

**The Book of 1 Corinthians**  
**1 Corinthians 3:1-4**  
**Session 13: Babes and Carnal**

As we get into chapter 3, Paul is about to use the word “spiritual” in a different way than he did back in chapter 2.

In chapter 2, Paul was discussing the process of revelation and inspiration. To review:

1 Corinthians 2:13 Which things also we speak, not in the words which man's wisdom teacheth, but which the Holy Ghost teacheth; comparing **spiritual things** with spiritual.

We saw how the “spiritual things” in vs. 13 were the revealed truths which were made known to Paul’s mind. In other words, God is revealing doctrinal truth to Paul. Those truths are the “spiritual things” of vs. 13. Once those truths are revealed to Paul by the Spirit, the Spirit then “compares” those truths with words in Paul’ vocabulary (words which the Holy Ghost teacheth) to ensure those truths are accurately conveyed.

The Spirit knows the truths it wants to convey. The Spirit also knows which words in Paul’s vocabulary correctly expresses these truths. As Paul is thinking about how to express these truths, the Spirit is confirming or denying his choices. We do this same thing when we tell someone about something and they say, “Okay, what I am understanding is....: If they say it back to you and there is any part of that which is not right, it will immediately jump out at you and you would correct it. But, if they say it back to you and they say it just the way you meant it, then you would say, “Yes, that is what I want.” The same thing is taking place in Paul’s spirit.

In this process of revelation and inspiration, Paul is supernaturally given to know: 1) the truth the Spirit wants conveyed, 2) which words in his vocabulary accurately convey that truth, 3) which thoughts in his mind are his thoughts, 4) which thoughts in his mind are from the Spirit, and, 5) when his thoughts are perfectly in-line with the Spirit’s.

This is a supernatural event where Paul and the Spirit of God are having a conversation except it is all taking place in Paul’s spirit.

1 Corinthians 2:13 Which things also we speak, not in the words which man's wisdom teacheth, but which the Holy Ghost teacheth; comparing spiritual things **with spiritual**.

The “spiritual” that the Spirit is comparing with the things revealed (spiritual things) are the “words” which the Holy Ghost teacheth.

Neither one of the “spiritual” mentioned in vs. 13 is describing a type of person; they are truths and words.

The other mention of “spiritual” in chapter 2 is in vs. 15.

1 Corinthians 2:15 But **he that is spiritual** judgeth all things, yet he himself is judged of no man.

In this case, the word “spiritual” is referring to the one receiving revelation from God. He is said to be “spiritual” because God has given him the ability to discern that what the Spirit communicated to his mind was indeed spiritual truth. In other words, he is “spiritual” because the Spirit has given him the ability to know which of his thoughts are the result of his own thinking and which of his thoughts are those which the Spirit is communicating.

(This has never happened to you and me. We have never been given direct revelation from God, because what follows, when we communicate (whether it be verbally or in writing) would be divine inspiration – and that isn’t happening anymore.)

This is why, when I think I have come across a great truth, I want to inspect it to make sure it is correct, since, 1) I have not been given direct revelation from God, and 2) I have not been given the supernatural ability to tell the difference.

Now, why did we go over this again? Firstly, because I want us to get the right interpretation of the passage into our thinking and one pass- through it will not be enough for most of us. But secondly, because I am making my case that the word “spiritual” as used in chapter 3 is not the same use as back in chapter 2.

And how do we know that? Because after chapter 2:16, Paul has left the subject matter of how he has received the truth of the mystery, and the accuracy of his understanding of it and the certainty of the communication of it, because the Spirit of God superintended the whole process – he is leaving that subject to address a whole new issue, the lack of spiritual growth and the carnality of the Corinthians.

1 Corinthians 3:1 And I, brethren, could not speak unto you as unto spiritual, but as unto carnal, even as unto babes in Christ.<sup>2</sup> I have fed you with milk, and not with meat: for hitherto ye were not able *to bear it*, neither yet now are ye able.

This is a long way from “we have the mind of Christ” isn’t it? It is. So, when Paul says he cannot speak unto them as unto “spiritual” he is not talking about them receiving direct revelation from God, he is talking about what is not controlling their lives, their spirit. Contrary to living out of your spirit would be to live out of your flesh (soul). A “spiritual” person is not necessarily someone who is always talking about the Lord, or goes to church or any of that type of thing. A “spiritual” person is one who is controlled by his spirit, which in turn, is controlled by God’s Spirit.

What do I mean by “controlled by God’s Spirit?” I do not mean controlled in a robotic sense, but I mean this person is living out of the doctrine they know. They may not know as much as someone else, but they are obeying the doctrine they know, which means they are walking after the Spirit; spiritual!

The spiritual person may know a little or he may know a lot, but spiritual is not a degree of knowledge.

