

Lesson One – Setting Foundations

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This week we will begin with some simple, foundational material that needs to be in place in order to grasp the concepts presented throughout this study. If you are already familiar with the concepts in this first Lesson, then please just consider this week a review. If you are new to the Understanding the Bible Series, then please allow ample time for study and make sure that you spend some extra time studying the suggested additional material. I encourage everyone to spend time in *all* of the Scriptures that are presented and allow God to work in you and teach you through the ministry of His Word, as His Spirit guides you into all truth.

Please pray for eyes to see and ears to hear what the Lord is saying to His people through His Word.

Day One – Seek First

In our quest to learn more about God’s Word, specifically *His* plans and *His* purposes, we need to continually keep our focus. Do you know what *your* focus is? Do you know what *God* wants your focus to be? In other words, *what do you seek?*

Within the secular realm, studying and learning is usually for the express purpose of furthering one’s knowledge. We would be sorely misled if we approached God in the same manner, for knowledge *in and of itself* does nothing but “puff up” (1 Cor. 8:1). James puts it most simply –

James 1:22

But be doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving yourselves.

If someone only hears the Word, but does not do the Word, what is that person doing?

That should cause us to sit up and take notice, shouldn't it? If you just merely *hear* the Word and do not *do* the Word, you are deceiving yourself. Simple, but most true.

While you contemplate what it is that you seek, please prayerfully consider the following verses and questions. Be diligent in this because at the end of today's study time I will be asking you to gather your thoughts and write down your motivations, your goals, and your desires. This is an important exercise, so please do not skip it. (And may I also encourage you to be honest ☺.)

Deuteronomy 4:29

But from there you will seek the LORD your God, and you will find Him if you search for Him with all your heart and all your soul.

Ruth 2:12

May the LORD reward your work, and your wages be full from the LORD, the God of Israel, under whose wings you have come to seek refuge."

II Chronicles 15:2

...and he went out to meet Asa and said to him, "Listen to me, Asa, and all Judah and Benjamin: the LORD is with you when you are with Him. And if you seek Him, He will let you find Him; but if you forsake Him, He will forsake you.

There are both positive and negative aspects to certain actions mentioned in these passages. What are the actions and what are the consequences?

Here are a few more verses concerning the seeking of the Lord –

II Chronicles 3:18b-19a

...But Hezekiah prayed for them, saying, "May the good LORD provide atonement for everyone 19 who prepares his heart to seek God, the LORD God of his fathers..."

Psalms 51:6

Behold, Thou dost desire truth in the innermost being, and in the hidden part Thou wilt make me know wisdom.

Proverbs 2:1-10

1 My son, if you will receive my sayings, and treasure my commandments within you, 2 make your ear attentive to wisdom, incline your heart to understanding; 3 for if you cry for discernment, lift your voice for understanding; 4 if you seek her as silver, and search for her as for hidden treasures; 5 then you will discern the fear of the LORD, and discover the knowledge of God. 6 For the LORD gives wisdom; from His mouth come knowledge and understanding. 7 He stores up sound wisdom for the upright; He is a shield to those who walk in integrity, 8 guarding the paths of justice, and He preserves the way of His godly ones. 9 Then you will discern righteousness and justice and equity and every good course. 10 For wisdom will enter your heart, and knowledge will be pleasant to your soul;

What are these verses saying? Be as detailed as you can.

In the previous passage from the Book of Proverbs, vv. 1 through 5 provide an “if...then...” thought structure. Write out the conditions stated (“if”), followed by the consequences of the action (“then”).

Again we can see conditional statements made in accordance with seeking –

Proverbs 8:17

I love those who love me; and those who diligently seek me will find me.

Jeremiah 29:13

And you will seek Me and find Me, when you search for Me with all your heart.

What are the conditions stated here for finding the Lord?

Here are some more verses to contemplate –

Hosea 10:12

Sow with a view to righteousness, reap in accordance with kindness; break up your fallow ground, for it is time to seek the LORD until He comes to rain righteousness on you.

Amos 5:4

For thus says the LORD to the house of Israel, "Seek Me that you may live."

Zephaniah 2:3

Seek the LORD, all you humble of the earth who have carried out His ordinances; seek righteousness, seek humility. Perhaps you will be hidden in the day of the LORD'S anger.

How should we seek the Lord?

Why should we seek the Lord?

Let's pay particular attention to Jesus' own words –

Matthew 6:33

But seek first His kingdom and His righteousness; and all these things shall be added to you.

Luke 13:24

Strive to enter by the narrow door; for many, I tell you, will seek to enter and will not be able.

From these two verses, what specifically are we to seek for and strive to do?

