mortal with immortality. When the perishable has been clothed with the imperishable, and the mortal with immortality, then*

*the saying that is written will come true: "Death has been swallowed up in victory." "Where, O death, is your victory? Where, O death, is your sting?" The sting of death is sin, and the power of sin is the law. But thanks be to God! He gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ.*

The Trumpet will sound


### 5.3 EACH IN ITS TURN

Jesus was the first fruit. What he is is what we will be. Eternal life (the life giving spirit within us) is already within us. But its work will be completed on his appearance.


There are several resurrections, as Paul makes clear:

*1 Cor 15:23 But each in his own turn: Christ, the firstfruits; then, when he comes, those who belong to him.*

The resurrection evidently occur only when Jesus come. Then it will be the turn of all those who belong to him. Revelations indicates that the unbelievers are raised from the death only after another 1000 years.



**The redemption does not occur in one step. It is in steps.  
Each in its turn.**



*Rev 20:5 (The rest of the dead did not come to life until the thousand years were ended.) This is the first resurrection.*

There is no confusion here.

- First Christ.
- Then those Old Testament Saints.
- Then the Believers who died before.
- Then the Believers, who are alive.
- Then all the dead just and the unjust.
- Then comes the resurrection of the material world as we have seen earlier. The whole universe bound in decay will be liberated from that bondage. This is the final event.

*1 Cor 15:26 The last enemy to be destroyed is death.*

Death has been overcome.

#### **5.4 RESURRECTION OF THE WICKED**

*Rev 20:5 (The rest of the dead did not come to life until the thousand years were ended.) This is the first resurrection.*

Then after a thousand years, the rest of the dead came to life. These are not the believers. Then

*Rev 20:13 The sea gave up the dead that were in it, and death and Hades gave up the dead that were in them, and each person was judged according to what he had done.*

Here a group of righteous men is added to the list of life as we see in Matthew.

*Mat 25:31-36 "When the Son of Man comes in his glory, and all the angels with him, he will sit on his throne in heavenly glory." All the nations will be gathered before him, and he will separate the people one from another as a shepherd separates the sheep from the goats. He will put the sheep on his right and the goats on his left. "Then the King will say to those on his right, 'Come, you who are blessed by my Father; take*



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*your inheritance, the kingdom prepared for you since the creation of the world. For I was hungry and you gave me something to eat, I was thirsty and you gave me something to drink, I was a stranger and you invited me in, I needed clothes and you clothed me, I was sick and you looked after me, I was in prison and you came to visit me.'*

*Mat 25:41 "Then he will say to those on his left, 'Depart from me, you who are cursed, into the eternal fire prepared for the devil and his angels.*

They were not asked the question whether they believed in Jesus or not. These righteous inherited the earth, while the redeemed entered into their rest already. The implication is that they were eventually added into the redeemed through certainly the blood of Jesus.

When God counts iniquity, can anyone stand? For the ultimate redemption of the material universe to happen all evil must be removed from this universe. As long as evil men are there in this universe this cannot be achieved. Hence, the solution proposed in the Bible is to remove them into another universe - Hades. It is across the bottomless pit - the blackhole. It opens up into another universe filled with the concentrated evil men from this world. They still have life, with a decaying body. They have willed it themselves. This is the second death.

*Rev 20:6 Blessed and holy are those who have part in the first resurrection. The second death has no power over them, but they will be priests of God and of Christ and will reign with him for a thousand years.*  
*Rev 20:14-15 Then death and Hades were thrown into the lake of fire. The lake of fire is the second death. If anyone's name was not found written in the book of life, he was thrown into the lake of fire.*

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Has God got a plan for their salvation? Bible never discloses that. As far as we know it is another world of pain and suffering worse than we have now. But the life in its fullness is given only to the redeemed through the blood of Jesus. That is why Jesus add the word "and Life" He that has the Son has life. It is assured to every one that believes.

*John 11:25-26 Jesus said to her, "I am the resurrection and the life. He who believes in me will live, even though he dies; and whoever lives and believes in me will never die. Do you believe this?"*

## CHAPTER EIGHT

### I AM THE WAY, THE TRUTH AND THE LIFE

#### I AM THE WAY

##### 1. INTRODUCTION

*John 14:1-6 "Do not let your hearts be troubled. Trust in God ; trust also in me. In my Father's house are many rooms; if it were not so, I would have told you. I am going there to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come back and take you to be with me that you also may be where I am. You know the way to the place where I am going." Thomas said to him, "Lord, we don't know where you are going, so how can we know the way?" Jesus answered, "I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me.*

The context of the statement gives us what Jesus is talking about. Jesus declares that he is going to prepare a place for his followers so that he will be able to take them to him. Abruptly Jesus states that the disciples knew the way to the place where he was going. Where is this place? How are we to get there? Evidently, we can get there only if we know where we are going. Jesus was not asking a question. He was not asking, "Do you know the way?" He states that they knew already the way. But Thomas was not quite sure. Probably he was the person who dared to make their doubts vocal. He says that they did not know even where he was going.

##### 2. THE WAY TO FATHER

The verse Jn 14: 6 gives a direct answer.

1. Jesus is the way
2. Jesus is the only way.
3. The place is the presence of God -- to the Father.

Man was separated from for God and banished from the presence of God due to his sin. Jesus therefore declares that the reconciliation and redemption are achieved through him and through no one else. This Jesus emphasizes by the adjectives THE way, THE truth, THE life.

*Rom 5:11 Not only is this so, but we also rejoice in God through our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom we have now received reconciliation.*

*2 Cor 5:18-19 All this is from God, who reconciled us to himself through Christ and gave us the ministry of reconciliation: that God was reconciling the world to himself in Christ, not counting men's sins against them. And he has committed to us the message of reconciliation*

*Col 1:19-22 For God was pleased to have all his fullness dwell in him, and through him to reconcile to himself all things, whether things on earth or things in heaven, by making peace through his blood, shed on the cross. Once you were alienated from God and were enemies in your minds because of your evil behavior. But now he has reconciled you by Christ's physical body through death to present you holy in his sight, without blemish and free from accusation –*

### **3. THE WAY TO HEAVEN**

The Indian word for this is Mukthi that indicates a release from bondage. In Hinduism, this bondage is the bondage of cycle of incarnations. Bible does not teach reincarnation, unless we consider

the resurrection as reincarnation. Then resurrection is the same form, same person, with the full conscience of the past life in total contrast to the incarnation concept of Hinduism and New Age. But both agree that our aim is to be with God, in the continuous presence of God. Advaitists on the other hand strive to be one with god, because to them man in essence is God. Christian concept is Dwaitist that man is in substance different from God and is only an image. The place where we are going has to be a material world. At least there has to be a material dimension to that existence. Human body is material, though the resurrected body has more than material dimension as the properties of Jesus' resurrected body indicate. In this passage, Jesus does not refer to Heaven. He only refers to it as a place. If we are going to have a body, (transformed and glorified with spiritual dimensions as well) this place has to be material as well as spiritual. It is this that Paul refers (for lack of other terminology) as the spiritual body.