Our spirit is the place where the Spirit of God resides within us. When we were saved, we are talking about our spirit. That is where we were made spiritually alive – alive in our spirit. Yes, our soul is saved (in the sense of having eternal life), but not in the sense of our spirit. Our soul was very much alive before we got saved. There is much in our soul that is carnal or fleshly.

When we say fleshly, we are not talking about our body. This mistaken idea, which has its roots in Gnosticism, has given rise in the past to people whipping themselves or abusing themselves in order to keep their body in submission to God.<sup>1</sup>

The flesh is representative of all of the lusts and desires of our soul. We may commit sins or carry out lusts with our body, but they find their origin in our soul.

To make the distinction, look at it this way.

Prior to salvation, we are spiritually dead. We have a human spirit which functions before we are saved. But that spirit is incapable of influencing us to obey the doctrine. It is our spirit that allows us to interact with ourselves. It is our human spirit that makes us self-aware. As Paul said, “what man knoweth the things of a man, save the spirit of a man which is in him?”

When we trust Christ, the Spirit of God takes up residence in us, in our spirit, and we become spiritually alive. In other words, our spirit is saved. Immediately upon our trusting Christ, our spirit is as saved as it is ever going to be from a positional standpoint and a functional standpoint.

With God’s Spirit within us, we can now interact with God. The Spirit of God is the intermediary between our human spirit and God. It is through our spirit that we understand the things of God. This is why the natural man (the man controlled by His soul) thinks the things of God are foolish.

The saved man (spiritually alive) that lives out of his spirit instead of his soul, Paul calls this man “spiritual.” There is an element of this which is also true back in chapter 2, when Paul talks about “he that is spiritual judgeth all things.” He can say that because the Spirit of God is communicating those truths in his spirit, not in his soul – making Him...spiritual. The particular

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<sup>1</sup> Please see the Reservoir of Knowledge #1 for an expanded view of Gnosticism.

circumstances between chapters 2 and 3 may be different, but the place being referenced (our spirit) is the same. Therefore, Paul can say “spiritual” in both places, even though the particulars are different.

Once we have trusted Christ, our soul is positionally saved, which means when we die, it will join our spirit in eternal life. But functionally, our soul is in the process of being saved, in the sense of being “saved by [Christ’s] life” in us (Romans 5:10). This is the process whereby we are conformed to the image of God’s son.

Hebrews 10:38 Now the just shall live by faith: but if any man draw back, my soul shall have no pleasure in him.<sup>39</sup> But we are not of them who draw back unto perdition; but of them that believe to the saving of the soul.

This “saving of the soul” is actually a sanctification issue. Our soul is “saved” but it may not look/act like it. The natural man is the man who is influenced and controlled by his soul. You can have the Spirit of God in your spirit and still regard evil in your soul. Sonship is the process of producing the life of God’s Son in every part of us; body, soul and spirit.

All of this is meant to further our understanding of what it means to be spiritual. Paul says to the Corinthians, that he cannot write unto them as those who are controlled by their spirit, because they are controlled by their flesh (souls). Natural men.

Before we move on, let me say something else about our soul.

Before we are saved, we are dead spiritually. By this I mean that we are alienated from the life of God and we are incapable of communicating with God. We cannot obey doctrine.

Our soul is alive, but, our soul is in darkness. There is no “light” from God’s word working in us, so all we have is a human viewpoint (the wisdom of men/wisdom of the world). Look at these verses in James 3.

James 3:14 But if ye have bitter envying and strife in your hearts, glory not, and lie not against the truth.<sup>15</sup> This wisdom descendeth not from above, but *is* earthly, sensual, devilish.<sup>16</sup> For where envying and strife *is*, there *is* confusion and every evil work.

In every dispensation, the wisdom which is “not from above” is three things: earthly, sensual and devilish. The satanic program, the lusts and sin program of Satan, works from the outside in, appealing to the body for pleasures of every sort. Then it moves to the soul where either emotions or intellect run the unsaved man.

When we, as believers, allow our emotions to be the basis of how we make decisions, we are acting like an unsaved person. When we live out of our emotions, they will capture our will and bend it to their desires.

When we allow our human intellect to dictate what our actions will be, we are still functioning out of our soul, like a lost person.

And these are devilish in that we have been captured in Satan's trap and we are traveling down the road he has charted for every man and woman.

For a lost person, their body and soul are stuck together. The unsaved person is a "servant of sin."

**John 8:34 Jesus answered them, Verily, verily, I say unto you, Whosoever committeth sin is the servant of sin.**

I am using the verse in John for a reason. We will look at what Paul says in Romans 6 shortly, but for now, look at what Jesus says: "whosoever committeth sin is the servant of sin." There is no trick here Paul is going to confirm this same thing about us in this DoGG. What Jesus is saying here is that the ability to make decisions is under the control of a man's sin nature. Now, what happens when we get saved? There is a five-step ministry that is carried out on our behalf by the Spirit of God. It is seen the acronym, CRIBS.