Let's read this verse from the Book of Hebrews –

Hebrews 11:6

And without faith it is impossible to please Him, for he who comes to God must believe that He is, and that He is a rewarder of those who seek Him.

In order to please God, what must one have?

In order to please God, what must one believe?

With all of these verses in mind, how would you verbalize your own seeking?

Are your goals in line with God's goals? Are your desires in line with His desires?

I again encourage you to spend time with the Lord in evaluating your heart, your mindset and your attitude. The following is a wonderful prayer that perhaps could be used throughout the many weeks and months to come. Read through it carefully and thoughtfully.

Psalms 51:1-17

1 To the Chief Musician. A Psalm of David, when Nathan the prophet came to him, after he had gone in to Bathsheba.

Have mercy on me, O God, according to Your loving-kindness; according to the multitude of Your tender mercies, blot out my transgressions. 2 Wash me completely from my iniquity, and cleanse me from my sin. 3 For I confess my transgressions; and my sin is ever before me. 4 Against You, You only, have I sinned, and done evil in Your sight; that You might be justified when You speak, and be clear when You judge.

5 Behold, I was brought forth in iniquity, and in sin did my mother conceive me. 6 Behold, You desire truth in the inward parts; and in the hidden part You shall make me to know wisdom. 7 Purge me with hyssop, and I shall be clean; wash me, and I shall be whiter than snow. 8 Make me to hear joy and gladness; that the bones which You have broken may rejoice. 9 Hide Your face from my sins, and blot out all my iniquities.

10 Create in me a clean heart, O God, and renew a right spirit within me. 11 Cast me not away from Your presence, and take not Your Holy Spirit from me. 12 Restore to me the joy of Your salvation, and uphold me with a willing spirit. 13 Then I will teach transgressors Your ways; and sinners shall be converted to You. 14 Deliver me from the guilt of shedding blood, O God, O God of my salvation, and my tongue shall sing aloud of Your righteousness. 15 O LORD, open my lips, and my mouth shall show forth Your praise.

16 For You do not desire sacrifice; or else I would give it; You do not delight in burnt offering. 17 The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit; a broken and a contrite heart, O God, You will not despise.

NOTES:

Now would be a good time to write down your goals, your desires, and your motivations that I encouraged you to think about at the beginning of today's lesson. Please take your time with this.

See you tomorrow.

Day Two – Being Taught

Every Christian should be a student of the Scriptures, and as such should be reading God’s Word and constantly making connections, asking questions, seeing subtle revelations as well as obvious ones, *asking more questions*, all the while checking context and content. It sounds complicated, but it isn’t; time consuming, *yes*, but very available and possible to the average, non-seminary-trained lay person.

Let’s step back for a moment and contemplate how truth is given –

John 16:13-15

13 [Jesus speaking] “But when He, the Spirit of truth, comes, He will guide you into all the truth; for He will not speak on His own initiative, but whatever He hears, He will speak; and He will disclose to you what is to come. 14 He shall glorify Me; for He shall take of Mine, and shall disclose it to you. 15 All things that the Father has are Mine; therefore I said, that He takes of Mine, and will disclose it to you.”

Into what does the Spirit guide us (v. 13)?

What will the Spirit disclose to us (vv. 13-15)?

Jesus says that the Spirit *speaks what He hears*, and Paul says much the same thing in his letter to the Church at Corinth –

I Corinthians 2:10-12

10 ...for the Spirit searches all things, even the depths of God. 11 For who among men knows the thoughts of a man except the spirit of the man, which is in him? Even so the thoughts of God no one knows except the Spirit of God. 12 Now we have received, not the spirit of the world, but the Spirit who is from God, that we might know the things freely given to us by God...

What does the Spirit of God search?

What does the Spirit know?

What have we (the Church) received and why?

And just a few verses later we read –

I Corinthians 2:16

For who has known the mind of the Lord, that he should instruct Him? But we have the mind of Christ.

What does this verse say that we have?

(Please note that you and I, as present-day Christians, can *in many cases* use the “we” in the epistles to apply to us. All the epistles, from Romans to Jude, were written to the Church and hence were written to *redeemed* individuals. Sometimes, however, the context reveals a specific trait that the writer and the recipient share, such as *faithfulness*, which you and I and other members of the Body may or may not share. Needless to say, we would then need to check the Word, as well as ourselves, to see if it is personally applicable.)

According to the preceding verses, can you and I know and understand what God’s Word says and means? In other words, can any Christian know the truth of God’s Word?

