

Dr. Daniel Morano

GOD IS NOT RELIGIOUS

A DIVINE ROMANCE

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Dedication

I dedicate this book to all of my beautiful children and grandchildren, the living breathing expressions of God's overwhelming love for me! My deepest heartfelt intention in passing the legacy of this revelation onto them is that they would find for themselves individually, the same incomparably fulfilling and exhilarating experience of getting to know our all loving God in all His depth and receiving His infinite mercies as I have.

Table of Contents

Let's Talk	6
Introduction	7
Chapter 2: Is Anybody Out There?	10
Chapter 3: The Nature of the Beast.....	15
Chapter 4: The Image of the Beast.....	19
Chapter 5: Am I My Brother's Keeper?	23
Chapter 6: The Tin Man Syndrome	28
Chapter 7: The Trojan Horse	31
Chapter 8: Fool's Gold.....	49
Chapter 9: The Personal Touch.....	52
Chapter 10: Damn That Talking Snake!.....	55
Chapter 11: Where Does God Weigh In?	58
Chapter 12: The Perfection of Intimacy	60
Chapter 13: The Kiss of Life	62
Chapter 14: It's All About Image	64
Chapter 15: A Poor Imitation	67
Chapter 16: Prop Up the Image.....	70
Chapter 17: Just Another Day in Paradise.....	72
Chapter 18: The Beauty of Oneness.....	77

*"The words that I speak to you they are spirit and they are
life"*

(John 6:63)

Let's Talk

A dialogue must be initiated between: God and His people - His People - His People and the World

An even exchange: giving, sharing, loving, hearing, listening, experiencing, learning, teaching, burden bearing, burden lifting, feeding, eating, communing, confronting, absolving, forgiving, forgetting, forbearing, befriending, acquainting, knowing, becoming known, taking on, dropping off, grabbing hold, grasping, letting go, relinquishing, taking on responsibility, releasing guilt, shame, obligation, requirement, rules and regulations.

Being stripped naked of restrictive bonds: clothing, custom, culture, method, motive, manipulation, prejudice, program, production, popery, restraint, restriction, rhetoric, religion, sanctimony, sophistry, sacrifice, sham, insecurity, inferiority, inadequacy, deception, disappointment, disdain, dishonesty, degradation, distinction.

Instead being clothed with: love, honesty, openness, transparency, compassion, empathy, sympathy, tenderness, gentleness, relationship, comradery, understanding, patience, hope for, faith in our fellow man, as we mutually cast our helpless dependence upon our loving, non- prejudicial, non-discriminating, all merciful and sacrificially giving God of Love, who is not willing to see one of His precious creatures, created in His own image, through His love, by His genius, for His purpose, perish in the rising deluge of confusion or burn up in the fury of this age of rage.

Rather, He would: envelop us, bathe us, warm us, hold us, draw us deep into His bosom and embrace us, fill us, ravish us, romance us, invite us, woo us, fill us with His all-consuming, infinite and all-encompassing love and affection. So, He can gently, in His Fatherly strength and security and His motherly care and nurture, bring us into the depths of his tender heart and the wonders of His glorious Mind! That He may cause us to learn to walk together with Him and thus with one another in unity, respect, tolerance, harmony, hand-in-hand, rising as one high above the turbulence, torment, and tyranny of this terrorized illusion of existence. As deceptively depicted by demonic device, designed to divide, destroy and detach us from our one true source of love and truth, our generous God and from one another!

Let us, therefore, allow Him to engage us and cause us to engage one another, that we may benefit each other, build each other up in love and share through Him the sweet and potent wine of Triumph over the forces of darkness which blacken our landscape and turn us into enemies of one another instead of brothers and sisters of the New Kingdom where we as one graciously, adopted family, revel in our Father's love for us!

Introduction

In most cases if the word God is mentioned, one's mind automatically shifts its focus directly toward religion. Why is that? The reason is, that our understanding is completely fixed on the belief that any revelation concerning God has been delivered to us through the medium of religion. The form of religion, particular system, or faith is not yet at issue here, only the fact that, the concept of God, when we are confronted with it is immediately processed through our psyche via the filter of religion.

The question to be dealt with in this book is: Is this the medium through which God, from the beginning, initiated his communication to and with man; and is this the stance with which he wishes to continue his dealings with us? I will contend that it is not and that this foundational misunderstanding lies at the root of the human being's difficulty in understanding, getting to know experientially and enjoying an intimate, personal relationship with the Person we refer to as God. I will present the most pivotal truth in determining whether a person in pursuit of the knowledge of God and in fact, God Himself, will land merely at a surface, clinical, sterile view of a distant, disconnected God. One aloof and disinterested in the sufferings, deeply felt needs and personal successful destinies of his created beings, or whether the seeker of this God will discover a rich, fulfilling and intimate love relationship with a compassionate, caring, proactively accessible Heavenly Father. Who is and has always been passionately invested in every detail of His creative work, particularly, His masterpiece and darling, Man!

I will contend that God has in fact, initiated, and continues to this day to engage Man through the medium of Relationship, as opposed to the system of Religion. I will show that when man approaches God on the basis and through the medium of religion, he lands on something-cold, hard, distant, and indifferent. He has the experience of never being able to reach this standard, nor ultimately satisfy the requirements he has set up for himself through his ceremonial system. Therefore, he never arrives at a feeling of contentment and absolution, nor, unconditional acceptance and loving assurance, the security a child feels for instance, in the arms of a truly selfless, doting parent. However, when this same individual seeks out the origin of his being and the connection to the One who gave him that being, on the premise that that Heavenly Parent created him by relationship, through relationship and for relationship, he lands on Someone warm, loving, intimate and passionately involved. **God is not religious!**

Chapter One

What is Religion?

We are all basically, religious; we are prepared from birth for religion...

Religions are organized systems for protecting information and for passing it on from one generation to another.

Religions therefore bind people together and supply the means through which their lives can be lived with truth and purpose. World Religions John Bowker

If it is true that man initiates his search for God by surveying the landscape of religion, and if his search begins there for some instinctive, justified reason, then the following question begs an answer: What is religion and where did it come from? I will cite here just a few definitions from various academic sources.

-The belief in and worship of a superhuman controlling power, especially a personal God or gods, a particular system of faith and worship. Oxford Dictionary

- (1) the service and worship of God or the supernatural
 - (2) commitment or devotion to religious faith or observance
 - (3) a personal set or institutionalized system of religious beliefs and practices
 - (4) a cause, principle, or system of beliefs held to with ardor and faith
- Liberty Online Degrees.com

A religion is a cultural system resting on belief in a supernatural being, a system composed by an account of (1) the way of life and (2) the worldview of (3) a group of people that sees itself as set apart for divine service.

Religious Foundations of Western Civilization Jacob Neuser-Editor

In perusing the definitions I have offered above, one cannot help but be struck by the amount of times religion is referred to in regard to a system. This very concept and reality has served as perhaps, the greatest stumbling block to freethinking people of our present age, when the idea of beginning a search for God through religion is contemplated. One must admit, when he views the most predominant representations of organized religion he is put off by the all imposing, intimidating and confusing nature of the great religions. The institutional and complex practices and dogma of these mammoth religious systems leave one with the strong impression that they are just too rigid, complicated, and difficult to ever understand, much less become a part of. The uninitiated observer, potential convert is immediately diverted away from thoughts about a

possible encounter with a **personal God** and constrained within the confines of an incomprehensible and alien system. A culture in which, the dress, behavior, and even language are completely foreign. A plethora of rituals, initiations and transformations have to occur in one's inner thought and outward action before he can even begin to search out the answers to the real questions and deep longings for truth and love he first had. Hence, the cliché quipped historically between drinkers at a bar “I’ll talk about anything, but I don’t talk religion or politics!” which in the drinker's opinion are one and the same.

It is interesting to note that the word religion itself, as we know it, did not appear until the 13th century. Also, within the root of the original Latin word, religio or religare, the concept of constraint or restraint is strongly emphasized. So, the word we use to describe the vehicle for God's delivery of love and freedom for the individual actually contains within its own root meaning-to constrain, to restrain, to tie back. In biblical language, we would employ the term bind, or to be bound. A condition, that the Bible and particularly, the New Testament proclaims is not from God and in fact, one that he is very intent on undoing (loosing those who are bound, setting the captives free, etc.) However, is this how it always was and how man's search for God began? Let us return to our initial question: What is religion and where did it come from?

Chapter Two

Is Anybody Out There?

For thousands of years people have searched for the meaning and truth of their own nature and of the universe, and religions, are the result. World Religions John Bowker

The evidence in both sacred and secular literature, archaeology and anthropology, (study of human beings) is overwhelmingly conclusive. From the beginning of time man has sought out and believed that there is something or someone outside of himself, greater and wiser than he. He has therefore, attempted to comprehend, make contact with and further appease this mightier force or forces, personality or personalities, in order to be able to feel secure in his environment. He strove to establish that this lofty Being or beings were not hostile and if so, to make petition on behalf of himself for mercy and if possible, favor and blessing. Time and space here do not permit for an exhaustive survey of the many ancient religions and their practices. Many volumes have been written by academic and religious scholars alike that prove this beyond speculation. My purpose here is to establish the fact that man has been religious from his very beginnings and deal with the more important question of why?

“Alexander Pope was not being particularly biblical when he wrote, “the chief study of mankind is man”. He was not even being original, for the obligation to “know thyself” was an axiom of Greek thought thousands of years before him. Still Pope was expressing an obligation felt by most men and women in nearly every age of history. We want to know who or what we are, why we are here, and where we are going.”
Genesis An Expository Commentary James Montgomery Boice

Therefore, the answer to the question why can be broken down into three categories pertaining to man’s fundamental need: **Meaning, Identity, and Truth.**

Some of the questions pertaining to meaning would be: Why am I here? What is the purpose of life? What is my purpose in life? Why does any of it matter?

For identity: Who am I? Where did I come from? To whom do I belong? (Culture, origin) Where am I going?

For truth: How did the world come into being? Is there a God who created it? If so, what is my responsibility and relationship to him? Is there hope in this life? Is there hope for an afterlife? Which is the right way to live?

Meaning

The roots of religion lie in humanity's quest to comprehend the world and our place within it. How did we get here and what is the purpose of our lives? Is there an agency that controls them?

National Geographic Concise History of Religions

It is astounding, that despite all the scientific, technological advances as well as, the increase in knowledge and understanding of the world we live in and how it functions that we are still driven by the same basic needs. Despite all the innovations that have been pioneered to make our existential needs (material, physical) easier, quicker to obtain and manage; this has been no help in solving the deeper questions that haunt us. No matter how well we have learned to care for ourselves, to the point of pampering, far surpassing the comfort and leisure of both our distant ancestors and our more recent forebears, from say 50 years ago, this deep well of convenience and expediency does absolutely nothing to quench the thirst for meaning in all that we do. Whether we suppress these primal fears and wonderings through endless distraction, via ceaseless activity through entertainment (hobbies, leisure etc.) or obligation (family, career) or not, those inner voices scream out beneath the clamor from the deepest part of our true being, what is it all for?

Despite all the arrogant denials that it doesn't matter as long as we get what we need with a good measure of fun along the way, (the one who dies with the most toys wins school), the persistent search for answers to the more profound questions is glaringly evident. The overwhelming interest in our inner world through spirituality is attested to by the myriad of people in our various societies who are involved in religious groups, cults and other spiritual avenues of discovery. Whether this is sought through the medium of organized religion or the other sundry forms of psychological and metaphysical exploration is irrelevant. The verdict is undeniable! No matter how much man achieves for his outer life, his inner life is still going untouched and longs for resolution to the question of meaning. What is the purpose for all the creative labor, discovery, and advancement? Ultimately, how far have we come if we still don't know the purpose for the journey in the first place? Rising up within our consciousness under all the self-sufficiency and ease of life lurks the old haunting familiar spiritual truth, "what shall it profit a man if he gains the whole world and loses his own soul?"

Is man mistaken in believing that he can apply the same methodology that he applies to existential, external matters – the **creation of systems**, in order to arrive at the answers and solutions to the inner world of his being, spirituality? Does he possess the inner resources himself and can he merely apply a utilitarian remedy to ease his troubled mind about the issues of meaning and purpose? Or, does this quest call for intervention by something or Someone greater than he to calm this raging storm within his breast? Thus, the

search relentlessly carries on for closure to the why. This is **religion- man's attempt to find the meaning of his existence and with whom he has to do.**

Identity

In the former section we examined man's fundamental need for his meaning and purpose. As compelling as that need is, it can at least for a time, be pushed down or ignored through busyness. The answer to the pounding of the question, "why am I here?" can be dulled by the anesthetic of the daily demands and pleasures of the moment. **Expediency can overrule meaning by the sheer tyranny of priority.** "I don't have time to philosophize over such deep matters! I am just trying to make it from day to day! I will get to that when existential life is not quite so demanding and present!"

However, another very basic need is not as easily pushed aside, even amidst the throes of the rat race of life. Its tormenting presence can overwhelm us and drain us of the very will to overcome our challenging circumstances. The question of identity- Who am I? Where do I come from? To whom do I belong? **The need to belong!** One of man's greatest driving emotional needs has always been and will remain the need to belong, to know one's place in the world. There has never been such a wide-scale interest in the tracing of family lineage, heritage, race, and origin as the present. Modern technology, primarily the Internet, has made this search much simpler and more rewarding to the average individual who wishes to mine out his origins. Why the fascination with cultural and racial heritage? Why the allure of searching out one's family tree, discovering where one came from?

We have inherent within each one of us the inescapable, primal need to belong! We want to know that we are not alone, that we belong to a larger group of people. Preferably, a people much like ourselves to whom we can claim membership. It clothes us, makes us feel warm, protected, meaningful. We are part of the united social effort to make the world a better place. We are not indefinable, disconnected lone creatures left on this big, bad, scary planet to figure it out all by ourselves. There are those who've gone before us and are still traveling alongside us to whom we belong. They look like we do, think like we do, talk like we do and come from where we come from. **We are not alone!** We have identity, something to call ourselves, a designation by which to define ourselves. In short, **we are somebody!** We have others to stand for us, defend us, and legitimize us. We are not the first of our kind. We have always been here and have a right to be!