#### C = Circumcision

**Colossians 2:11 In whom also ye are circumcised with the circumcision made without hands, in putting off the body of the sins of the flesh by the circumcision of Christ:**

We are identified in the person and work of Jesus Christ. His death at the cross becomes our death. In His death, we also died. Not physically, but we are dead in our old identity in Adam, in our old sin nature, in our enslavement to sin.

**Romans 6:6 Knowing this, that our old man is crucified with him, that the body of sin might be destroyed, that henceforth we should not serve sin.<sup>7</sup> For he that is dead is freed from sin.**

As a result, we are no longer servants of sin.

**Romans 6:17 But God be thanked, that ye were the servants of sin, but ye have obeyed from the heart that form of doctrine which was delivered you.**

**Romans 6:20 For when ye were the servants of sin, ye were free from righteousness.**

See how Paul says that we "were" but not any longer! The reason this is true is because of the C=Circumcision, where God cut our soul loose from our body. He broke the connection. Our body is not redeemed, so God breaks the bond between our soul and our body.

Not only this, but before the court of God's justice, our sin has been officially cancelled. Our bondage under sin is broken and the "captives are set free." This is a non-experiential truth in

that there is nothing happening to you when you get saved that tells you the spiritual circumcision has taken place. Therefore, we have to be told about it. Whether we know it or not, we have been set free from sin.

R = Regenerated. We have been regenerated in that our dead spirit has been made alive.

I = indwell. The bible doesn't actually use the word "indwell." It does use the word "dwell." When it does, it can be one of two meanings. The first meaning of dwell is describing the Spirit taking up residence in our spirit upon our faith in Christ. This is the meaning we are after right now. When this happens, we are in direct contact with the life of God, through His Spirit. There is another aspect of "dwell" which has to do with our sanctification, where the Spirit is in control; we are obeying the doctrine which means we are "walking after the Spirit." It is possible for a person to have the Spirit of God and not be under His direction. But the point we are making now is that every saved person has the Spirit.

B = Baptized. We are baptized into the body of Christ by the Spirit of God. By that baptism, we are now one with Christ. This is why water baptism is so unnecessary. Why? Because water baptism hides and obscures the true baptism and our new identity in Christ. If you doubt that, just ask your Christian friends to define baptism, and listen to what they say. Invariably, they will talk about water baptism as an act of obedience, like it is a "thing" in and of itself.

S = Seals. God places us permanently in Christ so that no matter what, we will never lose our position in Christ or our identity with Him. We are sealed until the day of redemption, meaning the redemption of our body.

All these take place at salvation. His death set us free from our old life and identity, and His resurrection gave us new life in Christ.

We quoted earlier from the gospel of John and before we end the session, I wanted to make a comment about that. The normal date for the gospel of John is from 90-110 A.D. Lately, some scholars have put the date even later, at 175 A.D. If true, this means John could not have written it and neither could anyone who had actually lived during the time of Christ's earthly ministry. In other words, the gospel of John could not be an eyewitness account.

If either of the later dates is true, this would mean that Paul did not "fulfill" the scriptures in the way I think of in Colossians 1:25. And while I do not yet have a full set of dates for the NT books other than Paul's, I think I can provide evidence for John writing his gospel before Paul writes 2 Timothy.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>2</sup> There is a RoK #2 section that gives a more detailed account following the notes for this session. It is taken from information accumulated and published by J. Warner Wallace, of Cold-Case Christianity.

Since I am giving you a more detailed account of this in the Reservoir of Knowledge (RoK) #2, I am going to keep my remarks simple. What happened in 70 A.D.? Titus and the Roman army destroyed Jerusalem.

When did Paul write his last epistle, 2 Timothy? Shortly before his death, during what I consider to be his second imprisonment, around 68 A.D., just two years before the destruction of the temple and the city of Jerusalem.

There is evidence in the Bible that demonstrates that John wrote the gospel of John before the destruction of the temple, which means that his gospel, which, by the way, was probably the last of the gospels written, had to be written before 70 A.D., at the least.

While there is more evidence in the RoK #2, we are going to limit the video to only one evidence, which is given in John 5.

John 5:1 After this there was a feast of the Jews; and Jesus went up to Jerusalem.<sup>2</sup> **Now there is at Jerusalem by the sheep market a pool**, which is called in the Hebrew tongue Bethesda, having five porches.

John used the present tense word “is” (ἐστίν) when describing the existence of the pool, yet the pool was destroyed in 70 A.D. when Jerusalem was sacked by the Romans. If the gospel was written after 70 A.D., it would have said, “Now there **was** at Jerusalem...” which would have been accurate if the writing is late. But it isn’t. John writes that at the time of his writing, that the pool is there.