*1 Cor 15:44-49 it is sown a natural body, it is raised a spiritual body. If there is a natural body, there is also a spiritual body. So it is written: "The first man Adam became a living being" ; the last Adam, a life-giving spirit. The spiritual did not come first, but the natural, and after that the spiritual. The first man was of the dust of the earth, the second man from heaven. As was the earthly man, so are those who are of the earth; and as is the man from heaven, And just as we have borne the likeness of the earthly man, so shall we bear the likeness of the man from heaven.*

But then that is not the only argument to support this conjecture. Jesus said he was going to the Father to prepare for place for us. Where did he go?

*Mark 16:19 After the Lord Jesus had spoken to them, he was taken up into heaven and he sat at the right hand of God.*

*Luke 24:51 While he was blessing them, he left them and was taken up*

*into heaven.*

*Acts 1:9-11 After he said this, he was taken up before their very eyes, and a cloud hid him from their sight. They were looking intently up into the sky as he was going, when suddenly two men dressed in white stood beside them. "Men of Galilee," they said, "why do you stand here looking into the sky? This same Jesus, who has been taken from you into heaven, will come back in the same way you have seen him go into heaven."*

How did Jesus go? He went up before their very own eyes until a cloud came and covered him. The ascension of Jesus was a bodily ascension and he went into the outer space. Unless Jesus was really fooling his disciples into believing what they saw, Jesus went to an outer material space. Certainly, he had other dimensions. But his body was localized and he went up. So, if we accept the story (as all Christians do) we have no other option to believe that this place (where he went to prepare a place for you and me) is at least partially material so that the translated imperishable body of mine will be able to live. It is this way that Jesus was saying to be Him. It is only through him too.

In this era of scientific fiction, the only comparison is one of space warp. I am glad that the Russian astronauts knew that. They tried to locate this place in their satellites. But then it is like walking North to find the edge of the earth. It is like the man in the movies 'Gods are Crazy' trying to see the end of the world. No one can get there by ordinary means. The place where you stand is the edge of the world. But you can realize it only when you have the perspective of the three dimensions. You are bound by the dimension of your existence. The way is Jesus. This place is a different dimension, different universe and the only gate is Jesus. The disciples saw him go. We will be taken there by Jesus himself. The way therefore is the faith that we have in Jesus.

To get to this new place we need to be transformed and translated. This power can be obtained through Jesus' precious blood alone and with the resurrection power that is in Jesus.

*1 Cor 15:51-53 Listen, I tell you a mystery: We will not all sleep, but we will all be changed-- in a flash, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet. For the trumpet will sound, the dead will be raised imperishable, and we will be changed. For the perishable must clothe itself with the imperishable, and the mortal with immortality.*

#### 4. PAUL DEFINES THE WAY

Early Christians were known as the followers of the way:

*Acts 9:1-2 Meanwhile, Saul was still breathing out murderous threats against the Lord's disciples. He went to the high priest and asked him for letters to the synagogues in Damascus, so that if he found any there who belonged to the Way, whether men or women, he might take them as prisoners to Jerusalem.*

*Acts 19:23-24 About that time there arose a great disturbance about the Way. I persecuted the followers of this Way to their death, arresting both men and women and throwing them into prison,*

Paul later defines the way in his defense speech before Governor Felix:

*Acts 24:14-15 However, I admit that I worship the God of our fathers as a follower of the Way, which they call a sect. I believe everything that agrees with the Law and that is written in the Prophets, and I have the same hope in God as these men, that there will be a resurrection of both the righteous and the wicked.*

This is probably the best definition of the Way we have:

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This has three parts clearly outlined:

1. We worship the God of our Fathers., i.e., Yvh is the God. It defined who God is.

2. We believe in everything that is laid down by the scripture. In modern terminology it the declaration of Sola Scriptura: Scripture alone is the basis of doctrine and teaching. Scripture was defined by Jesus during his ministry

Luke 24:44 He said to them, "*This is what I told you while I was still with you: Everything must be fulfilled that is written about me in the Law of Moses, the Prophets and the Psalms.*"

So the scripture is the book we now call Bible with the Law of Moses, the Prophets and the Psalms.

Jesus considered the Psalms as containing Prophecy.

3. We have the great hope of bodily resurrection of both the just and the unjust. That was the faith of the Pharisees. This was what Paul pointed out when he said "just as these people" meaning the Pharisees. Sadducees did not believe in resurrection.

The Way is the way of redemption of our decaying bodies (for the justified) through faith in Jesus Christ.

### 5. LORD DEFINES THE WAY

God defined the day in Gen 18.

*Gen 18:19 For I have chosen him, so that he will direct his children and his household after him to keep the way of the LORD by doing what is*



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*right and just, so that the LORD will bring about for Abraham what he has promised him."*

Way of the Lord is doing what is right and just. Then is righteousness is the way to heaven? Yes indeed.

Then the question is, what is righteousness. Bible defines it clearly:

*Ezek 18:5-9 "Suppose there is a righteous man who does what is just and right. He does not eat at the mountain shrines or look to the idols of the house of Israel. He does not defile his neighbor's wife or lie with a woman during her period. He does not oppress anyone, but returns what he took in pledge for a loan. He does not commit robbery but gives his food to the hungry and provides clothing for the naked. He does not lend at usury or take excessive interest. He withholds his hand from doing wrong and judges fairly between man and man. He follows my decrees and faithfully keeps my laws. That man is righteous; he will surely live, declares the Sovereign LORD.*

Ezekiel gives 10 tests for righteous man in the above passage. Paul in his epistle to Corinthians refers to 9 tests:

*1 Cor 6:9-10 Do you not know that the wicked will not inherit the kingdom of God? Do not be deceived: Neither the sexually immoral nor idolaters nor adulterers nor male prostitutes nor homosexual offenders nor thieves nor the greedy nor drunkards nor slanderers nor swindlers will inherit the kingdom of God.*

This is the way of the work. Karma Marga.