For most, this is embodied in belonging to family, next, to a particular culture, race, and country of origin. For those who unfortunately, have been denied the closer bonds of belonging, then, this third and most adhesive bond is the most appealing, belonging to a deeper and more passionate beginning and explanation of who I am, therefore, being justified as a valid citizen not only of my carnal roots, but being deeply rooted in the firm spiritual ground of my religion. In the same way, I can lay claim to intimate, passionate ties with my relatives and ancestors, even if in reality, we are not very close at all. I can likewise, boast of a passionate,

intimate connection with the God of my religion. Even, if only through loose, distant, ceremonially and ritually based affiliation. "I am Roman Catholic, I am Muslim, I am Hindu, I am Buddhist, I am Hebrew, I am Christian, I am Mormon, etc. Is this the deepest, most passionate and intimate connection to my beginnings,

my true identity and the God who gave me life and meaning? We will explore this later on.

Truth

And the Roman procurator Pontius Pilate answered Jesus saying, “**what is truth?**”

John 18:38 (Paraphrased)

Regardless, of all the esoteric and philosophical wandering we do. In spite of all the clever, cynical arguments we conjure. Despite all the manipulated and contrived scientific evidence we portend to produce. We know there is an Ultimate Truth! We may fear it. We may not want to be bound by it. We kick, fight, and scream to break free from what we perceive to be the limitations it carries. Nevertheless, we know instinctively that it exists. We also are aware that it is not as far away and difficult to attain as we would like for it to be. The fugitive within us, who has fled from the prison of absolute truth and finality, cloaks himself in his ultra liberal, totally tolerant, nonjudgmental, non-committal, open- minded, never ending possibility, fantasy world of options. We have thrown off the chains of moral and spiritual absolutes in exchange for the winds of chance and self realization, Romanticism, much more appealing to our own inconsistent and unfaithful nature. Yet, deep down underneath all the pleasant platitudes, ambiguous explanations and arbitrary escapes, we know! Truth exists! **Ultimate truth exists!** However, can we bear it in its naked, all imposing form? Can we drink the concentrate? Or, must we settle for the diluted version that we believe we still have control over? We want truth but with provisions. We want absolutes but with exceptions. We want to know but we can't handle being known. This is too intimate, too unveiling, too reaching to the core, too close to home.

We are spiritual voyeurs wanting to be able to look, examine, peer into those deep mysterious things that we know ultimately define us. However, we would complete this study undetected, without having to take responsibility for what is discovered. We want to make contact with and possess the knowledge concerning whom we truly are, where we originated from and what our hope of longevity is, but on our own terms! We would make the rules while feigning submission to a higher, more moral, loving and selfless force above us. We would secure acceptance, pardon and everlasting bliss without having to be confronted. We want love and security, blessing and prosperity, justification and purity all at a comfortable distance... Hands-on: knowledge, power, goodness and exoneration. Hands-off: conviction, honesty, transparency and intimacy. We would know but not be known. We would have but not be had. We would control but not be controlled. We would even love but not be loved! For in initiating the loving we still retain control and determine the distance, closeness, and involvement. We want to visit truth well enough to know it, study it, define it and propagate it, all without committing to it. **Religion is the perfect cover!** The ideal shield which can be hidden behind for protection and the blinding banner, which can be raised for justice and legitimacy, the mystical fruit which can be tasted for the attainment of the knowledge of good and evil, a fig leaf, large enough to cover our shame and nakedness. All this wonder procured without the complications of intimacy and the restraints of personal

responsibility.

Religion begins with our noble search for meaning, identity, and truth and reaches up as far as we would like to define, connect and relate to whom or what is above us, the most appealing attribute being **Control!** Religion begins with Man and he sets the boundaries and determines just how far and deep the roots will settle into the ground. He knows about his God or gods, yet merely feigns submission. Thus, he is exonerated from condemnation because he has sought out his Master. However, is the servant greater than his Master? What of the Master's desire, demands, designs on His supplicant? Religion makes sure to construct a ceiling between such probing questions and heavenly requests, thus, securing Man in his dominant, yet apparent submissive role. God is sought but not beyond the all mighty hand of Man's control. Let us make God in our image after our likeness then set him on an altar above us and bow down to our most beloved and notorious creation!

Chapter Three

The Nature of the Beast

“The thing that has been, is what will be, and that which has been done is that which will be done, and there is nothing new under the sun. Is there a thing of which it may be said, See this is new? It has already been, in the vast ages of time [recorded or unrecorded] which were before us”
(Ecclesiastes 1: 9 – 10 Amplified Bible)

As mentioned earlier, when we think of religion, the large organized religions or as we choose to term them, the great religions come to mind. In the West, one is aware of Christendom and all its various forms: Roman Catholicism, Protestantism with all its many denominations and offshoots. Judaism, also holds a very prominent and foundational role and in an ever-increasing influence and demographic, Islam. Not to mention, all the many other religious sects we may term cults: Mormonism, Jehovah's Witness, Seventh Day Adventist (offshoots or deviations from Christianity according to your point of view), Scientology, Zen Buddhism, Black

Muslim, New Age, Witchcraft, Satanism, Shamanism, Earth Religions (American Indian etc.), in the Middle East, again, a large representation of Islam, Judaism, Zoroastrianism, various forms of Christianity (Greek Orthodox, Roman Catholic, Protestant, Syrian Coptic, etc.). The continent of Africa and many of the island cultures embody many of the aforementioned religions as well as, primitive mixtures of Earth religions and ancient animalistic rights and an abundant array of voodoo oriented cults. Moving to the Far East, Orthodox Christendom descended from Byzantium, Buddhism, Taoism, Confucianism, Hinduism, and in the formerly colonized English settlements of Australasia, much of the same as we experience in the developed West as well as, primitive indigenous traditions.

These are the obvious examples of what we understand to represent religion. However, if religion stems not just on the surface from systems which have been created to house certain belief systems, but from a more primal and fundamental need within man, as we have just dealt with, then the roots must run much deeper. It is true that a major element of religious observance is a public and corporate activity and is carried out from membership within a group that holds to the same belief system as the parishioner.

“Religion is public, a fact of society and culture, not private or personal. Religiosity is a matter not of attitude or personal conviction, but of public activity, it is what people do together.”

Religious Foundations of Modern Civilization Editor – Jacob Neuser

The result of people joining together in groups or cultures to practice shared desires, beliefs, convictions, values and fears are the corporate manifestation of the psychological phenomena we have just examined. The shared core needs within each individual – the search for meaning, identity, and truth, draw people together in a common pursuit to arrive at a comfort zone of familiarity and belonging and supporting of one another to achieve like goals and objectives. Therefore, we find that this principle of common felt need and desire serves not only as the foundation for religion but also, is the chief cornerstone for what we refer to commonly as **Culture**. As we examine this word and its origins we find that the two institutions are not that greatly separated from each other, but conversely, very tightly linked to one another and actually possess the same root meaning and purpose.

“Cultus” is the Latin word for our English translation of culture. It has as its original definition –the worship of the gods or of a supreme being. This is a very religious concept to say the least. Yet, we float this term in our modern verbiage without any sacred connotation whatsoever and apply it to a purely secular concept of amoral society. However, in its original context and application, in its mother tongue it projects very emphatically, a religious image onto the representation of society and injects into the very fabric of the populace (Greek: polis) intense religious connotations, evoking strong and passionate sacred emotions and images. For the majority of us today this is very foreign and even a bit strange. This is because our modern society has been so broadly secularized, particularly in the West, where modern democracy, especially Republicanism, has driven such a wedge between church and state. However, this was not the case at all in the

ancient cultures where this word and principle have their roots. The Eastern cultures and the more ancient Western ones today, have a better understanding of this truth. This is due to the fact that their societies are still somewhat deeply rooted in the rich soil of the enduring heritages and legacies of their classic civilizations. The newly spawned offspring of these great civilizations, former colonies or settlements, most barely 300 years old (i.e. United States of America, Australia, Canada, New Zealand, etc.) have no concept whatsoever, of such deep ancestry. These were born after and perhaps, out of the great Enlightenment Age, when this monumental division and paradigm shift took root between the sacred and secular. We can travel as far back as the very initial primitive civilizations dawning at the beginning of time and see clearly, that at the foundations of these societies, their religions were not only linked to, but in fact, served as the chief motivating factor for their cultures.

In ancient Babylon, the infamous Tower of Babel was erected as both, a tribute to and means of, communicating and communing with the gods whom they believed held it in their power to bring blessing or calamity upon their every endeavor. Ancient Egypt has also fascinated and produced many careers for archaeologists, anthropologists, researchers of ancient religion and antiquity and inspired many mystical enthusiasts, due to its rich religious culture (pyramids, sphinxes, gods, and goddesses etc.) Obviously, the ancient Hebrew religion (what we term Judaism today) had, at its core, the very serious injunction from their one true God, Yahweh or Jehovah, that He and His Law always remain the center and spiritual and moral foundation of their economy and society to the exclusion of all others. “Thou shall have no other gods before me.” The surrounding Semitic cultures of the same period and onward also held at the base of their societal pillars, the polytheistic (worship of many gods) religions of their device and built elaborate cities with beatific temples at their center in homage to these deities. Across the great Atlantic in the Americas it is widely believed and documented that the extremely religious cultures of the Mayans and Incas in the South and the indigenous Indian tribes of the central and northern hemisphere were already engaged in their elaborate “nature worship” based religious societies. Primitive as they may have been in many respects, they were also able to achieve architectural wonders in monuments and temples dedicated to their gods.

Of course, one need not be a student of history to be aware of the great impact and contribution the Greek gods and their mythology have had and continue to have on art, philosophy, folklore and romance. The powerful Romans took up their mantle of mythological enchantment, militarized it and built as the basis for their new polity (Greek: for government, law) a culture based upon the worship and submission to these gods and goddesses with very human qualities or anti-qualities, if you will (i.e. Zeus, Hercules, Jupiter, Saturn, Diana, etc.). Building even grander and wider reaching God and Goddess cults and temples, they subsequently, took the human factor to its extreme in enshrining their very carnal Emperor in absolute godhood. Many “Arabian Nights” were memorialized in the ancient culture of the Arab people. Who filled their fantastic literature and music with tales of many powerful and dangerous, volatile gods, donned with sundry, sensual rituals and practices? These primitive polytheistic expressions of Peninsula piety would later be absorbed by influence, yet mostly by force, into the Prophet’s monotheistic (belief in only one God) religion of Islam. Islam

would successfully shed many of the unqualified and unsanctified deities of the former moon cults and relinquish polytheism. However, it would still retain many of the trappings and practices of its pagan predecessors and never lose the sword as the symbol and means of propagating and expanding the kingdom of its aloof and angry God, Allah.

Through the demise of the Roman Empire, the multitude of Greek gods, goddesses and philosophers would be transformed into Saints, icons and idols. As the former pagan glory of the Emperor was transferred to the Holy See (Pope) and the pomp of the Empire absorbed into the holy Roman Catholic Church and of lesser import and perversion, into the eastern Orthodox traditions. Whether subconsciously or with avid intent this religious empire would also take up the sword for its cause blatantly defying the injunction of its supposed Master (Christ): “put up your sword Peter, he who lives by the sword shall die by the sword!”
Matt. 26:52 paraphrased

This relentless, religious, retribution proceeding from this self-appointed, sanctified system would slaughter many from other religious traditions under the symbol of the Cross. The church’s likewise, self-appointed Holy Conqueror, Crusader and newly religious Emperor, Constantine would claim he had received this symbol in an ecstatic dream-vision from on high as the catalyst upon which to go forth and conquer in the name of Christ for the expansion of the holy Roman empire, which of course, was the Savior’s sole vehicle of conversion and redemption! The perversion of this symbol, **the Cross**, which has stood for so many sincere believers throughout the world for two millennia as the representation of the humility and sacrifice the Messiah suffered and the attainment of mercy and salvation for multitudes it accomplished, would set the mold for Christendom and its Legacy of terror and oppression for centuries to come. Hence, the organ, which supposedly, had as its mandate – to bring the light of life to the world, would instead plunge it into the darkness and quagmire of the Middle Ages.

Chapter Four

The Image of the Beast

And he was permitted [also] to impart the breath of life into the beast's image so that the statue of the beast could actually talk, and to cause to be put to death those who would not bow down and worship the image of the beast. Revelation 13:15 amplified

Very little in any organized faith is truly original. Religions are not born from scratch. They grow from one another. Modern religion is a collage... an assimilated historical record of man's quest to understand the divine. When the early Christian converts abandoned their former deities... Pagan gods, Roman gods, Greek, sun, Mithraic, whatever... They asked the church what their new Christian God looked like.

Angels and Demons Dan Brown

The mighty, wide sweeping, earthshaking **Protestant Reformation** (breaking away from the Roman Catholic Church system) snapped the yoke and shattered the chains of Papal Authority over its subjects. It made way for the liberation from ignorance and repression not only of the former priests and monks, who received the revelation that man could find their own way to faith through the Scriptures; but also, for the masses at large who had been kept under control through religious intimidation, illiteracy and lack of education. People were now becoming influenced to believe that spiritual things were not restricted only to be studied, interpreted and implemented exclusively by a selective, qualified group of religiously trained priests and clerics. In fact, spiritual enlightenment and religious revelation were now available to all who chose through diligence and faithful submission to the Scriptures, therefore to God, to learn and follow the ways of faith. This was made possible practically, by the availability of the Scriptures to the common man translated into his native language. The liberation of former clerics, priests and monks was a boon to the populace. For these trained experts could transcribe and distribute the Scriptures to the common man and this itself served as a major instrument in teaching the uneducated masses to read. This endowment was even the more empowered through the invention of the printing press, which expedited the copying process and multiplied the production of biblical manuscripts and the scriptural books and commentaries of the leading reformers themselves. The developing education and literacy of the populace also caused a major advancement in all disciplines, vocations and the sophistication of daily living. The effect of this revolution did not just reshape spiritual life but actually, transformed the very fabric, motivation and expectation levels of society as a whole.