God’s Word clearly says that we can know *the truth pertaining to the deep things of God*. Do you believe – *have faith in* – that? Do you believe that the Holy Spirit will teach you? Apart from the Spirit, you cannot be brought into all truth. So the issue when studying the Word of God is not about how smart you are or how much Scripture you can recall; it is about your desire to submit *your will* to the will of God in your life. Just follow the Spirit, get into God’s Word and be obedient, and He will teach and He will lead. It is simply a matter of choice.

Clearly though, we do need to know what God has written in His Word. However, we all differ in how we go about learning it. Some people need to read a passage over and over before they can remember it, others may need to *hear* it over and over before they can recall it from memory. And occasionally, others cannot seem to make the Scriptures stick in their head no matter what they try. (That can be discouraging, can’t it?) But I would really like you to be encouraged because God wants you to know His Word (cf. John 16:13-15), and He wants you to learn and share His message. It may take you longer to grasp concepts than it takes your friend to grasp the very same concept, and you may not have as much time as the next person to devote to studying the Word. *But*, do not forget that each one of us is a unique individual whom God needs to mold and shape and refine, and what works on one person may not work on another, and God knows this! Just submit yourself and your time to Him, *remain faithfully obedient to Him*, and He will prepare and equip you for the work He has planned for you.

Having said all of that, there is however a commonality in the way God teaches the truth of His Word that surpasses our own idiosyncrasies and abilities. We can see it explained in the following passage from the Book of Isaiah –

Isaiah 28:9-13

9 “To whom would He teach knowledge? And to whom would He interpret the message? Those just weaned from milk? Those just taken from the breast? 10 For He says, ‘Order on order, order on order, line on line, line on line, a little here, a little there.’” 11 Indeed, He will speak to this people through stammering lips and a foreign tongue, 12 He who said to them, “Here is rest, give rest to the weary,” and, “Here is repose,” but they would not listen. 13 So the word of the Lord to them will be, “Order on order, order on order, line on line,

line on line, a little here, a little there,” that they may go and stumble backward, be broken, snared, and taken captive. 14 Therefore, hear the word of the Lord, O scoffers...

This chapter presents a very important biblical truth concerning our being taught knowledge. In order to truly understand what Isaiah is saying it is necessary to read the context in which we find this passage. In summary, Isaiah, a prophet of the Lord, was ministering to the nation of Israel at a time when the nation had been divided into a Northern Kingdom and a Southern Kingdom. Isaiah proclaimed his message of repentance first to the Northern Kingdom of Israel just prior to it being conquered by the Assyrians, and then he turned his attention to the Southern Kingdom of Judah with warnings of the same nature. Essentially, Isaiah’s repetitive message to the people of God was this: repent from your sinful behavior and turn your attention and submission back to the Lord. He then gave strong warnings about the judgments to come regarding Israel’s ungodly behavior. Specifically, Isaiah chapter twenty-eight was a warning to the priests and prophets of Israel who had been engaging in unrighteous behavior and had been leading the people in the same manner.

In order to set context, please take the time to read Isaiah chapter twenty-eight now.

Now let’s read this passage again –

Isaiah 28:9-13

9 “To whom would He teach knowledge? And to whom would He interpret the message? Those just weaned from milk? Those just taken from the breast? 10 For He says, ‘Order on order, order on order, line on line, line on line, a little here, a little there.’” 11 Indeed, He will speak to this people through stammering lips and a foreign tongue, 12 He who said to them, “Here is rest, give rest to the weary,” and, “Here is repose,” but they would not listen. 13 So the word of the Lord to them will be, “Order on order, order on order, line on line, line on line, a little here, a little there,” that they may go and stumble backward, be broken, snared, and taken captive. 14 Therefore, hear the word of the Lord, O scoffers, who rule this people who are in Jerusalem.

According to vv. 9 and 10, God *teaches* and *interprets* His message in the following manner:

- Order upon order (Lit., commandment upon the commandment)
- Line upon line (Lit., connecting cord upon the connecting cord)
- A little here (Lit., a small bit here)
- A little there (Lit., a small bit there)

Before we go any further, it is important to note that the punctuation marks you see – quotation marks, question marks, periods, and commas – WERE NOT in the original language. The writers of ancient Hebrew did not use punctuation marks. Instead, they had ways of ordering words or using interrogative words to indicate, for example, when a question was being asked or when a new sentence was beginning. The language also consisted of marks on the letters of the words themselves to indicate meaning and emphasis. While we won’t be studying Hebrew punctuation per se, we do need to enlist the use of a study tool to see exactly how we are to understand this passage. Let’s look at Isaiah 28:9 as the Hebrew interlinear has it –

Whom? he shall direct knowledge and whom? he shall explain report ones being weaned from milk ones being pulled away from breasts.