This is a way. But the problem is:

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*Rom 3:10-19 As it is written: "There is no one righteous, not even one; there is no one who understands, no one who seeks God. All have turned away, they have together become worthless; there is no one who does good, not even one." "Their throats are open graves; their tongues practice deceit." "The poison of vipers is on their lips." "Their mouths are full of cursing and bitterness." "Their feet are swift to shed blood; ruin and misery mark their ways, and the way of peace they do not know." "There is no fear of God before their eyes." Now we know that whatever the law says, it says to those who are under the law, so that every mouth may be silenced and the whole world held accountable to God.*

The standards of God are so high that human endeavor cannot even approach that perfection. Though it is a way, it is an impossible way. No one can reach God through that way.

*Rom 3:20 Therefore no one will be declared righteous in his sight by observing the law; rather, through the law we become conscious of sin.*

Then How did Jesus provide the way?

*Rom 3:21-25 But now a righteousness from God, apart from law, has been made known, to which the Law and the Prophets testify. This righteousness from God comes through faith in Jesus Christ to all who believe. There is no difference, for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God, and are justified freely by his grace through the redemption that came by Christ Jesus. God presented him as a sacrifice of atonement, through faith in his blood. He did this to demonstrate his justice, because in his forbearance he had left the sins committed beforehand unpunished-- Rom 3:26 he did it to demonstrate his justice at the present time, so as to be just and the one who justifies those who have faith in Jesus.*

## 6. JNANA, BHAKTHI AND KARMA MARGA

In Hinduism, the Bhagavat Geetha, gives three basic ways to salvation - three ways of liberation. They are first Karma marga - the way of the work. Do good and be made perfect. Since you cannot do that in one life, you improve your work, incarnation after incarnation until you are made perfect - until you are able to do your duties without regard to its consequences. In this process, evil work leads you to lower levels of consciousness and good works leads to higher levels of consciousness. If you are at the higher level of consciousness you are reborn in the heavens and the pleasures of the heavens leads you to immersed in the senses and loose the way. In the lower levels of consciousness you are caught up in the struggles of existence that you loose the concept of godhead itself and you sink deeper, deeper into ignorance, and evil. The gods are to be incarnated to be a man to achieve salvation. Salvation is found only in human existence. I have described this teaching only to show the vicious circle karma yoga produces. If at all there is a way out, it is now and it is today.

Heb 4:7 Therefore God again set a certain day, calling it Today, when a long time later he spoke through David, as was said before: "Today, if you hear his voice, do not harden your hearts."

The second way designated is the Jnana Marga - the way of enlightenment - the way of Knowledge. Evidently, knowledge can show the way. But it cannot take you there. Every Yogi knows that he is God, but he has not attained. Evidently, knowledge in itself is not self-realization. You have to realize what you know. We do not know how. Only a Master can show that. Who is this master who has overcome death? Who has the power to give Life? Who is the true Master?

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The Third way is Bhakthi Marga - the way of faith. Bhakthi alone will not liberate unless Jnana and Karma concord.

*Rom 10:2-3 For I can testify about them that they are zealous for God, but their zeal is not based on knowledge. Since they did not know the righteousness that comes from God and sought to establish their own, they did not submit to God's righteousness.*

The Christian order is Jnana - Bhakthi- Karma.

Knowledge (jnana) should lead to Faith (Bhakthi) and this will produce righteous deeds (Karma).

*Rom 10:17 Consequently, faith comes from hearing the message, and the message is heard through the word of Christ.*

*Eph 2:8-10 For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith--and this not from yourselves, it is the gift of God-- not by works, so that no one can boast. For we are God's workmanship, created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do.*

Each one in itself does not produce Mukthi.

How did Jesus achieve this?

The normal law of Karma is that the results of the karma of one person are to be born by that person. If one does good, he receives the good reward and if one does bad he receives the bad reward. This is in essence correct.

*Ezek 18:20 The soul who sins is the one who will die. The son will not share the guilt of the father, nor will the father share the guilt of the son.*

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*The righteousness of the righteous man will be credited to him, and the wickedness of the wicked will be charged against him.*

*Rev 20:12 And I saw the dead, great and small, standing before the throne, and books were opened. Another book was opened, which is the book of life. The dead were judged according to what they had done as recorded in the books.*

But there is a law higher than that wherein the evil that one man does affects others, so also the good that one man does will affect others. We all know that. We all experience that every day in our life. Evil men create havoc in society and the community as a whole suffers because of their evil life. Similarly the community as a whole gains from the good deed of those unselfish great men. These great men are able to alleviate the suffering due to their karma by their righteous deeds. This is where the sacrifice and substitution comes in. Jesus took our Karma upon himself.

*Isa 53:4-6 Surely he took up our infirmities and carried our sorrows, yet we considered him stricken by God, smitten by him, and afflicted. But he was pierced for our transgressions, he was crushed for our iniquities; the punishment that brought us peace was upon him, and by his wounds we are healed. We all, like sheep, have gone astray, each of us has turned to his own way; and the LORD has laid on him the iniquity of us all.*

Only Jesus could take away the karma of every person because he took the evil karma and its consequences upon himself. There had been many godmen in this world. But none could take the karma of others fully upon themselves. Only Jesus could promise that. This is what the Bible refers to as imputed righteousness.

*Rom 4:5 However, to the man who does not work but trusts God who justifies the wicked, his faith is credited as righteousness.*

## 7. THE WAY IN UNCHARTED LIFE

If you have ever been in the desert or in the savannah, you cannot go without a guide. There are no landmarks there. Everywhere looks the same. Directions cannot be marked. Only a guide will be able to take you through these uncharted territories. The guide is the way. You have not passed this way before. But one who has been here long enough knows the way. What better way to go through the uncertain life of ours than to trust it in the hands of one who knows the future?