The objective and overall result of the Reformation was no longer to bring one into submission to a large, mystical and intimidating institution – the Roman Catholic Church. Rather, it served as the means to truly cause one to develop into a righteously motivated free moral agent, a pious saint of the eternal kingdom and more practically, a model citizen of the earthly one. It is understood of course, that this was the ideal not necessarily the perfectly executed reality. The emphasis of the Reformation as it developed was to no longer

lock faith and religious practice up behind church walls, but rather, to loose it into and onto all facets of life therefore, causing righteous thought, behavior and motivation to affect the whole of a person's life and the very heart of society. Now the coal smith could be just as righteously motivated and spiritually dedicated to God in his craft excellently executed as the pious cleric who copied and interpreted the Scriptures as his vocation. The Reformation's anthem – Sola Scriptura (Scripture only) and salvation by faith alone was extended to all men equally and the church was now, according to the reformers, relegated to its true and original role of inspiration, care taking and propagation of the gospel (good news). The physical church was seen merely as the meeting place for believers of equal stature to worship together and to encourage and support one another in their faith. As you can imagine, this was quite the blow to the closed and carefully structured hierarchy that had developed within the Roman Catholic tradition over many centuries of its rule.

This incredible revolution in thought had a title wave impact not only on religious orientation. Additionally, it created a rippling effect on all of society. The idea of **freedom of religious persuasion** and the exaltation of **independent thought** did not just free man in the realm of his religious life. In fact, it began to have a monumental effect on his thinking in the whole of life. He had not only been kept in sacred chains, but had also been imprisoned in many other exciting and evolutionary schools of thought –art, philosophy, science and most effectively, **politics**. Just as the religious reformers were inspired and emboldened to throw off their shackles and find autonomy away from popes, priests and ritualistic bondage, so many of their adherents would take this a step further and apply it to political liberation, freeing them from what they viewed as tyranny and injustice proceeding from monarchs, kings, and royal dynasties. They saw these pillars of society in the same light as their clerical counterparts espied the oppression of the organized Roman church system. In fact, these secular rulers received their authority and legitimacy from these very religious rulers. So, if their ultimate heavenly decreed authority could be successfully questioned, compromised and eventually discredited and overthrown, why should their secular servants – the monarchies, kings and royal dynasties maintain their monopoly on political and civilian life, thus, the birth of the age of **Revolution and the nation state**. The initial reformers had as their chief, holy objective to set men at liberty for the goal of religious freedom to the individual and moral conscience for the populace. However, as we well know from history, **wherever liberty is achieved in the spirit, license eventually manifests in the flesh**. Oh, that cursed fallen human nature!

So I find it to be a law [of my being] that when I want to do what is right and good, evil is ever present with me and I am subject to its insistent demands. Romans 7:21 amplified

The revolutions and the leading revolutionaries themselves, who would successfully transform many previously long-standing Roman Catholic and Orthodox strongholds into powerful nation states, would also rid themselves of what they saw to be the very enemy of their newly created secular societies – **religion itself**, according to their bitter and biased definitions of it nurtured by centuries of the hypocrisy and injustices we have just examined. **“Religion is the opiate of the people.” Karl Marx**

Their definition being, according to their highly enlightened revolutionary minds – the former Papal, monarchical, feudal and ancestrally inherited religious thrones and dominions. They would therefore purge the world or at least, their conquered part of it, of this wretched disease which had plundered, manipulated and raped man of his free agency, mocking him through its hypocritical pretense, infesting mankind with avarice, inequity, greed and social injustice for millennia! **Religion must be eradicated!** These newly erected nonreligious organisms called nation states would to one degree or another, totally annihilate and eradicate or at the least, minimize and compartmentalize religion's influence on the unsuspecting, weak and so easily manipulated masses. From the extremes of the French, Russian and Chinese revolutions, where practice of religion was outlawed and persecuted to the more religion friendly – United States of America, England, Germany etc. where religion was allowed its expression, but limited as to its influence in the political and legal realm (separation of church and state). The one very subtle, but extremely consequential oversight of these anti-religious pioneers was the lack of recognition given to the inextinguishable **religious nature of man**. This **religious spirit** in man is relentless and will always find an avenue of release within any structure or system man devises, whether he esteems it is religious or not!

I would like to revisit a portion of our definitions of religion from the first chapter. This will give us a more accurate understanding of the **spirit of religion** as opposed to, just the practice or outward manifestation.

- A cause, principle, or system of beliefs held to with ardor and faith
- (1) the way of life and (2) the worldview of (3) a group of people that sees itself as set apart for divine service.

Our definition affords us the nature or spirit of what religion is. Please notice however, that it does not assign to it a specific object, particular religion or set of beliefs. It only states that a group that holds to a similar system of beliefs, a cause or principle and sees itself set apart by Providence to fulfill it for the betterment of humanity defines religion in action. This is therefore, a very broad spectrum of possibility for what religion actually is in the spirit or nature of its being. Many candidates qualify to fall under the auspices of this designation. These revolutionary movements, which eventually, metamorphosed into **cultures** and **pseudo-civilizations**, which we now term nation states, appear also to fall under this assignment of title for religion. These simply exchanged the sacraments, icons, idols, worship, doctrines and gods of the former religions for their own brand of the same. Instead of doctrines and dogma- ideologies, legislation, instead of Bibles and commandments – manifestoes, constitutions. Instead of Gospels – declarations of independence, instead of icons, idols and crosses – flags, banners, swastikas, instead of the sacraments and prayers – pledges of allegiance, oaths. Instead of gospel hymns and Gregorian chants – hymns of the Republic and patriotic opuses (i.e. God bless America, Deutschland uber alles). Instead of corporate worship services – parades, rallies, conventions, instead of saints and gods – founding fathers, fathers of the revolution - “secular war breathing dragon dictators and demagogues”, posing as **messiahs** of the new world order which will bring a lasting peace and prosperity to our religiously ruined world! Many of these have come and gone, many are yet

to come, these **antichrists** of modern magic that plunge the world over and over again into war through their fantastic ideologies and megalomaniacal designs and intoxicating agendas.

If anyone says to you then, lo, here is Christ, the Messiah! Or, there he is! Do not believe it. For false Christ's and false prophets will arise, and they will show great signs and wonders, so as to deceive and lead astray, if possible, even the elect (God's chosen ones). See I have warned you beforehand.

Matthew 24:23 – 25 amplified

Whether these are very methodical and dead dogma oriented earthy, unspiritual systems like capitalism, republicanism, socialism, communism and fascism, or, mystical and charismatic, captivating enigmas, evoking not only intellectual and pragmatic enlistment. But, conjuring emotional euphoria and fanaticism, like Nazism and extreme fundamentalism (right-wing, inflict our way of life upon others orientation, whether Christian, Islamic, Zionist etc.) is irrelevant. **Man is a spiritual being with deeply rooted religious tendencies** and the most grotesque manifestations and deadly consequential resulting tragedies are reserved for those who deny this truth; yet, are doomed to carry it out to the most perverted and catastrophic ends!

Chapter Five

Am I My Brother's Keeper?

And the Lord said to Cain, where is Abel your brother? And he said, I do not know. Am I my brother's keeper? And [the Lord] said, what have you done? The voice of your brother's blood is crying to me from the ground. And now you are cursed by reason of the earth... Genesis 4: 9–11a amplified

See to it that no one carries you off as spoil or makes you yourselves captive by his so-called philosophy and intellectualism, and vain deceit (idle fancies and plain nonsense) following human tradition – men's ideas of the material [rather than the spiritual] world – just crude notions following the rudimentary and elemental teachings of the universe, and disregarding [the teachings of] Christ, the Messiah.

Colossians 2:8 amplified

Human wisdom is reactionary, always reacting to what has gone before, usually, in an extreme fashion, taking one position all the way to the other extreme end of the spectrum. The truth, of course lay in the middle somewhere, but is bypassed and superseded by the flame of unregenerate passion. **Man is an extremist taken captive by his passion!** Therefore his actions, when purely motivated, inspired and ignited by only his natural wisdom and energy are always reactionary and subjective, never proactive and objective, thus, rational and reasonable. **Human wisdom reacts. Divine wisdom acts.** This is why only spiritual wisdom inspired and originating from the heavenly realm can truly be nonbiased, free from prejudice and pre-supposition and uncompromisingly objective and proactive. The flesh (human nature, soul life) can only produce reactionary solutions and answers to preceding problems, thus flawed, due to its limited, finite and prejudiced surmising and judgments. It possesses no prophetic element due to its reactionary stance and perception. Nor is it endowed with supernatural agency and power to miraculously constitute change and recreate or resurrect life where death has previously occurred, because it is also of the earth and therefore, subject to death and corruption as well. Hence, it is left only with the faculties of **analysis, experimentation, and criticism.** It can only reflect back what it sees through its dim, limited vision and curse what it fears through its ultimate hopelessness and despair, once confronted with its powerlessness.

The political aberrations that we examined in the last chapter are not “only child” organisms, which formed in a vacuum and unilaterally, launched an attack on the “old world” traditional religion based kingdoms. No, there were siblings, who walked alongside and passed in and out of these new systems, breathing their creative, liberating, and sometimes destructive, influences. Divine inspiration, Holy Scripture and traditional and mystical religious ceremony and practice served as the validation and inspiration for the classical world of old. Many of these nation states, political movements and revolutions were also inspired by the holy writ of their prophets and apostles. Who, now spoke through the newly anointed mediums of **Art, Philosophy, and Psychology.** These doctrines, worldviews and ideologies were energized by the accompanying power, signs and wonders of **Technology and Science**, just as the religious institutions had claimed not only divine inspiration from the Holy Scriptures but also, world shaking and life altering power through the ministry of the Holy Spirit via the church.

These new religions (secular forms of thought and belief) and the traditional organized religions are both systems. The difference however being, that the great religions are what I would term – **closed** systems, due to the nature of “**divine revelation or inspiration**” through their fixed scriptures and laws by which they lay claim to divine origin. It is understood; through the awe inspiring fear that this concept of “divine revelation/inspiration” invokes that the foundational precepts are fixed upon holy boundaries and therefore, are complete finished and not open to questioning, modification, altering or disapproving and debunking. This is then a **closed** system. It is no longer in development. Rather, only open to **interpretation** and comprehension of its eternal and sacred truths. This being, truly legitimate only when those who have been set apart, trained and

ultimately called by the Divine serve as vehicles of both interpretation and dissemination of these deep and complex truths.

The new “secular” religions are not subject to this censure and have conversely, as their standard, the driving elements of change, modification, alteration, addition, disproving, debunking and subsequently, constant development and evolution of ideas, theories, concepts, precepts and laws. The reactionary element is obvious. The pioneers and adherents of these new religions have utterly and non-apologetically rejected the dead, fixed and restrictive forms of what the great religious traditions metamorphosed into and projected onto the populace at large and the free, independent, intelligent, truth-fact searching mind, individually. From the perspective of these new social engineers, man must be free to search out, analyze and experiment in order to find knowledge and truth. He must further, be able to forge this expedition without the chains of limitation, bias and ignorance that the religious institutions have come to accept, proclaim and enforce through the claim of ownership or at the least, stewardship of divine revelation, the justification for their closed system of thought and belief. The new “secular” religions are therefore **open** systems, for they are in a perpetual state of metamorphosis and a constant flux of change. They are truly evolutionary and free, because they are engaged in the lively, dangerous, therefore, exciting movement and creativity of discovery void of barriers!

Traditionally, **Art** was held within the confines of, harnessed and expressed through the church, embodying primarily religious themes executed in a very primitive and unsophisticated fashion (Byzantine, Gothic etc.). However, through an era referred to by historians as the **Renaissance**, ranging generally from the 14th through to the 17th centuries, the medium of Art was loosed from its chains and set free and aflame to explore the depths of the natural world, human nature and other formerly forbidden themes. Allowed to employ more sophisticated and worldly ideas and creative devices to produce its creations, Art expressed now, much less ethereal themes and more and more earthly and worldly desires and passions. Shedding the restrictions of the church and busting out of the cage of otherworldly topics and figures it became much more illicit and explicit (some would say on the edge of its borders – decadent) in its portrayal of human nature and the exaltation of its passions. This of course again, had a rippling effect on the general public and particularly, on thinkers deeply entrenched in experimentation as **pioneers** in the development of other disciplines and schools of thought. Just as the revolutionary liberation of Art set the soul (emotions) free to fly to higher heights or descend to lower depths of the human experience, dependent upon your perspective, philosophy offered the mind the same intoxicating and liberating ecstasy. Man was no longer forced to think within the box of organized religion but was set free to explore new trains of thought and reasoning as well as, resurrecting many old-school ones (Greek philosophy, Gnosticism, hedonism, pragmatism, paganism etc.).

Philosophy is not in and of itself a modern phenomenon. It has existed in many forms under various guises throughout antiquity. It is assigned its deepest roots and given credit for its origin and weightiest contributions within the classical Greek culture. Its name, which in the Greek (philosophus) means “lover of wisdom” comes from this root and achieved its greatest notoriety, ascendancy and fame through such

legendary practitioners of the art as Socrates, Plato, Aristotle etc., all Greek thinkers and teachers. Notwithstanding, it is widely agreed upon within the academic and historical tradition that this science came of age during the period referred to by historians as the **Enlightenment Age**, this school of thought having its most profound and impacting influence during the 17th and 18th centuries. There are many aspects and much diversity inherent within this discipline. The foundational element however, is the search for and dissemination of knowledge and wisdom through the diligent exercise and application of human reason. In short, religion had always begun with an immeasurable, unsearchable, practically forbidden realm of the Divine in its search for knowledge and understanding. Through philosophy, man began overall to start with himself as the center of things and move out from there. He was also no longer so enamored with the general awe of the universe and the indefinable God, supposedly, standing behind it. Rather, he was now hungry for the details and much more concerned with practical realities and understanding himself in the here and now. As opposed to, searching out spiritual origins of the distant past with which he no longer felt any fond affinity or profound attachment.