Literally this verse should read –

Whom shall he teach knowledge? And whom shall he make to understand doctrine? [Them that are] **weaned from the milk, [and] drawn from the breasts.**

According to the literal translation of this verse, to whom will God teach knowledge and whom will he make to understand doctrine?

When a child is naturally weaned from breast milk, what is that child then given as sustenance? What does this indicate about the growth of the infant/child?

God teaches knowledge in the manner of *line upon line, a little here and a little there* to those *ready and willing* to move away from the milk of the Word, *to those who are maturing.*

Knowing this, how would you currently categorize yourself?

We'll pick up from here tomorrow.

Day Three – Milk vs. Solid Food

Today we'll be spending a little more time understanding the differences between the *milk* of the Word and the *solid food* of the Word. Spend a moment in prayer, and then let's read what the Book of Hebrews says concerning this –

Hebrews 5:11-14

11 Concerning him [Melchizedek] we have much to say, and it is hard to explain, since you have become dull of hearing. 12 For though by this time you ought to be teachers, you have need again for someone to teach you the elementary [Lit., beginning] principles of the oracles of God, and you have come to need milk and not solid food. 13 For everyone who partakes only of milk is not accustomed to the word of righteousness, for he is a babe. 14 But solid food is for the mature, who because of practice have their senses trained to discern good and evil.

According to v. 12, what should the recipients of this letter be “by this time”?

Had they already been taught the “elementary principles of the oracles of God”? (Notice the word ‘again’ in v. 12.)

Why did they need to be taught the beginning principles again (vv. 11b and 12b)?

How is the one who partakes *only* of milk described?

What is the solid food, and who is it for?

How is this mature Christian described (v. 14)?

Let's compare this thought with something Jesus spoke about during His earthly ministry. Jesus started speaking in parables because those who *should have* understood what He was talking about did **not** understand. He said –

Matthew 13:13-15

13 "Therefore I speak to them in parables; because while seeing they do not see, and while hearing they do not hear, nor do they understand. 14 "And in their case the prophecy of Isaiah is being fulfilled, which says, 'YOU WILL KEEP ON HEARING, BUT WILL NOT UNDERSTAND; AND YOU WILL KEEP ON SEEING, BUT WILL NOT PERCEIVE; 15 FOR THE HEART OF THIS PEOPLE HAS BECOME DULL, AND WITH THEIR EARS THEY SCARCELY HEAR, AND THEY HAVE CLOSED THEIR EYES LEST THEY SHOULD SEE WITH THEIR EYES, AND HEAR WITH THEIR EARS, AND UNDERSTAND WITH THEIR HEART AND RETURN, AND I SHOULD HEAL THEM.'¹

Compare Hebrews 5:11 with Matthew 13:15. What are the similarities?

¹ The NASB version, which is the translation used throughout this study, capitalizes all texts within the New Testament that are a direct quote from the Old Testament. Many times the NASB version will put the Old Testament verse being referenced as an endnote in the margin, although not always. For proper Bible study it would be a good idea to locate the quoted Old Testament passage and read it within its original context.

Jesus spoke to His own people things about the kingdom of heaven (cf. Matt. 4:17), and both He and His message were rejected and He was crucified. Of these people Jesus said, “The heart of this people has become dull, and with their ears they scarcely hear, and they have closed their eyes.”

The connection with our passage from Hebrews is this: *Many* of the redeemed people of God who *should* hear and understand the truths spoken by God Himself concerning the solid food of God’s Word DO NOT hear, nor do they understand. Many of the hearts of God’s own people become dull, and their ears scarcely hear, and their eyes scarcely see. The sad thing is that *they do not start out that way!* They *become* that way.

Paul encountered a similar problem with the Church in Corinth –

I Corinthians 3:1-4

1 And I, brethren, could not speak to you as to spiritual men, but as to men of flesh, as to babes in Christ. 2 I gave you milk to drink, not solid food; for you were not yet able to receive it. Indeed, even now you are not yet able, 3 for you are still fleshly. For since there is jealousy and strife among you, are you not fleshly, and are you not walking like mere men? 4 For when one says, “I am of Paul,” and another, “I am of Apollos, “ are you not mere men?

According to v. 1, what does Paul compare the “babes in Christ” to?

Compare the “babes in Christ” in the Corinthian letter to the “babe” in the Hebrews letter.

Paul explicitly says in v. 4 what the root of their jealousy and strife was. They were *walking* like mere men and *following* mere men rather than the Word of God.

When a Christian acts fleshly, he/she cannot receive solid food. This solid food is what a Christian needs in order to mature, and *God expects His people to mature*. This solid food must be quite important, don’t you think? Do you see why all Christians must move beyond the milk of the Word?