*Gal 3:11 Clearly no one is justified before God by the law, because, "The righteous will live by faith."*

*Rom 1:17 For in the gospel a righteousness from God is revealed, a righteousness that is by faith from first to last, just as it is written: "The righteous will live by faith."*

You have not crossed the barrier of death. No one has ever come back from the dead to show the way over - except the one who was resurrected from the dead - Jesus Christ. Walk by faith. Put your hand in his hand. He knows the way.

*John 14:19 Before long, the world will not see me anymore, but you will see me. Because I live, you also will live.*

*Rev 1:18 I am the Living One; I was dead, and behold I am alive for ever and ever! And I hold the keys of death and Hades. II*

## I AM THE TRUTH

The word Truth in itself does not make sense because it is an abstract quality. The question to be asked is: Truth about what?

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Evidently, when Jesus said I am the Truth he implied something, which everyone knew.

The question 'What is Truth' was asked by Pilot to Jesus and he explained it to him.

*John 18:36 Jesus said, "My kingdom is not of this world. If it were, my servants would fight to prevent my arrest by the Jews. But now my kingdom is from another place."*

*John 18:37 "You are a king, then!" said Pilate. Jesus answered, "You are right in saying I am a king. In fact, for this reason I was born, and for this I came into the world, to testify to the truth. Everyone on the side of truth listens to me."*

*John 18:38 "What is truth?" Pilate asked. With this he went out again to the Jews and said, "I find no basis for a charge against him."*

Pilot here was grappling with two questions at the same time. One was the question of Sovereignty. Are You the King of the Jews? But Jesus goes beyond that question, while the answer to that question is yes, the sovereignty of Jesus is beyond that. It is true that by legal descent from David, the Kingdom of Judah belongs to Jesus. But Jesus points out that His Kingdom is not of this world. It will be a poor King to be the king of a decaying universe. Pilot got the point right on the nail's head. He was a Roman Scholar and knew his philosophy well. Truth, Virtue and Beauty are the absolutes of the universe. Ancient Indian Philosophy puts it as Sathyam, Sivam, Sundaram. He was also aware of the many stories in the Roman mythology about the children born to God. It was not difficult for Pilot to connect the issues and realize that Jesus was indeed claiming to be not the son born to a god, but an incarnation of God himself. This was probably new to him. But Jesus explained to him that He is indeed a King, but not of this world.

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*"For this reason have I come into this world, for this reason I was born".*  
The clear explanation is that he was born by accident. He decided to be incarnated for a specific purpose. He existed before his birth.

*John 8:58 "I tell you the truth," Jesus answered, "before Abraham was born, I am!"*

He is the Alpha and the Omega.

*Rev 22:13 I am the Alpha and the Omega, the First and the Last, the Beginning and the End.*

What was this reason? "To testify to this truth." To the truth that there is a world beyond this world where there is no pain or suffering or decay or death. He came to declare that truth and that He is the King of this imperishable 'spiritual' world. And that He was the way to this place. Here is the relevance to Jesus' statement: 'I am the Way, the Truth'

Pilate understood in the true Socratic and Platonic tradition that Truth is the Absolute. Here is Jesus who claims that he was this Absolute. Everything is to be compared and with him. He is the ultimate standard with which the world may judge any action. World has never seen anything like this before. Go into every culture and religion, Jesus is the ultimate, par excellence. All godmen of India claim that they were once Jesus. Islam announces the total purity of the Word of Allah who is Jesus. Why because world has no other greater standard to go by.

## I AM THE LIFE

We need to look at the last word Life in the context of the other two, The Way, The Truth. What is life? It cannot be defined by



simple mechanical means. Ultimately it is something that we cannot quantify nor measure. In the absolute sense, it is simply consciousness. It is profoundly and simply put as "I think, therefore I am". It is essence of existence for the self. Life is a personality. God is a person because he exists and knows that he exists. All other creatures on earth are created life forms. Bible teaches that man is created in the image of God. I have dealt with this aspect earlier. Life as we know of is dependent on matter. Every life being we know has a form. Human form is one form. But each life form has its own form. Animals have their form, birds have another, fish has another and there are a large number of life forms on the earth. Vegetation's have life. We cannot know the mind of other forms unless we can communicate with them. So, when we talk about life, we are actually talking about life as we know - material form, with mind. On the earth, they are based on Hydrocarbons. So, when the NASA decided to check whether life exists on other planets they made an effort to check for hydrocarbons. This is a sort of human. We have no reason to assume that life can rely only on hydrocarbons.

If there are life forms in another dimension, their forms will be of that dimension. For lack of other descriptive word, the Bible uses the word spiritual body. Evidently, spirit and body are mutually exclusive. So, the word spiritual body somehow gives us the concept of extra-dimensional material body. Jewish description of angels were that they were made with fire. See the description given by Paul:

*1 Cor 15:38-41 But God gives it a body as he has determined, and to each kind of seed he gives its own body. All flesh is not the same: Men have one kind of flesh, animals have another, birds another and fish another. There are also heavenly bodies and there are earthly bodies; but the splendor of the heavenly bodies is one kind, and the splendor of the earthly*

*bodies is another. The sun has one kind of splendor, the moon another and the stars another; and star differs from star in splendor.*

When Jesus claimed that he is Life, he probably meant several things.

## **1. HE IS THE CREATOR OF LIFE.**

*John 1:3 Through him all things were made; without him nothing was made that has been made.*

*Col 1:16-17 For by him all things were created: things in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or powers or rulers or authorities; all things were created by him and for him. He is before all things, and in him all things hold together.*

2. When God created he created with his word. The word became flesh. Creation was the event when word became flesh. Thus

## **2. IT IS JESUS THAT HOLDS ALL LIFE TOGETHER.**

*Col 1:17 He is before all things, and in him all things hold together.*

He is love and it is love that holds things together. When divisive forces produced by the life forms destroys this cohesiveness, it Jesus who brings them back and give them new life, through a new birth. For this purpose

*John 1:14 The Word became flesh and made his dwelling among us.*

For this reason again he became "Lamb that was slain from the creation of the world."

### 3. JESUS GIVES NEW LIFE.

As Jesus gave life to all created life forms, he also gives new life. Only he can do that. Life has been marred by selfishness and lack of love. Jesus gives new life.