The **artists, philosophers, psychoanalysts** and **scientists** of the past are often demonized and vilified by those who deem themselves religiously orthodox and particularly Christian worldview oriented, because they view the positions of these “unorthodox” thinkers within a contemporary context. As if they were writing their theses today, according to present conditions, attitudes and beliefs fully furnished with the foundation of developments that occurred long after their demise. They are perceived as if they are reacting to and attacking the present Orthodox belief systems of people of faith, not, which is truly the case, to have reacted to the religious and social systems which had preceded them and their analyses- institutions, whose manifestation and character were nothing at all as present. These “rebels” were reacting, rather to many perversions that were perpetrated within the doctrines, actions and rulings of their predecessors, these standards having reigned as the status quo during the classical, religious age. Having espied and uncovered many of these glaring flaws, these pioneers in their fallen human natures, reacted in a reactionary manner and therefore, as stated earlier, took it to the other extreme. This is why human nature always lands on error. The pendulum swings out of control from one end of the spectrum of rationality to the other, always ultimately landing on just another island of subjective, therefore erroneous conclusion. These extremely intelligent and learned individuals, having felt betrayed by the religious institutions through their excesses, imbalance and many times, false representations of Divine Order and social justice, reacted by abandoning these institutions and their all imposing teachings altogether. For these **revolutionary pioneers of modern thought** this false religious system represented the only link to this mysterious, unfathomable God whom they no longer felt any connection to or relationship with. They now felt obligated and burdened to take it all upon themselves to find answers to the deep and perplexing challenges of modern life.

Man would now, through the agency of his “**God given**” **reason**, draw his own conclusions, establish his own constitutional and natural laws and draft his own systems apart from religious precedent and influence by which to reign in the wild nature and destructive bent of an inexplicable world. A world, which he now felt emboldened, empowered and enlightened to discover and rule! Unfortunately, as time moved on and Man

moved out further and further from the center, the “God given” aspect for the most part, got lost in this evolutionary process. Or at the least, diminished and therefore, relegated to the position of irrelevance and inconsequence. The religions (and they are religions, remember our definitions) of **Atheism** – rejection of belief in the existence of deities or a particular Deity and **Agnosticism** – a fixed stance of doubt and skepticism concerning anything having to do with deity, spiritual certainties and eternal realities, were birthed primarily, out of this womb. As well, the more moderate position of **Deism** – belief in an inactive, uninvolved, detached Deity who has abandoned his creation to its own devices, took deep root in the rich soil of modern man’s arrogance, defiance and independence, the catalyst of this secular movement and paradigm shift of unbelief being, **the exaltation of knowledge in and of itself and the pride of invention and self-sufficiency.**

We know that we all have knowledge. Knowledge makes people arrogant, but love builds them up.
First Corinthians 8:1 amplified

This taxing burden of trying to discern between good and evil, right and wrong, profitable and non-profitable would only be eased by the elixir found in the wonder and power of **Science and Technology.** Man’s great discoveries and inventions which would propel him into the **Industrial Age** and eventually the **Space Age** giving him the reinforcement and continued boldness to take upon himself what for all antiquity preceding him had been left to the justice and genius of the heavens. Science emboldened Man and gave him a new precedent upon which to set his sights and establish his foundations. Shaky as they might be, they were his and this is all that mattered! After all, if he could literally soar into the heavens through space-age aircraft and hover there almost indefinitely, was he not then powerful enough and omniscient enough to figure it all out as well? Through his science technology he could speed up his travel, transference of knowledge and information. He could cure diseases that had plagued the primitive world for millennia. He could intervene even so far as, to manipulate agriculture, atomic structure, genetics and eventually, even the weather itself. He could discern and predict the signs in the heavens and therefore, the signs of the times so he thought, as one very prominent otherworldly Personality had once alluded to. What was then, therefore, beyond man’s reach?

Thus, why should it be an overextended reach even to draft another Science Philosophy concerning the genesis of his species itself? It only made sense that just as knowledge and progress appeared to be evolving so must have man apart from any Divine blueprint and personal design and execution. Man had lifted himself from the slime of nonexistence and made his **Big Bang** onto the stage of the glory of his technological godhood! Accordingly, Darwin’s school of **Evolution** (Origin of Species) would lay the foundation for a godless account of an explanation for Man’s rule on earth without God. Of course, the sobering reality would once again set in when certain interpretations and implementations of these scientific wonders and doctrines would give birth to such Frankensteinish aberrations, atrocities and tragedies in the 20th century as atomic warfare and race Holocaust and genocide, these possibilities having grown out from the uninhibited and unrestricted technological and ideological bastions of thought and invention void of moral and “religious” boundaries.

Once again, Man is confronted with the “fruit” of the **Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil**. However, Man would lift himself up from the ashes and carnage of war through his creative genius by the means of his newest and most sophisticated “religion science,” **Finance**. Through this ingenious system he would forge a new world and harness a new form of warfare more powerful than any nuclear bomb or biological weapon. This power has proven to be more effective, far-reaching and enabling or crippling, dependent upon which side of the equation one finds oneself. The woman clothed in scarlet rides the apocalyptic Beast drinking the wine of **promises of unparalleled and unlimited prosperity!**

[She] with whom the rulers of the earth have joined in prostitution [idolatry], and with the wine of whose immorality [idolatry] the inhabitants of the earth have become intoxicated.

Revelation 17:2 amplified

Chapter Six

The Tin Man Syndrome

At this point, I am reminded of a movie I so thoroughly enjoyed as a very young child – The Wizard of Oz. Like so many of my contemporaries, I found utter fascination with young Dorothy’s transportation to another world of absolute beauty, mystery and even danger. There were many interesting and powerful allegories and lessons brought forth within this epic drama, along with many fascinating and deep characters enhanced by the power of special effects, especially for its time. However, amongst all the extraordinary characters presented, my favorite still remains – The Tin Man. Something in the pitiful condition of his nature struck a profound chord of compassion and sorrow within me even at such a young and inexperienced age. The Tin Man’s quest within the storyline was to reach the castle of the great Wizard of Oz of whom he was convinced had the power to solve his dilemma. His dilemma being, that he had been created and crafted perfectly with all the equipment necessary for outward life; yet, was missing only one very vital element which all others possessed – a **heart**. On the surface, he could perform every task and partake in every activity equally, along with others. The only difference was, that he could not feel and experience what others could. His activity, good or bad, profitable or not, was empty due to his lack of a heart. He could not feel as the others, the heights of joy or the depths of sadness and despite all his accuracy in implementing and executing his various tasks and recreational activities he could not make contact with his **inner self**. He was unable to discover who he was and what meaning his life ultimately had. Worst of all, he **could not feel love** despite all his knowledge, experience and proficiency and talent. This numbness was more than he could bear!

This is the point that Modern Man finally reached through all his tearing down of the lofty structures of sacred antiquity and breaking them down into merely, separated, disjointed and practical particles. In other words, in his classifying, cold calculating conclusions drawn only from the material and natural side of existence, in all his exactness, he had lost something very crucial along the way – his heart. In reducing himself to the status of Mammal, a designation not very far removed from the Animal Kingdom which he studied to come to such uninspired conclusions, there rose up from deep within the chasm of unbelief a throbbing, painful longing for personal meaning and purpose beyond the utilitarian and existential. The **Tin Man Syndrome!** Man was mastering his outer surroundings as a lion tamer tames the lion. But, the raging beast of emotional complexity and depth of personality within was crying out all the more for answers and resolution to the age-old ache of – Who am I? Why am I? What is my purpose? What makes me tick? Now, that I know I am a vast collection of atoms and molecules and that I merely descended from some inanimate process of freakish amoebic origin, what makes me special? What meaning does my life ultimately hold and why, in spite of all the logical and mechanical explanations for my being do I still feel a uniqueness and a need

to bring resolution and unity to my inner world, the realm, where I feel and hurt and long to be loved, cared for and deemed special and of consequence? I may be termed Homo sapien, but I know and cannot deny that I am **Human!**

Thus, the dawn of a science called – **Psychology**. Although, in its current definition psychology or psychiatry is defined as a science of the study of the mind, it has justice done to it the more so, by classifying it under the distinction of the study of personality and to be more exact – the Soul. The word, Psychology, naturally, is derived from the root of the Latin word “psyche” which was merely transplanted from the Greek “psyche”, meaning simply – **Soul**. This subject was dealt with initially, to some degree, in a limited fashion by our previously mentioned Greek philosophers of old within the study of philosophy. There is no doubt that when someone the likes of Plato or Aristotle used this word they knew exactly that they were referring to the seat of personality. The place, they still believed, housed the eternal and purest part of the human being where he wrestled with God, himself and the world around him. Once again, as with philosophy, this study and discussion had already appeared earlier on in antiquity, as just mentioned, as a subsidiary subject of larger disciplines. This discipline would come of age under its present designation – Psychology/ Psychiatry in the late 19th and early 20th centuries through pioneers such as Sigmund Freud and Karl Jung. These men carried very scandalous and dubious reputations amongst the medical contemporaries of their own day. However, their writings and experiments endured the typical scrutiny and persecution of every groundbreaking, pioneering school of thought and eventually, became the standard for a new all invading science that has graduated to a status of religious proportion.

I do not find it the least bit unusual that the development and maturity of this science has run practically parallel to the evolution of modern society. The stress and hopelessness brought on by the loss of individuality and ethos of an eternal purpose has left the person with the feeling of being only a number, serving only as an asset for financial ends to someone richer and more powerful than themselves. This heartless principle has slaughtered what we now term **self-esteem** or **self-worth** for the individual through the combination of loss of spiritual significance and moral rectitude, the reduction of Man in his definition of himself to the status of an animal. The assault of technology upon him reducing him again, to a Social Security number (digits on a computer screen), coupled with the lack of community and the self-centered ambition for success that society has fostered and adopted as its exalted standard, man is lost in the fray. He is searching for his long-lost personality and hopes to find a wizard who can restore to him his heart again, in order that he may feel what love in its childlike, embarrassing quality has to offer him!

As much as Modern Man wished to and strove to view himself and treat himself accordingly, as one of the useful yet, inhuman machines, which he had invented, he would continue to be confronted with his uniqueness and otherness when compared with the rest of the created order. There was something inherent and transcendent in his very complex and glorious nature that defied a simple, mechanical or animalistic definition

for his existence and being. Despite all his efforts to bring himself down to the level of just another mere, terrestrial organism, something deeper, more wonderful, beautiful and otherworldly lurked beneath the surface, betraying this crude notion. **There was something special about Man!** There was something that transcended his biological structure and utilitarian existence that reeked of the divine. The deep, primal voice screaming from within the depths of the soul demanding to be released and dealt with in order to bring resolution to his dilemma and unity to his being would not be ignored! This is what Psychology began to attempt to extract and resolve. Yet, it has not been able to achieve this nor will it ever be in and of itself. For the roots run much deeper and reach much farther back to a less technical and more intimate and glorious beginning! We shall explore this later on.

Chapter Seven

The Trojan Horse

In chapter 3, we dealt quite extensively with the concept of Culture. We established that culture, being derived from the Latin root “cultus”, carries a very religious foundation in its connotation, even its manifestation within society and its accompanying structures and institutions. We saw that this was obviously discernible in the more ancient cultures that portrayed this openly through their embracing and propagation of mythological, pagan and even more Orthodox expressions of piety at the base of their societies, rituals and systems of law. In chapter 4, we uncovered the fact that even after the veneer of overtly religious ritual according to tradition was readily abandoned, the spirit of religion reigned on albeit, under more “secular” structures ruling society in the latter part of the Common Era. In chapters 5 and 6, we dealt with underlying schools of thought and deep progressive belief or “unbelief” systems which fueled the advancement, development and maturity of “humanistic” or “secular” societies (i.e. Art, Philosophy, Science/ Technology, Psychology), all of which also fall under our definitions of religion as examined in chapter 3.

In this chapter, I would like to deal with a subtle, yet, very powerful and influential phenomenon which has historically run concurrently alongside these larger movements more as an undercurrent and foundation shifting reaction to the mainstream consensus. This is a Trojan horse of an absolutely different color and a more rebellious nature, nonetheless, embodying the same attributes and spirit of religion as its antagonist – mainstream culture. In fact, many of these are eventually so powerful and exert such influence that their chief attributes, philosophies and methodologies are ultimately adopted, implemented by, and become an abiding standard within society itself- the **Trojan horse** metaphor confirming that **any persuasion if continually and skillfully portrayed as acceptable will eventually become commonplace**. I refer to what we term commonly as **Sub – cultures or Counter – cultures**. These are smaller and more distinct groups with much more defined differences and emphases usually, accompanied by greater extremes. They appear on the surface, to lack the detailed and restrictive structure of the larger mainstream cultures. Yet they possess, even if in looser form, the foundational elements and nature found within our definitions of religion.

-A cause, principle, or system of beliefs, held to with ardor and faith.

- (1) the way of life and (2) the worldview of a group of people...

Many of these sub or counter cultures don't put forth a written code or law, which one can read and therefore, make sure to follow and not transgress. However, there exists always without question, an unwritten, perhaps even, unspoken code that all true and faithful members of the order know is sacred. There are lines not

to be crossed and **values** or **anti-values** to be upheld, revered and practiced. If you don't believe this just enter into one of these communities and do your own thing. You will find out soon enough that regardless of how free, open and nonbinding the rhetoric, you will not last long as a Lone Ranger. You may not be publicly ostracized or legally disciplined but the fountains of blessing and prosperity will dry up quite rapidly. The list of these subcultures or counter cultures would be exhaustive if not infinite. I will attempt here to proffer satisfactory definitions for these non-formal institutions as well as, to bring out a few examples for the sake of our discussion. These will be in no way conclusive but hopefully, will serve to make the point.