Let’s go back to the passage in Isaiah that we studied yesterday. We can see that there’s another aspect to the manner in which God teaches in the way of “line upon line, order on order, a little here and a little there.” We can see *why* He teaches in this way –

Isaiah 28:9-13

9 “To whom would He teach knowledge? And to whom would He interpret the message? Those just weaned from milk? Those just taken from the breast? 10 For He says, ‘Order on order, order on order, line on line, line on line, a little here, a little there.’” 11 Indeed, He will speak to this people through stammering lips and a foreign tongue, 12 He who said to them, “Here is rest, give rest to the weary,” and, “Here is repose,” but they would not listen.

13 So the word of the Lord to them will be, “Order on order, order on order, line on line, line on line, a little here, a little there,” that they may go and stumble backward, be broken, snared, and taken captive. 14 Therefore, hear the word of the Lord, O scoffers, who rule this people who are in Jerusalem.

Who is the “them” in v. 12? (You will need to review Isa. 28:1-11 to answer this.)

To what did God say that they would not listen (v. 12)?

And because they would not listen, how would God speak to them (v. 13)?

Why would God speak to them this way (v. 13b)?

What would God use to speak to them (v. 11)?

Let’s now pay particular attention to vv. 14-16 from Isaiah chapter 28. (Verse 14 begins with “therefore,” so make sure you again check the context to see what it is referring to. When a “therefore” appears at the beginning of a sentence, the author is essentially saying, “because of the things in which I just told you...”) Isaiah has told the “scoffers” to listen to the Word of the Lord. The scoffers were the ones ruling “this people who are in Jerusalem,” and “this people” were the ones who would not listen to God’s invitation to “rest.” Let’s pick up at v. 14 –

Isaiah 28:14-16

14 Therefore, hear the word of the Lord, O scoffers, who rule this people who are in Jerusalem, 15 because you have said, “We have made a covenant with death, and with Sheol we have made a pact. The overwhelming scourge will not reach us when it passes by, for we have made falsehood our refuge and we have concealed ourselves with deception.” 16 Therefore thus says the Lord God, “Behold, I am laying in Zion a stone, a costly cornerstone for the foundation, firmly placed. He who believes in it will not be disturbed. 17 And I will make justice the measuring line, and righteousness the level...”

What do these scoffers say?

What does the Lord say back to them (v. 16)?

Now, doing just what this passage says to do (gather knowledge in the way of line upon line, a little here and little there), let's compare the scoffers in Isaiah to the scoffers mentioned in Peter's second epistle. Notice that in both cases it is *scoffing in relation to future judgment* and the people's response to what the Word of the Lord says –

II Peter 3:2-10

2 ...that you should remember the words spoken beforehand by the holy prophets and the commandment of the Lord and Savior spoken by your apostles. 3 Know this first of all, that in the last days mockers [KJV uses the word “scoffers”] will come with their mocking, following after their own lusts, 4 and saying, “Where is the promise of His coming? For ever since the fathers fell asleep, all continues just as it was from the beginning of creation.” 5 For when they maintain this, it escapes their notice that by the word of God the heavens existed long ago and the earth was formed out of water and by water, 6 through which the world at that time was destroyed, being flooded with water. 7 But the present heavens and earth by His word are being reserved for fire, kept for the day of judgment and destruction of ungodly men. 8 But do not let this one fact escape your notice, beloved, that with the Lord one day is as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day. 9 The Lord is not slow about His promise, as some count slowness, but is patient toward you, not wishing for any to perish but for all to come to repentance. 10 But the day of the Lord will come like a thief, in which the heavens will pass away with a roar and the elements will be destroyed with intense heat, and the earth and its works will be burned up.

This passage speaks for itself, doesn't it? The scoffing from these “ungodly men” (v. 7) – *not referencing the unsaved, but those of God's people who act ungodly* – is in relation to the Day of the Lord (v. 10), that which is also known of as the Seventh Day Rest (we will be learning more about this in the weeks to come). This is exactly what Isaiah speaks about, and *exactly what Isaiah needs to warn the people of God about*.

Any thoughts so far?

See you tomorrow.

Day Four – Man’s Purpose

As we begin to unravel the Biblical essentials presented in this study, we need to make sure we have a clear understanding of two fundamentally important concepts. We can go no further in any study until these are in place. One is the stated purpose of man², and the second is the triune nature of man.

Man’s purpose is stated quite plainly at the beginning of God’s Word, in direct context with man’s creation. Please read the following passage carefully –

Genesis 1:26-28

26 Then God said, “Let Us make man in Our image, according to Our likeness; and let them rule over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the sky and over the cattle and over all the earth, and over every creeping thing that creeps on the earth. 27 And God created man in His own image, in the image of God He created him; male and female He created them. 28 And God blessed them; and God said to them, “Be fruitful and multiply, and fill the earth, and subdue it; and rule over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the sky, and over every living thing that moves on the earth.”