*2 Cor 5:17 Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; the old has gone, the new has come!*

This new life is the abundant life. It is not like the life we know of where it is always misery. It is life without antithesis, where we grow from glory to glory. From lower life forms, we grow into higher existences. It is this indescribable life that Jesus claims.

*1 Cor 2:9 However, as it is written: "No eye has seen, no ear has heard, no mind has conceived what God has prepared for those who love him"--*

*Rev 21:5-6 He who was seated on the throne said, "I am making everything new!" Then he said, "Write this down, for these words are trustworthy and true."*

*He said to me: "It is done. I am the Alpha and the Omega, the Beginning and the End."*

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## CHAPTER NINE

### I AM THE TRUE VINE

*John 15:1-8 "I am the true vine, and my Father is the gardener. He cuts off every branch in me that bears no fruit, while every branch that does bear fruit he prunes so that it will be even more fruitful. You are already clean because of the word I have spoken to you. Remain in me, and I will remain in you. No branch can bear fruit by itself; it must remain in the vine. Neither can you bear fruit unless you remain in me. "I am the vine; you are the branches. If a man remains in me and I in him, he will bear much fruit; apart from me you can do nothing. 6 If anyone does not remain in me, he is like a branch that is thrown away and withers; such branches are picked up, thrown into the fire and burned. If you remain in me and my words remain in you, ask whatever you wish, and it will be given you. John This is to my Father's glory, that you bear much fruit, showing yourselves to be my disciples.*

#### 1. VINE

The first mention of Vine (*vitis vinifera*) is found in Gen 9

Gen 9:20-21 Noah, a man of the soil, proceeded to plant a vineyard. When he drank some of its wine, he became drunk and lay uncovered inside his tent.

This is a replication of what God did in the Garden of Eden.

*Gen 2:15 The LORD God took the man and put him in the Garden of Eden to work it and take care of it.*

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But because of sin, Garden of Eden was gone, and when evil became so rampant, God decided to put an end to his creation called Man. But man was given another chance and the progenitor of this species of man was Noah. In accordance with what God has commanded, Noah planted a vineyard. Noah represented the new Man. Civilizations sprang up luxuriant growth of wine was produced and the result made him drunk. This is clearly a picture of mankind. From then on, every civilization portrayed the vine as its glorious symbol. Early monuments of Egypt are filled with the drawings of vine and wine. Joseph started his glorious career as the Prime Minister of Egypt with the vine and the cup filled with Wine as a start:

*Gen 40:9-11 So the chief cupbearer told Joseph his dream. He said to him, "In my dream I saw a vine in front of me, and on the vine were three branches. As soon as it budded, it blossomed, and its clusters ripened into grapes. Pharaoh's cup was in my hand, and I took the grapes, squeezed them into Pharaoh's cup and put the cup in his hand."*

In the Roman Empire vine was the center of their life. Crowns made of vines were the victor's crowns in the coliseum. Caesar's crown was made of vine. History bear witness that the fall of Roman empire came as result of its addiction to the this god of Wine. So was the fall of Babylon and Assyria before them.

Vines of Palestine were of particular of interest. When Moses sent in his spies they brought back the proof of its fertility and abundance by carrying back a bunch of grapes. This was the land God wanted his chosen people to occupy and enjoy.

*Num 13:23 -24 When they reached the Valley of Eshcol, they cut off a branch bearing a single cluster of grapes. Two of them carried it on a pole between them, along with some pomegranates and figs. That place was*

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*called the Valley of Eshcol because of the cluster of grapes the Israelites cut off there.*

Other places in Palestine were famous for its special luxuriant vines such as of Sibmah, Heshbon and Elealeh (Isa 16:8,9,10; Jer 48:32) and of Engedi. (So 1:14) Even today, Palestinian vines are probably the best in the world.

The picture is clear from the above. Isaiah places it squarely thus:

*Isa 5:1-5 I will sing for the one I love a song about his vineyard: My loved one had a vineyard on a fertile hillside. He dug it up and cleared it of stones and planted it with the choicest vines. He built a watchtower in it and cut out a winepress as well. Then he looked for a crop of good grapes, but it yielded only bad fruit.*

Man was created in the image of God. He was asked to keep the earth, and populate it. But in so doing, Man wandered away, forgot his purpose, and produced evil instead of good. Vine represents Life especially Man.

When Adam failed, a new chance was given in Noah. Noah also got drunk from the newfound prosperity. Vine is the symbol of Human Life. It is a symbol of abundant life, the luxuriant growth of the wine that spreads on. Season after season the vine remains bearing new leaves and new fruit. Generations after generation life go on. Life was to be a life in the vineyards. But then the error of Noah was repeated through the nations. They got drunk with the abundance and let themselves naked.

So, God selected one particular person in Abraham. There arose Israel.

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*Psa 80:8 You brought a vine out of Egypt; you drove out the nations and planted it*

*Ezek 17:5-7 "He took some of the seed of your land and put it in fertile soil. He planted it like a willow by abundant water, and it sprouted and became a low, spreading vine. Its branches turned toward him, but its roots remained under it. So it became a vine and produced branches and put out leafy boughs. The vineyard of the LORD Almighty is the house of Israel, and the men of Judah are the garden of his delight. And he looked for justice, but saw bloodshed; for righteousness, but heard cries of distress.*

*Psa 80:9-14 You cleared the ground for it, and it took root and filled the land. The mountains were covered with its shade, the mighty cedars with its branches. It sent out its boughs to the Sea, its shoots as far as the River. Why have you broken down its walls so that all who pass by pick its grapes? Boars from the forest ravage it and the creatures of the field feed on it.*

What a realistic picture of Israel.

This is not an isolated picture. God tried to replant the vine into several nations.

*Amos 9:7 "Are not you Israelites the same to me as the Cushites?" declares the LORD. "Did I not bring Israel up from Egypt, the Philistines from Caphtor and the Arameans from Kir?*

He tried with Cushites (Modern South Sudanese), Philistines, and Arameans (Syrians) and probably many others before coming to Israel. All civilizations in spite of their revelations went astray. Instead of the provider, they worshipped the provided and went after Bacchus, the gods of wine, fertility, and prosperity.