A **subculture** – is a group of people who, not having to be joined together geographically or demographically hold to an identical or at least, very similar way of life, belief system, civilization heritage or cultural nuance. This group does not necessarily hold a position or take an aggressive stance in opposition to society as a whole. It is distinguished however by certain attributes, worldviews, beliefs or unique civilization or cultural differences.

A **counterculture**- which, in large is starting to become an antiquated term as the world gets wilder and more rebellious as a whole, yet on the other side, more uniform and less unique, original and splintered). However, traditionally – this is a group of people possessing the same foundational elements as the subculture difference being, many of their beliefs, attitudes, traditions and behaviors run counter to the society wherein they dwell as a whole. Thus, they are usually viewed at best, countercultural at worst, antisocial.

Of course, much of this defining and categorizing is also subjective and determined usually, by majority consensus, holding to an established understanding and prescribed order of culture. Inherent in this persuasion is naturally, predetermined biases, prejudices, cultural norms and powers that be manipulation and influence. What are some obvious determinants for sub or counterculture today? One might cite: Race, religion, political persuasion, gender oriented issues, sexual preference, alternative lifestyles, habits and preferences, tastes and artistic inclination, rejection of established norms, socioeconomic status, generational gaps etc. Many of these positions when held to with such fervency, commitment and non-compromise actually become religious in nature or spirit, the adherents believing so strongly in their beliefs, lifestyles and heritages that they actually practice them more ardently and with much more vigor and conviction than many members of established religions practice their devotion. They are simply more committed sometimes, even to the point of persecution and death. They believe in their lifestyles or set of beliefs or preferences so strongly that they are willing to put it all on the line!

The Race Card

Just as an example, let us take up **race** for a moment. We can look at both extremes of the spectrum. From the very positive, love and freedom oriented movements of the Civil Rights Era in America and the Anti-Apartheid in South Africa. Contrarily, to the appalling and monstrous, hell-born doctrines and practices of the Nazi regime under the Holocaust in World War II, the racial genocides in the 1990s in the former Yugoslavia and Rwanda, apartheid itself and the continued detestable ranting and atrocities of the neo-Nazis today. All bringing very negative and destructive results demonstrated with religious fervor.

As an American citizen I am also dumbfounded particularly, when I hear those who claim to be Christian, whose faith and security, supposedly, rests on the blood that their Savior Jesus Christ shed for them on the cross for both forgiveness and healing of all wounds continue to make such an issue of blood. In other words, exalting and exploiting race in spite of all the sacrifices which have been offered and achievements that have been reached to bring an end to this ugly, hateful, ignorant and primitive – **spirit of division**. It seems to me sometimes, that certain subcultures (civilizations, people groups) put more stock in their natural bloodline, where they come from racially and culturally. More so, than the blood they say redeemed them from sin, shame, oppression, spiritual and natural slavery and death itself! It is inconsequential whether this is coming out from the corner of ignorant white supremacists that can't admit and accept that the world has changed and that their demographic is no longer solely empowered and privileged; or whether it be African Americans or Hispanics who choose to continue to lug around that gigantic inequality chip on their shoulders regarding an unjust past. In doing so, they continue to color their futures as peoples and individuals with the stigma of bitterness, unforgiveness and divisiveness with their fellow man. Thus, in a backward way, refuting the so heartfelt held value proclaimed in the Constitution that states: "All men are created equal and are endowed by their Creator with inalienable rights for life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness." From a loftier place of authority: "We have not so learned Christ!" Therefore, many times my question is which is their true religion or faith? The faith of Christ where all men are equal and there is no black, white, brown, red. Where there is no male nor female, rich nor poor. Or is it rather – the **religion of the race card**, which cuts both ways? Affording the cardholder certain benefits, privileges and justifications and excuses for failure; but continuing to cut one down, classifying, categorizing, labeling, **profiling** and therefore limiting and severing the flow of true life and liberation! I am not so naïve as to pretend that injustices do not still exist and that **racism** with all its detestable tentacles has been severed and the root cleansed. The challenge is however, issued from above to those who would set themselves apart and be the "city set on a hill" shining the light of love and equality by choosing the higher road which makes way for unity, harmony and equal opportunity for all!

Politically Correct

We discussed quite extensively in Chapter 3 how religion had its base in and also serves as a foundation for the development and status quo of culture. Today, things are becoming quite different as society on a whole becomes more and more secularized and traditional or organized religion exhibits a much weaker influence and less direct power over political and moral high ground for the populace. What used to be a major stronghold say, 30 to 50 years ago for the traditional religions within politics, values, morals and the like is also starting to ebb and shrink into the background of **post-modern** society therefore, taking on as well the characteristics and classification of a subculture. Dependent on the extreme vigor and conviction held to by these “religious people and religious institutions,” they could eventually, be seen as countercultures. For their beliefs, convictions and standards oppose the “new” status quo which will no longer tolerate any inflexible position for instance, in the West, particularly the United States issues such as abortion, same-sex marriage, gay rights, legalization of recreational drugs (marijuana, and cocaine etc.), religious displays and demonstrations, freedom of assembly, speech and press. The propagation of religious views and values without compromise and allowance of equal time and presentation for the views of other persuasions that the faithful, according to their moral conscience can’t agree with or sanction is already causing tsunami waves in the public arena. This can lead to ostracization and even persecution when the state is so empowered by the majority rule to enforce its “politically correct” status quo.

This phenomenon has occurred over and over, all around the world as an historical precedent. Just think on communism in the former Soviet Union and its satellite states, along with the Peoples Republic of China under Mao and up to present day, even if executed in a tamer and more discreet and deceptive cover. Fundamentalist Islamic regimes would also qualify for this distinction due to their practice of banning or at least, severely persecuting and disenfranchising rival religions such as: Christianity, Judaism and even brands of Islam which they deem heretical. During the Nazi era, any branch of or esteemed leaders or parishioners of the Roman Catholic or evangelical church who were not willing to tout the national socialist banner from their pulpits found out very quickly how they no longer retained the status of “pillar of society.” Instead, they were demeaned and vilified, sometimes even violently demoted and denounced to the level of “dissident” or “deviant”, this revelation being ultimately realized for some, tragically, from the inside of a concentration camp.

With each passing election the old school, stalwart citizenry of the United States is being confronted with the sobering reality that contrary to all the patriotic efforts, appeals and historical precedent in maintaining that “this is a Christian nation under God”, the tune is falling on deaf ears. The vote is simply no longer reflecting the values, moral conscience and Judeo-Christian ethos of the post World War II generation. The titanic shift in demographic and the full harvest surfacing from the counterculture revolution beginning in the 1960s has finally registered its full impact on the majority consensus. Such incredibly influential religious factions as the religious right and the evangelical community in general, find themselves no longer the exclusive darling and

backbone of the Republican Party's voting-block, the party, still being willing to uphold their stand and serve as the Caesarean face for their pet issues. The Republicans now, for they are after all a "political party", are forced to modify and water down their supposedly diehard convictions, capitulating to the "popular" vote, that is, if they wish to have any fighting chance at ever winning the White House again. For this more than apparent, pluralistic, multicultural, multi-religious society no longer holds a soft spot for the unilateral position of the traditional, Anglo-Saxon, Christendom-based "moral majority" as a major player in the "new international nonreligious" society. The days of Ronald Reagan, no matter how often prolifically eulogized and memorialized by the diehards of the Republican Party and religious right are long gone. The sun has set on the era of nationalistic pride and religious unity, in other words, God and country (meaning the Christian God), flag and Bible. Instead, appearing boldly on the horizon is a creature more indicative of the mixed, freakish, multi-headed beast referred to in the Apocalypse, possessing the weak, fragile, divided nature of the 10 toed, mixed with iron and clay last- days kingdom prophetically portrayed in the book of the prophet Daniel.

Many "mainstream Christian" churches for instance, who insist on clinging to their biblically based, religious cultural positions ardently will find themselves, if they haven't already, relegated to a status of countercultural subcultures and treated accordingly, by the public at large and powers that be. More extreme and spiritual branches of the Christian churches (i.e. Charismatic, Pentecostals, Messianic congregations etc.) will find themselves joining the ranks of their European counterparts as members of sects and cults as viewed and designated already by amoral, nonreligious, secular society. Traditionally- minded American Christians who have cultivated and practiced a dual natured **American Christianity – a mixture of foundational, Orthodox, biblical beliefs equally balanced with extreme patriotism and all American moral superiority attitudes** will find their brand of "old-time religion" beginning to fail them. For this mixed drink will prove unattractive even to sincere seekers of godly truth and revelation. As they have no common interest, heritage nor allegiance to the old "power politics" and "puritanical" part of the "American gospel message." This "nationalistic" perspective and presentation will no longer provide any power for the propagators nor allure, for a generation who sees themselves more so, as citizens of a new world alliance and international community, one void of national boundaries as opposed to abounding in patriotic ideals. The new American sees him or herself as a productive, peaceful, tolerant, open-minded, nonjudgmental, noncommittal citizen of the "new technological age and global generation," as opposed to, a diehard veteran, keeper, and protector of the "grand old flag." Please understand that this is stated with all due respect, not as a judgment or insult, merely as an acceptance of fact. The religious political landscape has been profoundly and irretrievably altered and will never return to the status quo of yesteryear, no matter how strongly and sincerely **ideological warfare** is waged for the return of an antiquated standard by the well-meaning efforts of those who sacrificed to procure that standard a generation or two ago. The honor and valor of that all taken into account, there is an evolutionary, providential propulsion toward a climax of events. It moves with such swiftness and relentless determination that no "stubborn digging in of the traditional heels" can vanquish it! Time and events will move on mercilessly as they always have, leaving the "written in stone standard" of preceding generations behind.

Heavy-handed Islamic regimes (i.e. Iran, Saudi Arabia) and dictatorial Asian ones (China) and Latin ones (Cuba, Venezuela) are also experiencing this postmodern phenomenon of the younger generation (a much larger demographic in these civilizations) no longer merely, accepting the unquestioned, religious or political rule and staunch belief systems of the past. For regardless, of the ruling classes' tireless attempts at stifling outside influences from invading the thinking and ambitions of the new generation – the Internet, omnipresent media, foreign education and the international nature of 21st-century commerce, trade and travel thwart these efforts. The only advantage that these sovereign powers hold over the democratic West is that at their foundation, their laws and governmental structures do not permit the freedoms, human rights and independent entrepreneurship that the “free” Western democracies do. The rulers still have at their disposal, unless heavily challenged or threatened by the international community with military intervention or economic sanctions, the brutal and primitive use of force. Despotism employed to maintain their archaic and dictatorial rule of Islamic religious (Shari' a) or arbitrary (Marxist – Communist) law. However, as clearly demonstrated by the peaceful and progressive erosion of communism at its most powerful centers 25 years ago, the inevitable will eventually prevail, if only for the rudimentary reason of impracticality of these ancient, ineffective methods. The unenlightened means of such rule proving so unproductive that they ultimately bring about poverty, mass starvation, economic disaster and isolation from the rest of the world to a point of dissolution of the society itself.

Politics is the religion of many today! All their hopes, dreams, ideals, aspirations and expectations of realizing their way of life (whatever that may be) and personal success and security are wrapped up in the decorative packaging of pretentious political promises. These promises are hitched to the caboose of a train carrying endless strife and conflict! This “little engine that could” is steered by incorrigible racial, religious, and ideological forces truly inspired underneath the surface, by the insatiable appetite for greed and power! Fear of course, serving as the coal that fuels this age-old machinery of manipulation and deception. As President Franklin Delano Roosevelt so eloquently stated many years ago: “We have nothing to fear but fear itself!” He however, apparently had no revelation at that time of the great commodity fear would become in driving world markets and holding hostage the masses through threat of economic ruin, both personal and global. Nor could he divine the great weapon it would evolve into posing as the perpetual justification for military, financial and ideological warfare between competing worldviews, powers and civilizations. This mentality of “politics as my religion” also has its violent evil extremes, as obviously carried out through the **religion of terrorism**. This is clearly demonstrated upon our paranoid world stage almost daily, somewhere on our treachery plagued planet through Al Qaeda type networks and Hamas type “suicide bomber” psychological and literal horror-based ideologies and practices. Just as equally devoted, yet through more civilized and noble means are those who truly believe “the kingdom of God on earth” will somehow be ushered in by the proper political party possessing the most advantageous and well-meaning agendas. Unfortunately, both have had it proven to them historically and will continue to be disappointed and disenchanted and betrayed by hinging their hopes and dreams of utopia on the whims and hypocritical and inconsistent nature of self-righteous flesh.

For Love of God and Country

The ultimate expression and most convincing declaration of one's Patriotism historically, has always been enlistment and "active service" in the military. "For love of God and country" has been the heartfelt battle cry for those willing to sacrifice their lives in defense of their "homeland" as well as those who support them and have offered them up to such holy distinction. One's mind immediately fixates itself upon visions of those who have valiantly laid down their lives in battle for the defense of our most noble and worthy ideals, values and most importantly, freedoms. Our imagination floods with images of monuments we have visited, inspiring movies we've seen and testimonials we have either read or listen to compassionately, stories of soldiers risking or laying down their lives for their comrades in the heat of battle exalting the fading virtues of chivalry, honor, courage and loyalty. Virtues, which we believe have all but disappeared from the fabric of civilian life and character. Therefore, under the emotion of these accounts of selfless bravery, sacrifice and patriotism we are brought to tears as we sit in awe of the superior character and courage of these valiant warriors who were willing to die for or at the least, have their lives irretrievably altered for the sake of defending our dearest and most holy values and liberties.