God states man’s purpose *two times* – once just prior to Him creating man (v. 26) and once immediately after creating man (v. 28). What did God create man to do?

Not only do we see man created to have dominion here in the very beginning of God’s Word, we can also see the attaining of rulership as man’s purpose throughout the Scriptures (I have listed but a sampling) –

Psalms 8:3-7 [A Psalm of David]

3 When I consider Your heavens, the work of Your fingers, the moon and the stars, which You have ordained; 4 what is man that You take thought of him, and the son of man that You care for him? 5 Yet You have made him a little lower than God, and You crown him with glory and majesty! 6 You make him to rule over the works of Your hands; You have put all things under his feet, 7 all sheep and oxen, and also the beasts of the field, 8 the birds of the heavens and the fish of the sea, whatever passes through the paths of the seas.

According to v. 6a, what is man made to do?

According to v. 6b, what has God done for man?

² The word *man* can be used to denote either humankind in general – which includes male and female – or *a man*, a male, specifically. For the purposes in this study we will be using the term *man* in place of the term mankind or humankind. This is in order to stay consistent with the wording of the version of the Scriptures we are using (NASB, cf. Gen. 2:7; 5:2).

And according to vv. 3, 7 and 8, what are the specific “works” that have been put in subjection under man’s feet, which man was made to rule over?

Compare this passage with the one from Genesis 1:26-28. What are the similarities? What are the differences?

The author of Hebrews quotes this passage from Psalms and adds a bit more information to it –

Hebrews 2:5-8

5 For He did not subject to angels the world to come, concerning which we are speaking. 6 But one has testified somewhere, saying, "WHAT IS MAN, THAT THOU REMEMBEREST HIM? OR THE SON OF MAN, THAT THOU ART CONCERNED ABOUT HIM? 7 THOU HAST MADE HIM FOR A LITTLE WHILE LOWER THAN THE ANGELS; THOU HAST CROWNED HIM WITH GLORY AND HONOR, AND HAST APPOINTED HIM OVER THE WORKS OF THY HANDS; THOU HAST PUT ALL THINGS IN SUBJECTION UNDER HIS FEET." 8 For in subjecting all things to him [man], He left nothing that is not subject to him [man]. But now we do not yet see all things subjected to him [man].

According to v. 5, what is the author speaking of?

According to v. 7, man has been “appointed over the works of [God’s] hands.” Do we currently see all things subjected to man (v. 8)?

The Scriptures state that man was created to have dominion, i.e. *to rule*. The Scriptures also state that God has appointed man over the works of His hands – works in the heavens and works on the earth (Ps. 8:3-7). Yet the Scriptures also state that *man is not currently in that position*, for we do not yet see all things in subjection to man. And according to the author of Hebrews, this all has to do with *the subjection of the world to come*. Therefore, the concept of man having dominion is not about *this* world, it is about *the world to come*. Keep these thoughts in mind for the remainder of this study.

Let’s look at other references to man *ruling* –

Matthew 19:28

And Jesus said to them, "Truly I say to you, that you who have followed Me, in the regeneration when the Son of Man will sit on His glorious throne, you also shall sit upon twelve thrones..."

Revelation 3:21

He who overcomes, I will grant to him to sit down with Me on My throne...

In these two verses we see man attaining to a position on a throne. What does one do from a throne?

Consider the following passages –

Daniel 7:22

...until the Ancient of Days came, and judgment was passed in favor of the saints of the Highest One, and the time arrived when the saints took possession of the kingdom.

II Timothy 2:12

If we endure, we shall also reign with Him...

Paying particular attention to the underlined phrases, what do these verses specifically say in reference to man and rulership?

So far we've seen that man will one day sit on a throne, saints (i.e. holy ones) will possess the kingdom, and man will reign with Christ. We'll concern ourselves with the specifics of this scenario in the many weeks to come, but for now it is important to see that God consistently and constantly makes reference to man *ruling*.

Continuing with this big picture, we also see the distribution of *crowns* to righteous men mentioned many times –

1Corinthians 9:25 (KJV)

And every man that striveth for the mastery is temperate in all things. Now they do it to obtain a corruptible crown; but we an incorruptible.

II Timothy 4:8

...in the future there is laid up for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, will award to me on that day; and not only to me, but also to all who have loved His appearing.

Even from a secular standpoint, what are crowns used for? What do they symbolize?

According to I Corinthians 9:25, what is man to strive for, and why?

According to II Timothy 4:8, when will Paul get the crown that is mentioned?