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*Isa 5:5-6 Now I will tell you what I am going to do to my vineyard: I will take away its hedge, and it will be destroyed; I will break down its wall, and it will be trampled. I will make it a wasteland, neither pruned nor cultivated, and briars and thorns will grow there. I will command the clouds not to rain on it."*

Civilizations were destroyed because they did not produce the right fruit.

*Mat 21:33-41 "Listen to another parable: There was a landowner who planted a vineyard. He put a wall around it, dug a winepress in it and built a watchtower. Then he rented the vineyard to some farmers and went away on a journey. When the harvest time approached, he sent his servants to the tenants to collect his fruit. "The tenants seized his servants; they beat one, killed another, and stoned a third. Then he sent other servants to them, more than the first time, and the tenants treated them the same way. Last of all, he sent his son to them. 'They will respect my son,' he said. "But when the tenants saw the son, they said to each other, 'This is the heir. Come, let's kill him and take his inheritance.' So they took him and threw him out of the vineyard and killed him. "Therefore, when the owner of the vineyard comes, what will he do to those tenants?" "He will bring those wretches to a wretched end," they replied, "and he will rent the vineyard to other tenants, who will give him his share of the crop at harvest time."*

## 2. "I AM THE VINE"

While the Bible condemns intoxication, abstaining from wine was a symbol of mourning. Wine was considered to be given to man to cheer him up. In the Aryan culture wine 'the amrit' is the drink of the gods - the elect of God. Christianity has always held that stand because; Jesus himself was called a winebibber. The first of his miracles was the conversion of water into wine. This is what the

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vine does. Vine takes water from the earth and converts it into juice in the fruit of the wine. In the marriage of Cana this is what happened.

*John 2:7-11 to the servants, "Fill the jars with water"; so they filled them to the brim. Then he told them, "Now draw some out and take it to the master of the banquet." They did so, and the master of the banquet tasted the water that had been turned into wine. He did not realize where it had come from, though the servants who had drawn the water knew. Then he called the bridegroom aside and said, "Everyone brings out the choice wine first and then the cheaper wine after the guests have had too much to drink; but you have saved the best till now." This, the first of his miraculous signs, Jesus performed at Cana in Galilee. He thus revealed his glory, and his disciples put their faith in him.*

Jesus declared his glory by converting water into the best wine because he is the true vine.

So when Jesus said, "I am the true vine", he was proclaiming that true Manhood is found in him and in him alone. When all of God's effort to redeem mankind to its Manhood failed, Jesus became man that he may redeem it to what it should be. Christianization is in this sense nothing but humanization. Making man as he is expected by God to be. Adam was Son of God, now the Son of God became Son of Man - the Messiah, the Redeemer. He is the redeemer of mankind not of a particular group.

One of the major errors of the elect was that each group believed that they were the only elect of God. So Israel believed that they were the children of God and missed their responsibilities. God did select a vine so that he could redeem all mankind. That led to Zionism. Aryans thought they were the gods. That led to Nazism. Communists thought they were the people who would usher in the

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Kingdom of Man. What mess they made! It is in this context that we have to see the declaration of Jesus.

*2 Cor 5:17 Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; the old has gone, the new has come!*

Out of this true vine grows the new creation man and its nucleus is the Church. He told his disciples "you are the branches." Then he commanded them:

*Mat 28:19-20 Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age."*

No wonder Jesus selected the Cup of wine as his symbol of new covenant. It represents the new man. If wine brought decay, death and destruction before, the new wine brings life and fruitfulness.

### 3. "I AM THE VINE; YOU ARE THE BRANCHES"



While vine represents mankind, the new true vine is starting with church. In that sense, it also represents Church - as a foretaste of the Kingdom. A vine has several branches. In fact, each branch has several sub branches and it goes on. That is how a plant grows. That is how a plant should grow. Why should a plant bring out lot

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of branches? Why not just one stem? The reason is simple; each leaf wants to get the sunshine. Each leaf wants to produce its greenness. For this purpose, it has to declare some sense of freedom and independence. But the entire leaf and branches forms one vine. And the wine spreads on the ground. This is the picture of the church with all its denominations and spreading across the world. They all together abide on the root, which is Jesus Christ. Don't cry for unity. There is only one unity - that unity is the centrality of Jesus. Church is the body of Christ and is bound together in Christ. There may be shades of redness on the grape leaf. They are not copies of each other. The corrugations on the leaf edges and the projections are all different. Their veins are all differently woven. How wonderful? Such is the Church.

Church has its members. As each branch carries other branches and they in turn carries others and also leaves, each individual member represents the branch and the leaf. Each family is a branch and each member in turn is a potential branch. It also represents the wide world with every human being as part of the great vine. The whole mankind is one huge vine. At the root of this mankind is Jesus. As he was the source of life in the beginning, he is also the source of new life in the new beginning.

But cut the branch from the stem, it loses its contact with the root and they wither and die under the same sun which otherwise provided nourishment. World experiences are transformed into nourishment to the believer as long as they live on the branch. Outside of it, these experiences bring destruction.

*John 15:6 If anyone does not remain in me, he is like a branch that is thrown away and withers; such branches are picked up, thrown into the fire and burned.*

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Abide in me, Jesus says. Otherwise, you are wasted.

*John 15:5 "I am the vine; you are the branches. If a man remains in me and I in him, he will bear much fruit; apart from me you can do nothing*

*John 6:53 Jesus said to them, "I tell you the truth, unless you eat the flesh of the Son of Man and drink his blood, you have no life in you.*

*John 6:56-57 Whoever eats my flesh and drinks my blood remains in me, and I in him. Just as the living Father sent me and I live because of the Father, so the one who feeds on me will live because of me.*

What does the branch do? They cannot do anything of its own. They simply abide on the vine.

What produce the fruit? The sap produces maturity and that produces the fruit. Then it is fertilized by the pollen, that is distributed by the wind (Holy spirit) and the combination of the Word and the Spirit produces the fruit. The branch simply carries it. The Fruit of the Spirit flourishes in contrast to climate, where there is hatred it produces love; where there is sorrow, it produces joy, where there is quarrel, peace.

My command is this: Love each other as I have loved you.

*John 15:13 Greater love has no one than this, that he lay down his life for his brother.*

Why? Because all mankind is one organism.