As romantic as this all is, as mankind matures and society becomes more enlightened to the actual forces that inspire and promote this "culture of war" along with the true motives behind its initiation and evils lurking behind its implementation, some of the glory is starting to fade. The power of technology and the intrusive truth seeking (dog on a bone) nature of a media embedding itself on the ground is shedding light on the darkness of this age old enterprise called – **War**. People are now deciding for themselves whether this "defense" is really more often an "offense" for injustice and ignoble gains, whether it is in truth "love of God and country" or "love for the God of money!" As devastated families receive their precious young back in flag draped coffins or as unappreciated and even sometimes resented traumatized paraplegics scarred either physically, psychologically or both. The only victory being, the oil greased palms of greedy corporate dynasties enriched through the blood-soaked sacrifice of a youth squandered, wasted and embittered!

The military absolutely qualifies for our definition of a subculture. It exemplifies, imparts and maintains (some would argue even to the point of brainwashing) a learned, trained, culture unique to its leadership and servants. It retains its own "classified" practices, language, form, rituals and codes of conduct absolutely alien to the outside civilian population. It is particularly, on the higher levels a "secret society of set apart specialists" sanctified, conditioned and mobilized for the "art of war". On the lower levels its' enlisted or drafted, indentured servants (for one submits him or herself to a certain time frame of absolute surrender and obedience) are sworn to uphold these allegiances. Even to the extent of offering their lives on the altar of this sacred institution's ideals and beliefs, goals and conquests. There is no turning back, no retreat nor enlightened change of mind allowed without lifelong negative repercussions for the deserter! For some of these either formally or informally, enlisted "soldiers of the state" this is still an inspiration owed to extreme patriotism or unswerving devotion to religious belief, conviction or ideology. However, for many today as it has been also

traditionally, an occupation chosen, a career choice that appears on the surface to be extremely advantageous, rewarding and existentially secure. The immediate benefits and long-term possibilities being a stellar, star-studded career decked out with honor and power and undergirded with the guarantee of perpetual employment and financial security. Of course, there are those who enter the higher ranks with prior education and from a more privileged background. It is clear however, that the military has always offered and provided a means for the uneducated, underprivileged and visionless sectors of society. An avenue to “find one’s way in life” and even receive some of the crucial things that he could not seem to achieve on his own – sponsored education, vocation, guaranteed income, community (sense of belonging), values or belief system, alternative to a life of crime, identity (self-esteem), title or distinction, a way of life! Deeply hidden behind the glitter of all this potential and promise hangs the high and often “deadly” price that serves as the inevitable reward and gratitude for choosing this “risky” line of work. As one returns from the ravages of war not to a victory parade as World War II veterans experienced but rather, a life of obscurity, alienation and traumatic flashback as one tries to in most cases, hopelessly acclimate oneself to a world to which one no longer relates. The society also could care less about what he is so convinced of he has sacrificed and suffered on their behalf. This of course, taking into account that he returns alive.

This mighty, traditional subculture also teeters on the edge of becoming for most rationally minded, peace-loving individuals, a counterculture. For, after millennia long carnage, devastated landscapes, decimated cultures and pulverized populations, the glory of battle is becoming too clotted with the congealed blood of beautiful youth and innocent civilian collateral damage to be so enthusiastically celebrated and venerated. “Let’s give Peace a chance” is a slogan much more appealing to a war-torn, tired and poverty-stricken planet! Is this just a bunch of pansy, pacifist talk? **The moral value and legitimacy of a thing is determined by the nature of that thing. The nature of a thing is best identified by its origins.** What are the origins of Militarism?

The fact of the matter is that as much as the military may be involved in other enterprises, some charitable and even peace initiating, the foundation of and for military institutions is the execution of war. Whether that war is fought on an offensive or defensive premise, the purpose for the existence of this institution has always been – engagement in war. Furthermore, there is a profound reason for the religious nature and spiritual origins of war. Many are perplexed over the phenomenon of religion being historically, at the center of so many military conflicts throughout the world. Also, even more perplexing is the fact that in spite of all the advancement in knowledge and experience the human race has accrued over thousands of years, this reality has heightened not lessened. However, when one truly understands the origins of war, when it started and where it came from, the perplexity is abated. **War is spiritual** and did not begin on earth but rather has its origins and was inherited from a much loftier region!

“Then war broke out in heaven, Michael and his angels going forth to battle with the dragon and the dragon and his angels fought, but they were defeated and there was no room found for them in heaven any longer.

And the huge dragon was cast down and out, that ages–old serpent, who is called the Devil and Satan, he who is the seducer (deceiver) of all humanity the world over; he was forced out and down to the earth, and his angels were flung out along with him. Revelation 12:7 – 9 amplified

Most theologians are agreed upon the dual interpretation and application of the above cited Scripture reference. This is a commonly accepted rule in interpreting and applying many prophetic, apocalyptic or eschatological (end- times related) passages. Meaning, they can have a dual meaning or can have fulfillment in more than one instance, event or time period. In regard to this passage, many believe that firstly, it fits into the scheme of events relating to the judgment that God will bring on the rebellious angelic forces and rebellious mankind at the very end of time. This is clearly understood within the context of the passage as it relates to the preceding and the following storyline. This is what I would term “ground-level” exegesis (dividing and interpreting Scripture). The “higher-level” or more sophisticated reading, which involves discernment and knowledge of a tapestry of theology woven together from teaching derived from many other Scripture passages, upholds the following secondary interpretation. This is by the way, how doctrine is formed. **Biblical doctrine is – the discovery and piecing together of a consistent line of thought and teaching from a wide body of various Scriptures, which ultimately bring one clear revelation and understanding on a particular spiritual topic.**

The secondary interpretation of this passage would be that a “glimpse” is afforded here into the original battle waged by **Satanail** (his name before his fall, later Satan) and the rebellious angels who followed him (one third of the angelic population as we are told in other scriptures i.e. Revelation 12:4). From this and other scriptural accounts we know that this mighty Angel persuaded other angels under his charge to wage a revolution (war) against God Himself in vain attempt to overthrow the Creator and assume leadership of all creation. This deluded, foolhardy and arrogant coup was squashed by God through the agency of the mighty Prince Archangel Michael and his hosts. I will leave elaboration on this event to another book. What I wish to bring out here for our consideration is the rebellious angels’ location upon defeat. Where did they land? We are told clearly “the huge dragon was cast down... He was forced out and down to the earth, and his angels were flung out with him... There is nothing further in Scripture, nor is there any supporting evidence from the constant spiritual conflict and destruction and corruption that has perpetually plagued the earth and continues to do so, that gives one the impression that the attitude or actions of these violent, rebellious angels has changed. Neither is there evidence supporting the argument that these devils have already been judged and confined. Quite to the contrary, we are informed by the preceding Scripture as well as many others, that this is being prepared for an appointed time which is not yet arrived. More troubling is the affirmation that these fallen angels are not very happy about their defeat and are intent on taking their vengeance out on mankind!

But woe to you, O earth and sea, for the devil has come down to you in fierce anger (fury), because he knows that he has [only] a short time [left]! Revelation 12:12 b amplified

Like anything else in this world war is learned. So it was at the beginning of time. As we have just examined, war began in heaven and a great company of angels despising their first estate, left it with great violence and landed upon the earth to continue their malignant mayhem! However, they left behind even in heaven, the idea of revolt, rebellion and an alternative to the one exalted form of being they had always known. The angels who were left behind in the heavens witnessed this incredible cosmic conflict. They saw their mighty Lord triumph over the forces of evil and the heavy price the rebels paid for their outlandish boldness in challenging the Almighty. Yet, the portal was opened to peer into another world, one of rebellion, self-will and the possibility of another abode outside of God's presence in the heavens. Now that Earth had become a region for angels to explore it would remain to be seen whether regardless of the curse associated with rebellion, the enticements of the carnal, earthly realm would prove alluring and powerful enough to draw away even the most faithful and loyal of God's angelic hosts. They would indeed! For somewhat later on, after the creation of man and his notorious fall, another legion of holy Angels would be commissioned to "watch" or keep guard over fallen humanity and perhaps, also their fallen brothers and report this to the councils of heaven, therefore, their designation in several holy writings, **Watchers**. At some point during their assignment they were distracted, allured and tempted by the women belonging to the wicked children of Cain and embarked upon a covenant with one another to approach these women and interbreed with them creating a race of giants for offspring.

"It happened after the sons of men had multiplied in those days that daughters were born to them, elegant and beautiful.

And when the Angels, the **sons of heaven** beheld them, they became enamored of them, saying to each other, let us select for ourselves wives from the progeny of men, and let us beget children.

And the women conceiving brought forth **Giants**.

When they (Giants) turned themselves against men, in order to devour them.

First Enoch 7:1 – 2, 10,13

Once again, we espy the **seed of violence** born from rebellion in heaven and bred into the genetic pool and manifested life of perverted humanity. The greatest tragedy being that, what was never meant to be introduced to mankind to their detriment, was transgressed by these "renegade guardians".

Moreover Azazel taught men to make swords, knives, shields, breastplates, and made known to them the metals of the earth and the art of working them...

You have seen what Azazyel has done, how he has taught every species of iniquity upon earth, and has disclosed to the world all the secret things which are done in the heavens. First Enoch 8: 1a, 9:5

War and the spirit, genius and elements needed to execute it, had to be taught and these rebellious traitors of heaven, following their depraved fall from eternal perfection, felt all too ready to oblige! They received their due reward for such action, becoming the first eternal prisoners to await fiery judgment; but not before they had succeeded in polluting the earth with their violence and planting their seed of perpetual treachery into the foundation of humanity upon its beginnings.

Again the Lord said to Raphael, bind Azazyel hand and foot; cast him into darkness; and opening the desert which is in Dudael, cast him in there.

Throw upon him hurled and pointed stones covering him with darkness;
There shall he remain forever; cover his face, that he may not see the light
And in the great day of Judgment let him be cast into the fire. First Enoch 10:6 – 9

God apparently does not share our worship and exultation over this “angelic inheritance” but, is quite repulsed and angered by and reserves his greatest judgment for those who make it their business to promote and carry out their sacrifice to the **god of the religion of – War**. What we prize as great he sees as worthless!

“And now as to the watchers who have sent thee to intercede for them, who had been aforetime in heaven, [say to them]: “You have been in heaven, but all the mysteries had not yet been revealed to you, and you knew worthless ones, and these in the hardness of your hearts you have made known to the women, and through these mysteries women and men work much evil on earth. Say to them therefore: you have no Peace!”
First Enoch 16:2 - 5

A Cult of Violence

The kingdom of heaven suffers violence and violent men take it by force. Matthew 11:12b NAS

As we have just covered, violence had its beginnings in the heavens, was transported to the earth and instilled into human nature and behavior by nefarious spiritual forces whose agenda was to infiltrate and ultimately annihilate the human race itself. A search through history would prove only superfluous regarding the more than obvious truth that violence has not only accompanied man on his journey but also actually, to a great extent driven him! **History is painted with blood on the canvas of slaughter!** It is a rare occasion when nations or civilizations are built without the foundation of spilt blood and massive carnage. Even when revolutions are staged for supposed righteous reasons or merely, in the cause of defense of freedom and dethroning of tyranny and injustice, it is almost always with much bloodshed. Regardless, of our newfound sophistication and development of the” art of diplomacy” in civilized society, there is still something instinctive within us that says ultimately the “call to arms” has the final word, even as a last resort. Apocalyptic Scripture has much to say in regard to man’s violence and his propensity escalated toward the end of time as

his means and genius increase for the ability to create “weapons of mass destruction”, a term, run into the ground for good reason over the last decade. There is absolutely no argument against the fact that man has mastered the “discipline of destruction”. It is bad enough, that the ever-looming threat of self-annihilation hangs over the planet due to the supreme technological ability powerful nation’s harbor in their arsenals for mutual destruction. More disturbing is that this technology, these weapons and this unchecked tendency to resort to their use to resolve conflict or pose threat has filtered down to the general public. The average citizen in many countries is able to get his hands on “deadly” weapons that can be employed against his neighbor at will. In the poor countries this is realized on the black market or through acquisition by means of defeat of one faction against another where the weapons are assumed by the victorious party. This is very unfortunate, but at least it possesses the one moral virtue of not being sanctioned by the state and supported by legislation. What is the most tragic is, when rich nations make the arming of their populations not only easy but also recommended and promoted through majority consensus and governmental legislation.

The United States is a major violator of this principle. It is astounding to me that no matter how many murders per capita in cities, how much unrestrained violence (gang warfare etc.) and how many “amok” shootings occur annually, the cry and demand for the “right” to own guns carries on. How many school campuses, fast food restaurants, movie theaters and beauty salons have to be bombarded with gunfire and carnage by psychotic suicide rampage shooters and jealousy-obsessed boyfriends? How many domestic shootings, suicides and family executions have to fill our newscasts and papers before we begin to be persuaded that perhaps, it is not such a great idea for every Tom Dick and Harry to flaunt his right to bear arms! Yes, I am aware of the Bill of Rights declaration of “the right to bear arms”. However, I have the feeling that the founding fathers were thinking more along the lines of every volunteer militiaman keeping a musket in his log cabin for defense of his family in time of war. As opposed to, Rambo wannabes running through our peaceful cities shooting up innocent bystanders because they lost their job unjustly or their girlfriend cheated on them. This” ridiculous right” to pick up a weapon is only the more reinforced and often programmed into the citizenry from their youth up through popular entertainment – movies, TV shows, music videos. The worst being, the advent of computer games bent on the absolute glorification of violence, death, destruction, war and murder which take place in an alternative virtual world. Eventually, for many psychologically unstable souls (that number is increasing profoundly) the borders are blurred between what is real and what is only fantasy. Especially, if obtaining, picking up and using the “real deal” is just as simple as the fantasy version. This is supported spiritually, by the extremely demonic and hell exalting origins, themes and emphases of these virtual theaters of terror. Many characters also appear to resemble the sinister and powerful images of our “heavenly renegades” we mentioned earlier. Is this mere coincidence or could we be being revisited by the same wicked forces that introduced violence to the planet, come to finish their work with a bang as the world winds down to the time of judgment from above!