Another crown is spoken of in the Book of James –

James 1:12

Blessed is a man who perseveres under trial; for once he has been approved, he will receive the crown of life, which the Lord has promised to those who love Him.

When does the “man who has persevered under trial” get this crown?

Peter also speaks about crowns –

I Peter 5:3-4

3 ...nor yet as lording it over those allotted to your charge, but proving to be examples to the flock. 4 And when the Chief Shepherd appears, you will receive the unfading crown of glory.

When does this person get the crown of glory?

And in the Book of Revelation –

Revelation 2:10

Do not fear what you are about to suffer. Behold, the devil is about to cast some of you into prison, that you may be tested, and you will have tribulation ten days. Be faithful until death, and I will give you the crown of life.

When does this faithful man get this crown?

And in the end of God’s Word, there is yet another reference to man *reigning* –

Revelation 20:6

Blessed and holy is the one who has a part in the first resurrection; over these the second death has no power, but they will be priests of God and of Christ and will reign with Him for a thousand years.

It is quite difficult to miss the repetitiveness concerning God's intention for man. God states mankind's purpose clearly at the very beginning of His Word, just prior to their creation and just after their creation. Then throughout the Scriptures we see this constant theme of man one day attaining to the position of a throne, having dominion, possessing a kingdom, and gaining a crown. And contextually, we know that none of these events have happened because the Book of Hebrews (along with Psalm 8) clearly says that man is not ruling *yet*.

So, do you think that God meant it when He said, "Let them [male and female] rule"? And do you believe that God will indeed bring to pass this very thing? What are your thoughts?

See you tomorrow.

Day Five – The Triune Nature of Man

Let's again go back to the very beginning of the Word. Notice what God says just prior to the creation of man –

Genesis 1:26

God said, "Let Us make man in Our image, according to Our likeness; and let them rule..."

Whom does God pattern man after?

God speaks of Himself in the plural form, "*Our* image...*Our* likeness." The Hebrew word used here for God is *Elohiym* (0430), which literally means *two or more* gods. It is no small matter that God chose to mention this about Himself in the direct context of man's creation. Let's see the connection.

The Scriptures clearly teach that there are not two or more *separate* Gods, but One God consisting of three parts; this is what we think of as the Trinity. The Trinity is clearly mentioned in the following verse –

1John 5:7 (NKJV)

For there are three that bear witness in heaven: the Father, the Word, and the Holy Spirit; and these three are one.

What are the Three that bear witness in heaven?

And the Scriptures say that *these Three are One*. In order get a fuller picture of the Trinity we must get further explanations from the Scriptures. Here is some more commentary on "the Word" –

John 1:1-3, 14

1 In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. 2 He was in the beginning with God. 3 All things came into being by Him, and apart from Him nothing came into being that has come into being.

14 And the Word became flesh, and dwelt among us.

What does John 1:1 say about the Word?

This verse indicates a synonymous nature between God and the Word. Verse 14 then adds in another element. What does it say?

Therefore, who is the Word?

There's one another element to consider regarding God's Word (which is paramount to have in place as we begin to explore it), and that is the synonymous nature between God's Spirit and God's Word. Paul draws the parallel this way –

II Timothy 3:16

All Scripture is inspired by God [Lit., God-breathed, 2315]...

God's Word (the Scriptures, *the very Bible that we study*) is His breath. And in both the Hebrew and Greek languages the word used for *breath* is the same word used for *spirit* (the Strong's numbers are: Heb. 07307, 05397; Gr. 4151). God's Word is His Spirit; God's Word is His breath (try speaking without inhaling exhaling a breath); God's Word became flesh; God's Word is Jesus.

Therefore, the Father, Jesus (God's Son in the flesh, the Word of God), and the Holy Spirit *are one – Three in One*.

Here are a few more verses for you to consider when regarding the triune nature of God –

I Corinthians 8:6

...yet for us there is but one God, the Father, from whom are all things, and we exist for Him...

John 10:30

(Jesus speaking) **"I and the Father are one."**

John 17:22

"And the glory which You gave Me I have given them, that they may be one just as We are one..."

Matthew 28:19

"Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit,

John 4:24
God is Spirit...

I Corinthians 2:10
But God has revealed them to us through His Spirit. For the Spirit searches all things, yes, the deep things of God.

Remembering that Genesis 1:26 states that man was created in God's image and likeness, consider the following verse –

I Thessalonians 5:23
Now may the God of peace Himself sanctify you entirely; and may your spirit and soul and body be preserved complete, without blame at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ.

There are three different parts of man mentioned in this verse. What are they?