Love one another was the Old command. Now Jesus adds the phrase, 'as I have loved you' He has left us an example. He has given us the power.

All civilizations are built on selfishness. It is the corner stone of every civilization of old and also of today. Individualism is the key to capitalism. But Jesus offers a different solution. He declares that all mankind is one organism. What we need is a band new plant capable of assimilating the others as its part. Grafted into the true vine all mankind have a chance to life.

#### **4. BUT NOT ALL BRANCHES BEAR FRUIT.**

*John 15:7-10 If you remain in me and my words remain in you, ask whatever you wish, and it will be given you. This is to my Father's glory, that you bear much fruit, showing yourselves to be my disciples*

How does the vine bear fruit? The branches do not produce fruit. It is the whole plant that produces fruit. It is sap that is brought up by the root that produces the fruit. They run contrary to the law of gravity. They run upward and it supplies the necessary nutrients for the building of fruits. Fruits do not come overnight. By abiding continuously, it results in producing the fruit. You cannot force to produce the fruit. "As the Father has loved me, so have I loved you. Now remain in my love. If you obey my commands, you will remain in my love, just as I have obeyed my Father's commands and remain in his love.

And love is the ultimate fruit.

*Gal 5:22 But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness gentleness and self-control.*

The proof of this abiding is that we receive whatever we ask for. Most people seem to by pass this test. In the history of the church prayers were answered when the church prayed with oneness of mind. Oneness of mind comes only through love. Evidently, the

proof of our love and oneness of mind is revealed through answered prayers. This promise is unconditional - whatever you ask.

## 5. IF YOU DO NOT ABIDE AND DO NOT PRODUCE FRUIT?

*Mat 3:8-10 Produce fruit in keeping with repentance. And do not think you can say to yourselves, 'We have Abraham as our father.' I tell you that out of these stones God can raise up children for Abraham. The ax is already at the root of the trees, and every tree that does not produce good fruit will be cut down and thrown into the fire.*

*Mat 7:16-20 By their fruit you will recognize them. Do people pick grapes from thorn bushes, or figs from thistles? Likewise every good tree bears good fruit, but a bad tree bears bad fruit. A good tree cannot bear bad fruit, and a bad tree cannot bear good fruit. Every tree that does not bear good fruit is cut down and thrown into the fire. Thus, by their fruit you will recognize them.*

Through the history, God has been doing this. Will He do the same with the branches of the church too? Will the church also get drunk with the wine like all the other nations? Not if the Lord Jesus is allowed to be present. That is what Jesus explains in his parable of the Vine here. He cuts off every branch in me that bears no fruit.

The Hebrew writer explains it:

*Heb 3:13- But encourage one another daily, as long as it is called Today, so that none of you may be hardened by sin's deceitfulness. We have come to share in Christ if we hold firmly till the end the confidence we had at first. As has just been said: "Today, if you hear his voice, do not harden your hearts as you did in the rebellion." Who were they who heard and rebelled? Were they not all those Moses led out of Egypt? And with whom*

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*was he angry for forty years? Was it not with those who sinned, whose bodies fell in the desert? And to whom did God swear that they would never enter his rest if not to those who disobeyed? So we see that they were not able to enter, because of their unbelief.*

*Therefore, since the promise of entering his rest still stands, let us be careful that none of you be found to have fallen short of it. For we also have had the gospel preached to us, just as they did; but the message they heard was of no value to them, because those who heard did not combine it with faith. Now we who have believed enter that rest, just as God has said, "So I declared on oath in my anger, 'They shall never enter my rest.'" And yet his work has been finished since the creation of the world.*

*Heb 4:6 It still remains that some will enter that rest, and those who formerly had the gospel preached to them did not go in, because of their disobedience.*

*Heb 4:11 Let us, therefore, make every effort to enter that rest, so that no one will fall by following their example of disobedience.*

## **6. THOSE THAT BEAR FRUIT?**

### **BEAR MUCH FRUIT**

*John 15:2 He cuts off every branch in me that bears no fruit, while every branch that does bear fruit he prunes so that it will be even more fruitful.*

*1 Pet 1:6-7 In this you greatly rejoice, though now for a little while you may have had to suffer grief in all kinds of trials. These have come so that your faith--of greater worth than gold, which perishes even though refined by fire--may be proved genuine and may result in praise, glory and honor when Jesus Christ is revealed.*



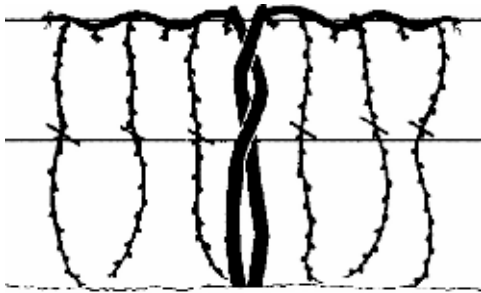
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*John 15:16 You did not choose me, but I chose you and appointed you to go and bear fruit--fruit that will last. Then the Father will give you whatever you ask in my name.*

Notice that God wants every man to prosper. But it is only when one abide in Him will we be made whole as a mankind.

**7. CHURCH AS VINEYARD**

There are many other insights possible from this analogy and most commentaries give excellent studies in this regard. Here is an outline, which I have gathered.



<b>Vineyard</b>	<b>Church, The World</b>
Fruitful branches	Saints in the church, the righteous
unfruitful branches	nominal Christians who live a defeated life, unrighteous

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Pruning by God	God purifying his people by afflictions - consequence of sin
To dwell under the vine and tree is an emblem of domestic happiness and peace,  Micah 4:4 Every man will sit under his own vine and under his own fig tree, and no one will make them afraid, for the LORD Almighty has spoken.	Rom 8:1 Therefore, there is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus,  Rom 8:2 because through Christ Jesus the law of the Spirit of life set me free from the law of sin and death.  Jesus provides this protection by his blood. There is safety in taking refuge in Him
vineyards are surrounded by a wall or hedge in order to keep out the wild boars, Ps 80:13;	One of the duty of the church as an institution is to keep the members from the assault of blasphemy and heresy from outside the church.
Jackals and foxes. Nu 22:24; Ne 4:3; So 2:15; Eze 13:4,5; Mt 21:33;	Internal squabbles? It is the little foxes that spoils the vine.
Its rich clusters	the graces of the church Solomon 7:8
Its quick growth	the growth of saints in grace Hosea 14:7
The stones carefully gathered out of the vineyard Isaiah 5:2	Internal weeding process within the church
Cottages are built for the keepers inside the vineyard Isaiah 1:8	Places of help within the church
Provided with the apparatus for making wine Isaiah 5:2 · Matthew 21:33	make provision for the infilling of the Holy Spirit