Those Crazy Cults

The word “cultus” from the Latin, as we have examined earlier in chapter 3, serves as the root for our English term culture. It is also the root for our word “**cult**.” This term today, generally carries a negative, scary or spooky connotation. Due to its association with radical religious, occult and terrorist groups of the “Jim Jones, Charles Manson, Branch Davidian, Japanese suicide pact, UFO awaiting suicide pact, Indian swamis and gurus, splinter Mormon polygamy groups, satanic covens, extreme right-wing fundamentalist Islamic terrorist cells, snake handling hillbilly Pentecostal groups etc. Although, these unfortunate aberrations can be included under the definition of cult, for lack of a better term, this was not the original meaning of the word. In fact, the original designation was more along the lines of what we are presently discussing. Subcultures, smaller groups (clearly indicated by it being merely an abbreviation of the word culture) within the broader culture who were distinguished by independent and unique beliefs, lifestyles and religious or cultural practices, none of these having to carry inherently within them nefarious, dangerous or antisocial, revolutionary traits or positions against the host society. Again, much of this assigning of this label to groups is subjective and speculative, as mainstream society elects to classify what it doesn’t understand, has very little experience with and contact to, thus finds peculiar and strange. I’m not saying that some of the group’s society chooses to give this label to don’t warrant such a distinction. Notwithstanding, many times, a particular group usually of a religious nature will be ostracized through this prejudicial designation. Even when its character, nature, beliefs and practices as well as its contribution to and relationship with many members of society are both, beneficial, charitable, morally responsible and lacking in any denigrating accusation.

A simple example of this would be Orthodox, Bible believing Christian groups, not necessarily of the large, well-known traditional institutions (i.e. Roman Catholic, Greek, or Russian Orthodox etc.) whose character and behavior are of an absolutely peaceful and non-agitating nature. However, because they reside within a culture where the general public has very little experience with them or the government of the host country is indifferent to or even antagonistic toward Christianity as a whole, they are then viewed as and negatively assigned the label of cult. This of course, is also mirrored in some instances in Christendom tradition societies when it comes for instance; to some Islamic groups even when over time they have proven to be peace loving, non-confrontational and respectful of the host culture. All this again, falls under and is a manifestation of the suspicious, fearful, non-trusting nature we as human beings have unfortunately, been conditioned to nurture and pass on from generation to generation. The Scientology group for example, has had difficulty attaining the **status of a religious organization** in some countries due to its unique and according to the country’s estimation- strange, unorthodox beliefs and practices. However, according to our definition it would qualify as a religion.

In Roman society, as we mentioned in chapter 3, much place, freedom and autonomy was granted to what was in that day’s vernacular and custom termed cults. Many of the temples and idol worship, god and goddess worshipping cults and even sexually oriented practice groups were termed cults. These were not seen as

antagonistic or subversive as long as they paid equal homage and tribute (tax) to the “secular” God of the state – Caesar. The “sect of the Nazarene” in other words, believers in Christ, distinguished themselves unto persecution not because they were rabble-rousers or troublemakers or so powerfully and ideologically juxtapositioned against the Roman system. Rather, their grave and unpardonable sin against the state was not their worship of this “Jesus the Christ” but their refusal to simultaneously bow down to and worship the emperor. For this, they were ostracized, persecuted and ultimately, martyred.

We don’t find so different a dynamic today. For instance, America is often referred to as the “new Roman empire” and affords through its liberal laws and protection of the rights of the individual and freedom of assembly, religion, press and speech the same type of autonomy and dignity for independent and distinctive religious, political, ideological and cultural persuasions. There is also very little ostracization and persecution of these independent believers. The same could be said overall, for the European Union, Australia, Canada, and several other democratic governments. However, is the time approaching where one will be called upon to prove his allegiance to the state to such a degree that the true believer in all clear conscience, will no longer be able to bow simultaneously to his “Jesus” and the spirit of the age powers that be, **religion of state**? Will persecution then once again rear its ugly head? At present, it appears at least on the surface, that pluralism is reigning proudly and tolerance is at an all time high! The supposed prejudices, fears, convictions, and narrow views of the former **Judeo-Christian ethic** are being marginalized and that which used to be seen as purely heretical and unorthodox, even strange and dangerous, has moved from the faraway fringes to the centers of influence and acceptability.

Just as an example, a boldly professing Mormon just ran for president in the United States. He didn’t win, but not because of a fledgling halfhearted attempt by the religious right and evangelical community to foster support and vote their traditionally right-wing, Republican line. Rather, because of the demographic and moral, ideological paradigm shift within the new generation that we alluded to earlier. It is quite enlightening as to the development of things within the United States culture that someone who would have been seen only a decade or two ago, as an absolute heretic and member/ leader of a nefarious cult is today embraced, supported and promoted as the potential leader of the “Christian free world”. This hearty endorsement proceeds out from those whom, within their own church walls hold to absolute orthodoxy within their doctrine and practice, as they measure it. Here, there apparently exists a great divide between church and state according to expediency. Deep religious convictions and doctrinal purity lose their great superiority and priority when it comes to the choice between the “greater and lesser evil.”

I find it an interesting and exciting phenomenon occurring as I espy the traditionally labeled cults (i.e. Mormonism, Jehovah’s Witness, Seventh-day Adventist etc.) moving more and more towards center when it comes to biblical orthodoxy and genuine Christ-like compassionate ministry. Whereas, I find it conversely grievous to watch the traditionally Orthodox, Bible believing, even Spirit- filled churches moving out and away from center. Beginning to embrace and propagate much less biblically based and more so worldly

oriented doctrines, these messages and emphases reeking of the lust of the world, deceitfulness of riches and compromise with the **spirit of the age**. It therefore remains to be seen who will be the first to bow at the sound of the music, to the image of the Emperor carrying his symbol in their flesh and contrarily, who will truly be willing to be thrown into the fiery furnace for devotion to his God, whether or not God decides to deliver him from his peril and allow him to maintain his prosperous and comfortable life or not.

Sex, Drugs and Rock n' Roll

Sex has been worshiped and idolized since the beginning of time and has even been grafted into (including many perverse and deviant features) the religious practices of many cultures. We have predominantly in the West, today as well, a popular culture also passionately driven and insanely energized by the worship of sex! Whether, it is the various acts and persuasions or the idolatry of gender and the perversion thereof. The sexual “free love” revolution of the 1960s and 1970s gave birth to many of the long-standing attitudes, belief systems, excesses and sociological problems we are grappling with today- teenage unwanted pregnancy, abortion, contraception wars, sexually transmitted diseases, total dependency on the welfare state due to unplanned pregnancies as the result of society blessed promiscuity, divorce, broken families on and on. **Gender and sexual preference right wars** also, proceeded out from this womb and became religions for the propagators and adherents.

Feminism, flaunting its heyday in the 1970s may have procured some long needed rights and appreciation for the role of female in society. However, no clear thinking individual can overlook all the damage that was caused to marriages, the family unit and respective roles of authority and parenting in the home. These authority breakdowns, role reversals and abandonment of traditional parenting roles and functions for the exaltation and idolatry of career, produced - neglected, embittered, confused and rebellious children, sacrificed to the selfish ambitions of liberated parents who made it the state's and childcare industry's burden to raise their “obstructive offspring”, who just took away too much time and attention from their promising careers.

The next step in this progression of society shedding all its moors and prejudices was the exaltation of the **homosexual** lifestyle, commonly referred to as “**gay rights**”. Again, no honest, intelligent individual can deny that this issue has long left the privacy of what two consenting adults choose to undertake in the bedroom and has been jettisoned with all religious fervor into the public arena. This is no longer about sex nor has it been for a long time! There has been a calculated and well-planned out agenda and campaign heightening in the 1980s, through the media, entertainment, educational system and the lobbying machine both, on Capitol Hill and within the individual states to take what used to be a mere scandalous lifestyle practiced in secret and catapult it to the **main moral/anti- moral issue** battering the public's eyes and ears indefinitely. Rarely, can one choose to enjoy some recreational entertainment, partake in the political process or even discuss religious issues without having this one tedious, tireless topic shoved down one's throat. Many people today, especially younger people, who would never opt for this sexual preference themselves regardless, feel obligated, even

compelled to defend this issue in all its components (same-sex marriage etc.) with the conviction of an evangelist preaching the gospel! Oh, the power of slow, subtle conditioning and brainwashing. How one can be effectively manipulated and influenced to such a degree, as to not merely remain indifferent but actually, take up the banner for something he has nothing to do with or anything to gain from. As stated earlier under the **Trojan horse principle**: “**Any opinion, when continually and skillfully portrayed as acceptable will eventually become commonplace.**”

What used to be so strongly associated with counterculture – substance abuse, has now moved into the mainstream. The former Woodstockers of the 1960s and 1970s have moved on into retirement and traded in their marijuana, cocaine and hallucinogens for prescription drugs covered by the very conventional institution of health insurance. The new generation has also taken its cue from their forebears and found it much more convenient, not as messy and more clinically and socially acceptable, to get their prescriptions filled from the same doctors their grandparents do rather than, go down to the nasty part of town and “cop” some crank from a drug dealer. What a gift this **multigenerational subculture** has proven to be for the medical, psychiatric communities, pharmaceutical companies and rehabilitation centers! A booming multilevel, repeat customer business! The war on drugs has been transformed into a pleasure cruise for all ages, providing a smorgasbord escape from responsibility and inner and outer pain, **an all you can get covered for buffet**. For the “old-schoolers” alcohol serves the same purpose and other leisure drugs are on their way to escaping the disingenuous clutches of “prohibition” and approach the dawning of the day of “legalization.” The Western world at least, will soon become one great Amsterdam where all fellow addicts can enjoy the “freedoms” and legitimacy of “high” society. I will not belabor the point of addiction, which is obviously a religious preoccupation. What I find negatively fascinating is the irony that even when one “kicks the habit”; he still remains enslaved by the **subculture of addiction**. “Hi, my name is Liz and I am an alcoholic.” The addict, regardless, of which substance is taught by the majority of recovery programs to continue to identify him or herself with the substance and addiction thereto, this is profoundly sad, for how can I be free from something that I am still constantly preoccupied with. Such a freedom exists but is better left to another book!

Another religion or sub- counterculture paralleled the rise of the drug culture in particular, Music. Music is very distinctive when it comes to a religious spirit, for there is something in music that is very spiritual (soulful) in its substance and nature. One will often speak of having their spirits lifted by a piece of music. Music is also traditionally and historically, directly associated with and linked to the **act of worship**. All traditional religions for instance, who believe in heaven or paradise, believe that this wonderful abode is filled with music and that the holy Angels play a major role in providing this glorious and peaceful atmosphere. Many theologians as well as worship leaders of religious faiths agree that overall, music has fallen due to man’s rebellious fallen nature and has become perverted and often chaotic. Instead of reflecting the glory and beauty of the heavens, it now often serves as an echo of the chaos, confusion and destruction caused by man’s violent nature and his communion with the forces of darkness causing the world to spin out of control. There is no question that certain types of music undergird, provide the atmosphere and emotion for and even play a

significant role in creating and sustaining certain sub or countercultures. Again, this list would be exhaustive. For the sake of being relevant, one must clearly recognize the role that the music undergirding the acid rock era played for the hippie culture of the 1960s promoting psychedelic drug taking. The disco and punk and new wave of the late 70s and early 80s promoted sex addiction and homosexuality. The heavy metal era unleashed a major thrust of Satanism and violence. The hip-hop and rap era of the 90s and onward – gang warfare, crack cocaine, racism etc. all the way up to the cheesy competition and reality shows of the 2000's which exalt the main religion of practically every contemporary person today – **worship of self, love of money!** Of course, there is still much beautiful music being written and performed today. This can truly be enjoyed when a person listens to music for its sheer genius and beauty as opposed to, using it only as a vehicle to promote or follow the crowd in some manipulated, marketed attempt to push a certain lifestyle and more often, sell a certain product.

Cyber Coliseum

Our beloved Greeks, whom we have already mentioned numerous times, also benefacted another of our most cherished and fanatically practiced religions, the worldwide celebrated event of the Olympics having descended directly from them. I speak of the all-pervasive culture of Sports. This subculture, is so dominant in Western cultures particularly America, that one can hardly go for a drink, get something to eat or frequent any public place bearing a television set and not be assaulted with the loud action of a sporting event and more so, the reaction of its enthusiastic fans. It is astounding to ponder all the money that is made both legally and illegally, all over the world annually from this form of idolatry. Think of the fights and riots which claim lives and upset whole cities over opposing worship as to which soccer team should be celebrated in Europe or South America or which football team should emerge victorious at the Super Bowl in the US. Everything in balance of course, there is nothing wrong with watching or playing a game and physical conditioning and training is good for the body and the discipline and fun of camaraderie with one's teammates and healthy competition is good for the mind and soul. However, when one looks on or attends some of these major sporting events he cannot ignore the sometimes barbaric, gladiator-event oriented atmosphere and the hysteria that many devoted and even ritualistic fans demonstrate (look at some of the primitive costumes worn) and the states of mind they work themselves up into and the wild behaviors they display, primitive worship to say the least. How far can this idolatry go and to what extent can it invade even one's religious practice? I have personally witnessed, church services being canceled or hosting the viewing of the Super Bowl. Is this overboard, would this be considered idolatry? Could you imagine Peter, James, and John telling their converts to meet them at the gladiator arena for service? Everything is possible, I suppose.

The advent of computer technology and the inheritance of it by the general populace in the late 20th into the 21st centuries have spawned an electrifying new virtual world! It has transported the average individual into an endless labyrinth of information and possibilities way beyond anything ever before conceivable. It has fast tracked the advancement of society and broken open a Pandora's Box of alternative dimensions and built a

bridge to the invisible world of the mind that never before possessed such an open portal for expression. If anything qualifies as a **new religion** it is the spiritual journey created by the infinite realms of “online”! The accessibility of information/knowledge and the speed and boundless and limitless sources wherefrom it can be retrieved, has truly confirmed and inspired **postmodern man** in his quest for and faith in his own godhood. What information over any subject matter cannot be captured from any source in any language, from any time period, from any particular persuasion or school of thought? It would appear that there are no more limitations; all boundaries and hindrances have been obliterated. Nothing any longer stands in the way of godlike attainment of infinite knowledge, wisdom and cosmic mysteries as the magic of mathematics has busted through the black hole of the primitive time and space Stargate and brought the once distant space-age future into the here and now.