The truth is that every book in the NT was written, collated together, copied and distributed out, every one of them, before 70 A.D. I believe, based on what Paul says in Colossians, that he is the final writer of NT books. His book of 2 Timothy closed the canon of scripture.

## Reservoir of Knowledge #1: Gnosticism

Gnosticism comes from the Greek word 'gnosis', which means to know, or, to have knowledge. Gnosticism is a general description of a wide range of religious ideas, which became very popular during the second and third centuries. There were many different gnostic schools, all of which had different beliefs and practices, but who all claimed their particular group had the secret knowledge, which would alone achieve salvation.

To say you were a Gnostic was to say: "I know something you don't. I'm in on the secret. I've been enlightened. I'm spiritually on a higher level." You get a hint of that in the way Simon Magus is described in the book of Acts. He's been called the first Gnostic, and according to Acts chapter 8, "he amazed the people of Samaria, saying that he himself was somebody great."

Acts 8:9 But there was a certain man, called Simon, which beforetime in the same city used sorcery, and bewitched the people of Samaria, **giving out that himself was some great one:**<sup>10</sup> To whom they all gave heed, from the least to the greatest, saying, This man is the great power of God.

Gnosticism was an attempt at answering the centuries-old problem of the relationship between good and evil. Members of the gnostic sects were convinced that they possessed secret and mysterious knowledge, which they had received by revelation. This knowledge was deeply veiled to the world around them, and could not be found outside the teaching of their group. Gnostics received this knowledge by being initiated into one of the gnostic sects. Salvation was achieved by receiving this esoteric knowledge. In Gnosticism, knowledge took the place of faith, so the Gnostics became a club of the illuminated, rather than the society of the redeemed. Gnosticism should be categorized as a mystery religion.

There are many, too many, false teachings in Gnosticism. The one we are concerned with in this study is its teaching on the body.

Gnostics say that the spirit is good, and all matter, including the physical body, is evil.

To bridge the gulf between man and the distant unknowable god, and to explain how a wholly good Supreme Being could create an evil physical universe, different gnostic teachers speculated about a complicated hierarchical series of 'aeons' or 'emanations'. These were a series of spirit beings, which were descended from the invisible God and served as intermediaries between man and God. Some teachers, such as Valentinus, claimed that there was a company of the eight highest beings known as the Ogdoad. From these a further five pairs of aeons came, known as the Deod, and another six pairs known as the Dodecad. All thirty of these together formed the 'fullness of the godhead' or 'pleroma'. Names of these emanations included Wisdom, Truth, Mind, Word, Life, Man, and Church. From Mind came another pair of aeons called Christ and Holy Spirit.

Dualism resulted in God becoming very distant, unapproachable, and unknowable. God was incapable of emotion, feeling or passion. Gnostics believed that God is pure spirit, and therefore he cannot have any contact with evil matter. God therefore cannot be identified with the creator-God of the Old Testament. Instead they taught that the physical world was created by an evil god, or 'Demiurge', identified as the God of the Jews, and author of the Old Testament. Some taught that the physical world resulted from the fall of 'wisdom'.

Gnosticism inevitably led to a denial of the incarnation and humanity of Christ. In their dualistic thinking, it was impossible for God to take on a physical body, so they taught that Jesus was merely one of the lower-level emanations.

Docetists taught that Jesus only seemed to have a physical body. He was only a purely spiritual being, with only the appearance of having a physical body, therefore he did not suffer and die on the cross.

The other form was taught by Gnostics such as Cerinthus. He made a distinction between the divine Christ and the human Jesus. Jesus was born as a man in the normal way to Mary and Joseph, and lived a righteous life of obedience to God. At his baptism the divine Christ descended upon him in the form of a dove, giving him supernatural power to bring news of the Father, who had been unknown before this time. Before the end of his life, the Christ withdrew from him, so only the human Jesus suffered on the cross, not the divine Christ.

To a Gnostic, salvation was seen as the way to escape from this evil material world, from the corruption of the physical body, into the pure world of the spirit. Sin was ignorance and salvation came through knowledge.

The dualistic separation of the physical from the spiritual led to two extremes of lifestyle. Both were ways Gnostics could show their contempt for the flesh. The first was asceticism. Because salvation was to escape from the body, the prison of the soul, some Gnostics aimed to subdue the body and its desires by a severe asceticism, which involved celibacy and fasting, or even deliberate ill-treatment of the body. Celibacy was seen as more spiritual than marriage. Some believed that humans were originally unisex, and it was the creation of woman that was the source of evil. They thought that the procreation of children simply multiplied the number of souls in bondage to the power of darkness.