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<p>Unfruitful</p>	<p>the wicked Hosea 10:1</p>
<p>Worthlessness of its wood</p> <p>The wood of, fit only for burning</p> <p>Ezek 15:2-3 "Son of man, how is the wood of a vine better than that of a branch on any of the trees in the forest? Is wood ever taken from it to make anything useful? Do they make pegs from it to hang things on?"</p>	<p>Unfruitful life is a wasted life.</p>
<p>8. LAWS RESPECTING VINEYARDS</p>	
<p>Not to be planted with different kinds of seed Deuteronomy 22:9</p>	<p>Each church should have its own theology. Do not try to mix them.</p>
<p>The fruit of new vine should not be eaten by the owners till the fifth year Leviticus 19:25</p> <p>The fruit of new vine should not to be eaten for three years Leviticus 19:23</p> <p>The fruit of new vine is to be holy to the Lord in the fourth year Leviticus 19:24</p>	<p>This probably refers to the maturing period of new Christians. They may not be expected to teach. Just as the vine needs time to mature and bring fruit, every Christian needs to mature before they bring forth fruit.</p>
<p>Strangers entering the vineyard are allowed to eat the fruit of vine freely, but they may not carry any away from the vineyard. Deuteronomy 23:24</p>	<p>People may come into the church to feed themselves. But they may not take any food outside or any member out of the church. No church should take in another person from a different church, nor prompt to do so.</p>

## 9. VINTAGE

The vintage, is a season of general festivity, began in September. The towns were deserted as all the community left their homes and the people lived among the vineyards in the lodges and tents. The grapes were gathered with shouts of joy by the "grape gatherers," (Jer 25:30) and put into baskets. They were then carried on their head and shoulders, or slung upon a yoke, to the winepress. Winepress was a place of dancing and merriment where all the community took part. Young took their brides at that time. It is harvest time and took place every year. Six years they harvested their fruits. At the end of the sixth year was the biggest harvest of all. There would be double harvest

*Rev 14:18 Still another angel, who had charge of the fire, came from the altar and called in a loud voice to him who had the sharp sickle, "Take your sharp sickle and gather the clusters of grapes from the earth's vine, because its grapes are ripe."*

This is the great rapture, when Christ takes his bride home in pomp and splendor, in joy and merriment.

*1 Cor 15:51-52 Listen, I tell you a mystery: We will not all sleep, but we will all be changed-- in a flash, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet. For the trumpet will sound, the dead will be raised imperishable, and we will be changed.*

*Rev 19:7-8 Let us rejoice and be glad and give him glory! For the wedding of the Lamb has come, and his bride has made herself ready. Fine linen, bright and clean, was given her to wear." (Fine linen stands for the righteous acts of the saints.)*

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*Rev 21:2-4 I saw the Holy City, the new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride beautifully dressed for her husband. And I heard a loud voice from the throne saying, "Now the dwelling of God is with men, and he will live with them. They will be his people, and God himself will be with them and be their God. He will wipe every tear from their eyes. There will be no more death or mourning or crying or pain, for the old order of things has passed away."*

Then comes the seventh year - the sabbatical year when no land is tilled nor planted.

*Lev 25:2-6 "Speak to the Israelites and say to them: 'When you enter the land I am going to give you, the land itself must observe a Sabbath to the LORD. :3 For six years sow your fields, and for six years prune your vineyards and gather their crops. But in the seventh year the land is to have a Sabbath of rest, a Sabbath to the LORD. Do not sow your fields or prune your vineyards. Do not reap what grows of itself or harvest the grapes of your untended vines. The land is to have a year of rest. Whatever the land yields during the Sabbath year will be food for you--for yourself, your manservant and maidservant, and the hired worker and temporary resident who live among you, Consecrate the fiftieth year and proclaim liberty throughout the land to all its inhabitants. It shall be a jubilee for you; each one of you is to return to his family property and each to his own clan.*

*Lev 25:11-14 The fiftieth year shall be a jubilee for you; do not sow and do not reap what grows of itself or harvest the untended vines. For it is a jubilee and is to be holy for you; eat only what is taken directly from the fields. "'In this Year of Jubilee everyone is to return to his own property. "'If you sell land to one of your countrymen or buy any from him,*

This is the period when the church is taken away. There are no laborers on the earth. But there will a harvest. The spontaneous

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harvest will be harvested as they are. Thus shall the elect return unto their original estate into full humanity.

Then the son of man will appear for all the nations with his bride, the church. Isaiah describes this second coming thus:

*Isa 63:1-3 Who is this coming from Edom, from Bozrah, with his garments stained crimson? Who is this, robed in splendor, striding forward in the greatness of his strength? "It is I, speaking in righteousness, mighty to save." Why are your garments red, like those of one treading the winepress? "I have trodden the winepress alone; from the nations no one was with me. I trampled them in my anger and trod them down in my wrath; their blood spattered my garments, and I stained all my clothing.*

*Isa 63:4 For the day of vengeance was in my heart, and the year of my redemption has come.*

The day of the vengeance has come. The great white throne is now open.

When Jesus opened his ministry, his manifesto stated:

*Luke 4:18-9 "The Spirit of the Lord is on me, because he has anointed me to preach good news to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim freedom for the prisoners and recovery of sight for the blind, to release the oppressed, to proclaim the year of the Lord's favor."*

In his second coming the remaining portion of Isaiah's prophecy will be fulfilled adding

*Isa 61:1-2 The Spirit of the Sovereign LORD is on me, because the LORD has anointed me to preach good news to the poor. He has sent me*

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*to bind up the brokenhearted, to proclaim freedom for the captives and release from darkness for the prisoners, to proclaim the year of the Lord's favor and the day of vengeance of our God, to comfort all who mourn,*

This Isaiah compares with the treading of the winepress.

Will you be comforted or will you be the target of the vengeance of our God?