We can also go to other places in the Scriptures to see *these same three parts of man* mentioned plainly as well. Let's take a look at Jesus and the scenario that is presented to us concerning His death on the cross –

Luke 23:46
And Jesus, crying out with a loud voice, said, "Father, INTO THY HANDS I COMMIT MY SPIRIT." And having said this, He breathed His last.

Keep in mind that Jesus was not only *fully God* but He was also *fully man*. In the previous verse, what did Jesus commit to His Father?

Then in the Book of Acts we read the words of Peter as he speaks to the people of Israel concerning this man Jesus whom they crucified. It is in this message that we can discover something very important concerning Jesus the Man. Read the following section carefully, paying particular attention to v. 31.

Acts 2:22-31
22 "Men of Israel, listen to these words: Jesus the Nazarene, a man attested to you by God with miracles and wonders and signs which God performed through Him in your midst, just as you yourselves know--23 this Man, delivered up by the predetermined plan and foreknowledge of God, you nailed to a cross by the hands of godless men and put Him to death. 24 "And God raised Him up again, putting an end to the agony of death, since it was impossible for Him to be held in its power.

25 For David says of Him, 'I WAS ALWAYS BEHOLDING THE LORD IN MY PRESENCE; FOR HE IS AT MY RIGHT HAND, THAT I MAY NOT BE SHAKEN. 26 THEREFORE MY HEART WAS GLAD AND MY TONGUE EXULTED; MOREOVER MY FLESH ALSO WILL ABIDE IN HOPE 27 BECAUSE THOU WILT NOT ABANDON [Lit., leave] MY SOUL TO [Lit., in] HADES, NOR ALLOW THY HOLY ONE TO UNDERGO DECAY. 28 THOU HAST MADE KNOWN TO ME THE WAYS OF LIFE; THOU WILT MAKE ME FULL OF GLADNESS WITH THY PRESENCE.' 29 Brethren, I may confidently say to you regarding the patriarch David that he both died and was buried, and his tomb is with us to this day, 30 And so, because he was a prophet, and knew that

GOD HAD SWORN TO HIM WITH AN OATH TO SEAT one OF HIS DESCENDANTS UPON HIS THRONE, 31 he looked ahead and spoke of the resurrection of the Christ, that HE WAS NEITHER ABANDONED TO [Lit., left in] HADES, NOR DID His flesh SUFFER DECAY.

Verses 22, 25 and 31 show us that Peter is clearly speaking about Jesus the Nazarene. In speaking of Jesus' death and resurrection, Peter uses David's own words from Psalm 16 (recorded nearly 1,000 years prior) in order to show the people that David himself was talking *not about himself* but about the Christ. Peter desired to convince the nation of Israel that their Messiah *did* come and Jesus was indeed the One they had been waiting for.

Concerning the prophetic words of David, we can see something particularly interesting mentioned regarding Christ's resurrection in v. 31. Rewrite vv. 30 and 31 in your own words.

Peter was essentially saying that God's Holy One – the Promised Descendant of David Who would sit on David's throne forever (cf. II Sam. 7:12-16), *would not be left in Hades*, nor would His flesh suffer decay. His body would not be held by death. The Christ, the Promised One, would be resurrected.

According to v. 27, what part of the Christ *would not* be left in Hades?

To point out the obvious here, we must take note that the verse reads His soul would not be *left* or *abandoned* in Hades. That means that His soul was *in* Hades but it would not be *left* in Hades. This is an important element to catch.

So we have seen that Jesus' spirit was given into His Father's hands, and His soul went into Hades (but wouldn't be left there). Then another aspect concerning His death is seen in the following verse –

Luke 23:52-53

52 ...this man went to Pilate and asked for the body of Jesus. 53 And he took it down and wrapped it in a linen cloth, and laid Him in a tomb cut into the rock, where no one had ever lain.

What part of Jesus is mentioned here, and what is done with it?

After Jesus' death, but prior to His resurrection, His *spirit* went to the Father, His *soul* went into Hades, and His *body* went into the tomb. That makes the man Jesus a *three-part being*, consisting of the same three parts mentioned by Paul in I Thessalonians 5:23.

Therefore, just as we see in the Trinity three distinctly different parts of One God, yet all three comprising One Entity, so too with man we can see three distinctly *different* parts, yet all three parts comprising one individual. *Three in one*, created in the image and likeness of God.

We'll cover more details in the days to come; for now, remember these things:

- Man was created to rule.
- Man will indeed one day rule
- Man consists of three parts: spirit, soul, and body.

Don't worry if some of this is new to you, or if you still have questions. We'll be tying all of these thoughts together as the weeks go on. But remember, this is only the beginning! The journey of (re)discovering the Scriptures is a lifetime of pleasure – and work – and the Spirit will open up more and more of the truth as long as you continue to seek it.

See you next week.