The other extreme was license, believing that because the body was evil, it did not matter what they did with their bodies, so its appetites could be indulged in and gratified without limit. The libertines taught that the soul within the body was like a pearl, which could not be stained in the mud. Many were involved in gross licentiousness, and boasted in their sin, claiming to be 'righteous' irrespective of their behavior.

The Gnostics used similar expressions to the Christians, which would cause much confusion to ordinary believers. They had particular phrases, including: 'being born of God', 'walking in the light', 'having no sin', 'dwelling in God', and 'knowing God'. Their aim was to purify the church, and change Christianity into an intellectually respectable philosophy. However, their teaching denied the incarnation of Jesus, contradicted Christian moral teaching and destroyed Christian fellowship, thus making it a severe threat to the spread of the Gospel.

In his first letter to Timothy, Paul tells him to instruct the people to avoid things which the gnostics of that day would have been teaching.

1 Timothy 6:20 O Timothy, keep that which is committed to thy trust, avoiding profane and vain babblings, and oppositions of science falsely so called: 21 Which some professing have erred concerning the faith. Grace *be* with thee. Amen.

1 Timothy 1:4 Neither give heed to fables and endless genealogies, which minister questions, rather than godly edifying which is in faith: so do.

1 Timothy 4:3 Forbidding to marry, and commanding to abstain from meats, which God hath created to be received with thanksgiving of them which believe and know the truth.

The Greek-thinking and pseudo-spirituality of the Corinthian church was fertile soil for gnostic teaching to spring up which Paul addressed in 1 Corinthians. Some in the church were claiming to possess knowledge which others didn't have (chapter 13:2, 8:1). Some were forbidding sexual relations within marriage (chapter 7), or denying the physical resurrection (chapter 15). There were also serious issues of sexual immorality in the church (chapters 5-6).

## **Reservoir of Knowledge #2: The Date of the Gospel of John**

John's gospel may have been written last of all the gospels, but it was not written late. The gospel of John is generally believed to have been written *after* the other gospels (Mark, Matthew and Luke). There are several good reasons to accept this claim, given the historical and textual evidence:

### **The Church Fathers Say John's Gospel Came Last**

The first century bishop, Clement of Rome, testified that John's Gospel was written after the other gospels (according to Eusebius' History of the Church, Book 4, Chapter 14.7), and Irenaeus, the ancient Bishop of Lugdunum, also affirmed this to be the case (see Against Heresies, Book 3, Chapter 1). Later Church Fathers (like Origen, Eusebius, and Jerome) repeated this claim.

### **John Wrote as Though His Reader's Already Knew the Apostles**

In the "Synoptic Gospels," (the gospels of Mark, Matthew and Luke re-counting events from a similar point of view), the disciples are named and described as they are first introduced in the narrative. John, on the other hand, seldom takes the time to provide any detail about each follower of Jesus as he introduces them in his account. In John 6:67, for example, John writes about "the twelve" as a special subset of the larger group of disciples, but he does so without describing *who* precisely is part of this group or *why* they are uniquely related to the other followers. John writes as though this information is already available to his readers (in the gospels that preceded his).

### **John Wrote As Though His Reader's Already Knew About John the Baptist**

In a similar way, John wrote to his audience as though they already knew a great deal about *John the Baptist*. For example, the apostle never refers to Jesus' cousin as John "the Baptist". Instead the apostle simply calls him "John" as if his readers would already know about Jesus' cousin. In addition, the details surrounding John the Baptist's death are never described. Instead, at one point in the narrative, the Apostle John simply writes that John the Baptist had "not yet been thrown in prison" (John 3:24) as though his readers were already familiar with the imprisonment and execution of John the Baptist as recorded in the other gospels.

### **The Other Gospels Authors Don't Seem to Know About John's Gospel**

While the Synoptic Gospels contain parallel pieces of information (as if they were aware of each other's accounts), none of these texts contain information that appears to have come from the Gospel of John. While it appears that Mark, Matthew and Luke consulted with one another, nothing in their accounts reveal any knowledge of *John's* text. This makes sense if John's Gospel was written *after* the other three.

There are good reasons to accept the claim that John wrote his account *after* the other gospel accounts had already been written. But does this mean that it was written *late in history*? Not many generations ago, skeptical scholars from the “Tübingen School” in Southern Germany argued that the Gospel of John was written in the latter part of the *second* century (ca. 175AD). If this is true, the gospel could not have been written by the Apostle John or anyone else who actually witnessed the life and ministry of Jesus of Nazareth. Interestingly, modern New Testament scholars are now nearly unanimous in dating John’s Gospel *much* earlier.

I also believe this gospel was written early; within the lifetime of people who witnessed the events it records. This is important, because the early dating of the Gospels helps to establish their reliability as eyewitness accounts. Here is a very brief summary of the evidence establishing the early dating of the Gospel of John:

#### **John Fails to Describe the Olivet Discourse**

John’s Gospel is missing the Olivet Discourse, the Biblical passage (found in all the other gospels: Matthew 24, Mark 13, and Luke 21) in which Jesus predicts the destruction of the Temple. If John was aware of the fall of Jerusalem and the destruction of the Jewish Temple (that occurred in 70AD), it makes sense he would have included Jesus’ predictions in this regard as a point of emphasis.

#### **John Fails to Mention the Destruction of the Temple**

John also fails to mention the siege of Jerusalem, the sacking of the city, or the destruction of the Jewish Temple, all of which fulfilled the predictions of Jesus. Other ancient writers, known to have written *after* 70AD, include a description of the destruction of the Temple. The Epistle of Barnabas (traditionally ascribed to the Barnabas mentioned in the Book of Acts), for example, refers to the Temple demolition (Chapter 16, verses 3 and 4). If authors writing *after* 70AD included a description of the Temple destruction, it is even more reasonable to infer that John’s Gospel (missing the description) was written *prior* to this date.

#### **John Uses Primitive Terms and Titles**

John uses words in his text that are consistent with the earliest years of Christianity. For example, John never calls the closest followers of Jesus “apostles” (like Luke does in the Book of Acts). Instead, John refers to them with the earlier term, “disciples”.

#### **John Refers to the Pool of Bethesda in a Particular Way**

In Chapter 5, verse 2, John wrote, “there is in Jerusalem, by the sheep-gate, a pool (the one called Bethesda in Hebrew) which has five porticoes.” John used the present tense word “is” (ἐστίν) when describing the existence of the pool, yet the pool was destroyed in 70AD when Jerusalem was sacked by the Romans. John also provided very little detail in this passage as he

described the healing of the sick man. When Jesus asks him if he wants to be healed, the ailing man simply responds, “Sir, I have no man to put me into the pool when the water is stirred up, but while I am coming, another steps down before me” (see John 5:6-7). John never described *why* the waters were stirred in the first place, however, and this evidently caused confusion for readers in the decades to follow. In fact, scribes eventually added information to clarify the situation (the addition of verse 3 explains that the waters were stirred by angels). John appears to have written this passage very early (as someone who knew Jerusalem intimately) to people who were familiar with the pool.

### **John’s Gospel Is Similar to First Century “Dead Sea Scrolls”**

Scholars note textual and conceptual parallels between John’s Gospel and some of the ancient first century “Dead Sea Scrolls” (nearly 1,000 ancient scrolls have been discovered in caves near Khirbet Qumran in the eastern Judean Desert). Both John’s Gospel and the scrolls (known to have been written in the first century) reflect strong thematic similarities (particularly related to “dualism,” “predestination,” and messianic expectations).

### **Papyrus Evidence Affirms an Early Date for John’s Gospel**

In 1934, while examining uncatalogued papyrus fragments in the John Rylands Library at the University of Manchester, British scholar, C. H. Roberts, discovered a papyrus containing portions of John Chapter 18. New Testament scholars now date this fragment to approximately 125AD, and no one believes this to be a portion of the *original* gospel document. In fact, the fragment comes from *Egypt*. Scholars admit it would have taken several *decades* for the Gospel to have been written, copied, handed from one community to another, carried across the continent and finally buried in Egypt. This would place the original authorship of the document several decades *prior* to 125AD.

### **Document Evidence Affirms An Early Date for John’s Gospel**

Papyrus Egerton 2 is a collection of three papyrus fragments, dated at one time to approximately 150AD. These fragments describe events found in all four gospels, including a narrative resembling John 5:39-47. This would not be possible unless John’s Gospel was written early enough to be available to the author(s) of this document. In addition, the Muratorian Fragment, containing information dated to approximately 180AD, describes the origin of John’s Gospel and seems to take for granted the fact that John’s “fellow-disciples” (including the apostle Andrew) were still alive and present with John when he wrote his account. This would also argue for an early date of authorship. Finally, a set of early introductions to the Gospels, known as the Anti-Marcionite Prologues (penned as early as 150AD), cites Papias as the source for the claim that “the Gospel of John was revealed and given to the churches by John while *still in the body* (emphasis mine).”

John's Gospel most reasonably appears to have been written *after* the other gospels and *prior* to 70AD. One clue in narrowing the dating of the text may be present at the end of John's Gospel. In John Chapter 21, we find the following passage (vs 20-23):

*Peter turned and saw the disciple whom Jesus loved following them, the one who also had leaned back against him during the supper and had said, "Lord, who is it that is going to betray you?" When Peter saw him, he said to Jesus, "Lord, what about this man?" Jesus said to him, "If it is my will that he remain until I come, what is that to you? You follow me!" So the saying spread abroad among the brothers that this disciple was not to die; yet Jesus did not say to him that he was not to die, but, "If it is my will that he remain until I come, what is that to you?" (English Standard Version)*

In this passage, John appears to be aware of the fact that Peter was already dead (Peter was martyred in approximately 64AD), as he felt the need to further explain this statement of Jesus. If this is the case, we might reasonably date the authorship of John's Gospel to a time frame between 64-70AD. While John's Gospel may have been written after the other Gospels, it was early enough to have been written by the Apostle himself, a man who saw the events firsthand and recorded them within the lifetime of those who would know if he was lying.

**The Book of 1 Corinthians**  
**1 Corinthians 3:1-4**  
**Session 14: Can We Trust the Bible?**

Look, scholarship is fine and being a scholar does not necessarily make you a bad guy, but scholarship is not a replacement for bible study. Knowing the Greek, Hebrew and Aramaic are great, but those things alone do not teach you how to rightly divide the word of truth. What I am saying is: it is not enough to know that every Greek verb can be in four cases, and that in every case there is a singular and a plural, and that in each of those cases there is a masculine, feminine and neuter gender and that there is a different Greek word for each one of those. It is great to know that there are 23 ways to spell the word “the” in Greek. But knowing the original languages is not enough. You have to study that Bible.

I know there are guys out there, a lot smarter and more educated than I am who use that argument to say that you cannot accurately translate from one language into another because the words are different. They say that linguistically, that is an impossibility.

They will say, for example, there are different Greek words, all of which the translators of the KJB translated with one English word, then the translation cannot be accurate. Well, they never mention that even though we have a single English word, most of those words have multiple meanings, depending on the context. In a previous session, we covered over a dozen meanings for the English word “glory.”

But let's cut to the heart of the matter. Can any translation from one language to another be word-for-word verbatim? No, it cannot. But is that a problem? No it isn't. Why do I say that? Well, let me give you an example from Acts 7.

Acts 7:20 In which time Moses was born, and was exceeding fair, and nourished up in his father's house three months: <sup>21</sup> And when he was cast out, Pharaoh's daughter took him up, and nourished him for her own son.

If you read the account in Exodus 2, his mother winds up being Moses' nursemaid, but as the child grew, she “brought him unto Pharaoh's daughter, and he became her son. And she called his name Moses...” And what happened as he grew up as the son of Pharaoh's daughter?

Acts 7:22 And Moses was learned in all the wisdom of the Egyptians, and was mighty in words and in deeds.

Now we fast forward to Moses as an adult, where he had fled to Midian. So, after Moses comes back from Midian, what does he do? He comes back to Egypt and he starts talking with Pharaoh about letting the people go. Exodus records 10 chapters of conversations that were

taking place between Moses and Pharaoh. I want us to read just half of this chapter and I want you to notice the things which are being said.

Exodus 5:1 And afterward Moses and Aaron went in, and told Pharaoh, Thus saith the LORD God of Israel, Let my people go, that they may hold a feast unto me in the wilderness. <sup>2</sup> And Pharaoh said, Who *is* the LORD, that I should obey his voice to let Israel go? I know not the LORD, neither will I let Israel go. <sup>3</sup> And they said, The God of the Hebrews hath met with us: let us go, we pray thee, three days' journey into the desert, and sacrifice unto the LORD our God; lest he fall upon us with pestilence, or with the sword. <sup>4</sup> And the king of Egypt said unto them, Wherefore do ye, Moses and Aaron, let the people from their works? get you unto your burdens. <sup>5</sup> And Pharaoh said, Behold, the people of the land now *are* many, and ye make them rest from their burdens. <sup>6</sup> And Pharaoh commanded the same day the taskmasters of the people, and their officers, saying, <sup>7</sup> Ye shall no more give the people straw to make brick, as heretofore: let them go and gather straw for themselves. <sup>8</sup> And the tale of the bricks, which they did make heretofore, ye shall lay upon them; ye shall not diminish *ought* thereof: for they *be* idle; therefore they cry, saying, Let us go *and* sacrifice to our God. <sup>9</sup> Let there more work be laid upon the men, that they may labour therein; and let them not regard vain words.

<sup>10</sup> And the taskmasters of the people went out, and their officers, and they spake to the people, saying, Thus saith Pharaoh, I will not give you straw. <sup>11</sup> Go ye, get you straw where ye can find it: yet not ought of your work shall be diminished. <sup>12</sup> So the people were scattered abroad throughout all the land of Egypt to gather stubble instead of straw. <sup>13</sup> And the taskmasters hasted *them*, saying, Fulfil your works, *your* daily tasks, as when there was straw. <sup>14</sup> And the officers of the children of Israel, which Pharaoh's taskmasters had set over them, were beaten, *and* demanded, Wherefore have ye not fulfilled your task in making brick both yesterday and to day, as heretofore?

Look, we are only reading about half of the chapter. The point is, these kinds of conversations go on for about 10 chapters, so there is a lot of this. So, here is the question: when Moses and Pharaoh are talking, are they talking in Hebrew or Egyptian? Although Moses knows both, I think they are talking in Egyptian. We don't even know that Pharaoh knows Hebrew, but Moses does know Egyptian, we have been told that.

So, guess what? The original statements were made in Egyptian. But they get translated into Hebrew so they can be written into the Hebrew bible. Since you cannot translate verbatim from one language to another, did the original, inspired Hebrew Scriptures miss some stuff? I mean, do we need to go back to the original Egyptian to see the "truth?" No, we don't. Why not? Because God when the scriptures are being translated, is not worried about a word-for-word verbatim translation, but He is conveying that same message in the new language.

If God preserved the truth of the Egyptian language in Hebrew, why can't He preserve the truth of Hebrew or Greek into English? I think He can. So, while I am not a Greek or Hebrew linguist, the men who translated the KJB were the most renowned scholars of their day. I do not think that they translated a word-for-word verbatim copy of the Greek NT, because you can't; the differences in the languages won't let that happen. But does that mean that our English bible is no good, that it is undependable? No. I think those men chose the very words in English that would give us the understanding we are meant to have. And therefore, I do not think that the English bible I hold in my hands is inferior to the originals. I think the Greek speaking people got what they were supposed to have and the English speaking people got what they were supposed to have, if (and this is a conditional "if"), what they have is either the Greek of the Textus Receptus (TR) or the English which is translated from the Textus Receptus.

If you are reading a Greek different from the TR, then I don't trust it. If you are reading a bible that is translated from something other than the TR, I don't trust that either.

The attacks against the Bible are endless. My ministry is not focused on answering all of those attacks. I know a few things, but that is not the core of what I am doing. This ministry is about the edification of the saints, teaching how to have the life of Jesus Christ lived in us on a daily basis, and equipping us to labor with God throughout eternity, (the two components of sonship) with both of these being to the exaltation of God's Son and the glory of God the Father.

This is what sons and daughters are supposed to do; humble themselves and be obedient (even unto death, if need be) on this earth, so that they can be exalted in the HP to the further glory of God throughout eternity. By this, I mean to say that God can, and should, be glorified by our obedience to the doctrine while we are on this earth. Because of that obedience, we will be exalted. But even our exaltation results in even more glory to God than just our obedience on the earth.

How is this possible? It is possible because the glory we give to God is not static, as though the only thing He will be glorified for is only in that which He has done in the past. Instead, His glory is meant to be ever-increasing. Yes, He is glorified in the Cross. He is glorified in the mystery. He is glorified in Israel's program too. But the things that bring glory to God do not stop there. I believe that God will do things (things of a different nature) throughout eternity that will reveal aspects of His wisdom and goodness that were not seen before.

Just as our roles in the HP will continually unfold in ways they did not before, aspects of the greatness and glory of God which were not seen in previous ages will be unveiled and God will be glorified, not just for what He did before the dispensation of the fulness of times (DoFT), but for those things which He will continue to do throughout the ages to come.

There is a link. The more we are exalted, the more the Son is exalted. The more the Son is exalted, the more glory goes to the Father. This is why Paul tells us to “run to win the prize” and “seek things which are above.” Not for our greed, but for God’s glory.

One more thing before we return to our discussion on the soul; critics of the Bible often point to things to make Bible-believers doubt or look foolish. I am talking about things like Moses could not have written the first five books of the Bible. Why? Because much of what is contained in those books took place after Moses was dead. So, how did Moses write about the conquering of the land under Joshua and the battles of Jericho and Ai?

For me, that just isn’t a problem. I happen to think Moses did write those books. How do I explain the historical accounts after Moses’ death? I explain it by Deuteronomy 34.

Deuteronomy 34:10 And **there arose not a prophet since in Israel like unto Moses**,  
whom the LORD knew face to face,

Did God ever give His prophets the ability to tell the future? Well, I think that is what He did with Moses. Moses wrote of those details because He was a prophet of God. After all, he wrote about all the CoP in Leviticus 26 before they took place. So, it really isn’t a problem for me to think that he wrote the other prophetic things.

Okay, back to our discussion on the soul. When we left off, I had just given the five things that take place with every believer when they trust Christ as their Savior: CRIBS.  
(Circumcision/Regeneration/Indwelling Spirit/Baptism/Sealed)

Now that all that has taken place with us, we have a decision; we can live like God wants us to live – as spiritual, or we can be carnal or fleshly, like the Corinthians.

Paul said he could not talk to them like they were spiritual.

1 Corinthians 3:1 And I, brethren, **could not speak unto you as unto spiritual**, but as unto carnal, even as unto babes in Christ.