For those of us born before 1980 this has been challenging and even intimidating to adjust to and remains so, as time and innovation speed forward in a world that sometimes still feels alien and complex. For those born after that watershed timeline it is not in the least bit strange. For, it is the only world they have ever known and find themselves comfortable in, a world absent of time, tradition and geographical restraints. Their religion is that of virtually created worlds not bound by gravity or any other natural law as they speed in and out of one automated amusement to another and jump from one technical upgrade of the device they carry and cling to for life to the next. One can travel today, not only all over the world but also, through infinitesimal alternative ones from the comfort and security of a couch. Therefore, how shall religions bound by space, time and history, locked into tradition, culture and ancient literature, speech and ritual compete with the open ended possibilities and limitless resources of the spirituality which far exceeds the barriers of generational heritage, cultural tradition and mandated rules and regulations? Returning now, to our allegory of the Wizard of Oz from chapter 6, how does the wizard continue to project his image upon the screen of ignorance and disadvantage and have it feared and unquestioningly obeyed when the menacing little dog of “computer savvy” has pulled back the curtain and exposed the wizard for what he really is, a little fearful human being just like us!

Chapter Eight

Fool's Gold

Thou sealest up the sum, full of wisdom and perfect in beauty. Ezekiel 28:12 KJV

But the serpent said to the woman, you shall not surely die, for God knows that in the day you eat of it your eyes will be opened, and you will be as God, knowing the difference between good and evil, and blessing and calamity.

And the woman saw that the tree was good (suitable and pleasant) for food, and that it was delightful to look at and a tree to be desired to make one wise, she took of its fruit and ate; and she gave some also to her husband, and he ate. Genesis 3:4 -6 amplified

The beginning of Wisdom is, get Wisdom – skillful and godly Wisdom! For skillful and godly Wisdom is the principal thing. And with all you have gotten get understanding – discernment, comprehension, and interpretation. Proverbs 4:7 amplified

The one thing that all religions have in common is that they claim to hold the key or possess the way to attain wisdom transcendent from our everyday reality. They are the tour guides on the path to higher knowledge and eternal wisdom that only the faithful can unlock for themselves through strict adherence to the **code** and single-minded, passionate, uncompromised devotion to the discipline. The gates of paradise can be flung wide open eventually, for those who seek ardently enough and sacrifice willingly enough. Entrance is earned by those who attain the purity of wisdom and conduct that will buy the favor of God or the gods. Who will then, indifferently, grant access to the mysteries of time, space, and eternity? These eternal truths and godlike character qualities are dispensed indiscriminately to the pilgrim who denies himself at all cost and abandons himself to the practice of his religion. He will eventually imbibe of the blessed fruit of paradise that yields the wisdom of the ages. The everlasting fountain of knowledge immemorial will gush out its richness to the thirsty seeker of virtue and ascendancy. Transported into the garden of delights, the religious devotee lays hold on the keys to **paradise** and learns the **secret** of the way to live! He bites into the knowledge, wisdom and esoteric experience required to discern between good and evil, blessing and calamity.

However, paradise holds within its borders freedom and bondage, innocence and depravity, blessing and curse, friend and foe. Therefore, which of these is procured by those who come to paradise seeking only the wisdom it has to offer as opposed to, seeking relationship and submission to the One who truly offers it? Are the secrets of the ages available per request with no strings attached, by merely aligning one's self with the right navigation **system** (religion)? Is True Wisdom something to be learned, mastered, and manipulated? Or,

is there Someone standing behind his treasures demanding not only to be acknowledged for admission to be gained, but requiring intimate interaction and the surrendering of one's self-centered search in order to find one's true Love spring? The fact is, that after man has attained multitudinous answers to his many questions and explanations for his constant pain and discomfort in human experience (for religion has uncovered some of these truths), his inner child still cries out from loneliness and a feeling of abandonment. What comfort is it to the lost child to finally find his way home if he finds no one at home who loves him and has breathlessly awaited his arrival?

So he got up and came to his [own] father. But while he was still a long way off, his father saw him and was moved with pity and tenderness [for him], and he ran and embraced him and kissed him – fervently.

Because this, my son was dead and is alive again; he was lost, and is found! And they began to revel and feast and make merry. Luke 15:20, 24 amplified

There is a great price for independence, no matter how “Enlightened.” A very wise man also once wrote, “With much wisdom comes much sorrow.” (King Solomon) The two concepts, **wisdom and intimacy** are not mutually exclusive. It is no accident that so many wonderful sacred and even pagan poems and proverbs have attributed a personality to Wisdom. For we know instinctively, that when it comes to ultimate truth and the unveiling of supernatural knowledge that we are dealing with personality and not mere concept and philosophy. None of our own theories or illustrious schools of thought have just appeared and developed in a vacuum. We did not just find our laws or philosophies. The recent development of our newest behavioral science – psychology (not even 200 years old) the more so, proves that we desire to give not only clinical and technical thought processes to our dilemmas and challenges. We desire rather, to be intimately acquainted with and emotionally involved deeply with our discovery and implementation of what is real and of great value and conviction to us. Yet, as exact and thorough as we are in arriving at our finite absolutes we remain so influenced as to believe, that the infinite questions and conflicts can be resolved through mere systematic and ritualistic practice of religious duty, void of communion with a **Heavenly Personality**. As if there is a vault in the heavens that has been stacked with impersonal truths, laws and virtues by No One! Therefore, all we need is the correct map of our own device to find it and the proper excavating equipment also of human invention, to unearth it and make it our own. Lay hold on the Holy Grail!

Are we so arrogant as to believe, as the tradition of Deism teaches, that a Personality so complex and creative would just wind up our whole existence like a clock and let it fly? That this unfathomable Mind, this Supernatural Genius of such precision and care in His designing and ordering of things would hold no vested interest in such an incredible accomplishment would he require and desire no interaction, no exchange of passion, no loving embrace nor gratitude for this generous gift of life and learning? In fact, this disconnected Deity is so indifferent and disinterested that He leaves it to His tiny, weak little creature to figure it out all by himself! Is this who we are? Would we be so inclined to do so with our creations? On the contrary, we take great pride and joy in the least of our accomplishments and if possible, parade them before an anticipating

world so that they can discover just how bright and charitable we are to be willing to share our gifts with a needy and deprived society. Think for a minute, of the proud father at the high school basketball game. He shouts obnoxiously to all the other parents in the stands concerning his mediocre basketball playing son, “That’s my boy!” or the starry eyed mother who is convinced that her daughter is the most beautiful and talented ballerina on the dance floor. Whether our compliments, support or advertisement of what we have produced really warrant attention or not, we are not willing to simply wind it up, let it go and walk away. Could we imagine then, indifferently writing a bunch of rules, regulations, truths and suggestions on how to live, then burying them somewhere in a desert leaving it to chance that this Pandora’s box of laws on living would one day somehow be discovered, studied, then implemented successfully, all this without any contribution or loving encouragement from us? Sounds ludicrous does it not? Yet, this is how man in general, goes about his religious observance. As if some cold, indifferent “higher power” has left a set of instructions to an **elite group of spiritual specialists** to disseminate to all the other adopted, underprivileged, uninformed members of the religious society to follow. These should do so without question before the altar managed by others whom they see just like themselves (human beings). The privileged parishioner dare not penetrate beyond that checkpoint for fear that this God who wanted nothing to do with him in the first place, will suddenly appear on the scene out of nowhere and punish him for his incredulous presumption and arrogance, for his disobedience to and disrespect of **God’s delegated authority** and boldness to approach individually and demand a hearing. This sacrilege of wanting to push past all the ceremony and make personal contact would be so presumptuous that it could not be forgiven! Does this make sense? Does this correspond with what we know about ourselves and the way we desire to relate to one another and to be related to?

Chapter Nine

The Personal Touch

Oh Lord, you have searched me (thoroughly) and have known me.

You know my down sitting and my uprising; You understand my thought afar off.

You sift and search out my path and my lying down, and are acquainted with all my ways.

For there is not a word in my tongue [still unuttered], but, lo, oh Lord, You know it all together.

My frame was not hidden from You, when I was being formed in secret and intricately and curiously wrought (as if embroidered with various colors) in the depths of the earth [a region of darkness and mystery.]

Your eyes saw my unformed substance, and in Your book all the days of my life were written, before ever they took shape, when as yet there was none of them. Psalm 139: 1 – 4, 15 – 16 amplified

What is it in us that despite all the barriers, boundaries, form and propriety which society has inflicted upon us that we still surmise deep within ourselves that everything was initiated and has its origins and ultimate resolution in the personal realm? **We are personal beings!** Eclipsing all our other qualities, attributes and abilities as humans such as – reasoning, creating, discovering, inventing, exploring, problem solving we are above all very personal and interactive. A glimpse at our newest, most ingenious and far-reaching innovation – the Internet, demonstrates this in force. Beyond all its practical and informative resources it is the more so, dominated by the speedy and excessive way in which we can communicate with each other. We can accomplish this without time, geographic, even cultural and language restraints overall. This space-age technology has blown open the corridors of time, space and distance and shrunken the world in the quickest and most all-encompassing manner ever experienced in the history of the world! We can interact with one another instantly, anywhere in the world through a variety of exciting and creative formats. Activities or contacts that used to require days, if not months of research or travel to access are reduced now to the simple clicking onto of a link or website and we can immediately hear and be heard, see and be seen without the restrictions of time, travel or formality. Instant communication with anyone, anywhere, any time for any reason! True, this technology is being utilized to incredible lengths to increase and improve our quality of life for utilitarian purposes: business, government, record keeping, research, science etc. However, more than anything else it has revolutionized our social lives. We can find people now that years ago would have been lost to us or at least, would have required months of detective work to locate. We can communicate with those whom we deeply care about, who live far away from us and get up to the minute details about their comings, goings and exciting news, all this without incurring the long-distance calling bills, postage and travel expense of the recent past. The portals of Facebook and Twitter and the most expedient and convenient medium – texting, keep our world so close, small and informed. We barely have to lift a finger to access everyone in our world who means anything to us! In spite of all the technical possibilities, the greatest advantage of this milestone invention to the average person is of a personal nature. The ability to interact with those we know, love and care about or have a desire to get to know or learn about. This opportunity has almost everyone from toddlers to grandparents toting around some type of electronic device that keeps them in constant contact with the people most important to them.

What does this have to do with religion? Well, we still espy within us, despite the complex nature of our modern society, such an intrinsic need and desire for the personal. In spite of all the cold, technical and scientific advances of our age we still have as our indisputable priority personal interaction with one another and find it the most rewarding. How is it then that when we land upon religion we find such a completely different approach and culture? A system, inundated with impersonal form, ceremony and ritual shrouded in mystery and complication? If the foundation of our natures are so apparently personal and intimate and what we create is a catalyst for that purpose, why would we imagine that the way to the God who created us would

be so different? Further, that He Himself would be so otherwise inclined? Why would he create something or someone so different from Himself with whom He would desire no communication, no interaction and no personally rewarding relationship? Would He create a creature so unlike Himself and lay the basis for discovery and revelation about Himself on a system which exemplifies distance, ambiguity, cold sterile observance to repetitive rituals and mystical signs and symbols? Would this be his logical modus operandi if He wanted to be understood, interacted with and dare I say it, loved? **Everything about us from our very conception screams of intimacy!** Prior to our birth, we are carried within the very center of our mother's body. Can she hold us any closer than that? The moment we break forth from the confines of her womb into this world we search desperately for her breast settling instinctively, longingly and comfortably into her loving embrace as we continue to feed from her life force. We have no need to be taught any of this! It has somehow already been programmed into our very natures. We are born with an instinctive, passionate desire and need for intimacy. There is absolutely nothing independent and distance seeking, barrier erecting, boundary setting in our first moments of appearance on this planet. No, to the contrary, this must be learned! In fact, a lifetime of intensive training, indoctrination and experience is necessary in order to establish this cold, hard, always questioning, never- trusting independence.

Barring dysfunction, we are initiated into a family where we are intimately nourished, cared for and adored. We turn otherwise mature, sensible adults (our parents) into slobbering, ridiculously babbling (goo-goo, gaga) clowns who roll on the floor making funny faces and tickling us, kissing us etc. they will stop at nothing, no matter how silly it is to secure our attention and give us their affection. They want to hold us, squeeze us, bounce us on their knees, lift us up in the air and coddle us. What of those deep quiet moments, when mother lovingly and longingly grasps baby and holds it close to her chest sharing her very heartbeat and every breath with her dearest possession? It is as if she bleeds out a part of her very soul into baby. She wants to share even more so, in those nonverbal exchanges, the depth of her being and the endless springs of her softest and most compassionate of emotions. What of daddy, who is normally so steady and levelheaded, strong and in control of his emotions? But something happens in that moment when he holds baby on his lap and looks down proudly, a tear forming in the corner of his eye and conveys it is good! I am pleased with what I have brought into being, a reflection and extension of myself and yet, distinct and separate from me. In loving this child I have a medium through which to love and affirm myself. I have validated my existence, established my legacy and enriched my otherwise sterile and predictable environment, releasing into it the gentlest, most beautiful and purest part of myself. I have bestowed my image upon this little one and in some small way if only for a short time, made this war-torn world a sweeter place. I look upon my creation and see and proclaim that it is good!

If you then, evil minded as you are, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your Heavenly Father... Luke 11:13 amplified

Chapter Ten

Damn that Talking Snake!

Quite often in a discussion about God a quarrel or debate will develop concerning **which religion is the right one** and should serve as the ultimate standard for truth and spiritual knowledge. At this juncture, I frequently throw the question on the table: What religion was practiced in the Garden of Eden? After a display of consternated faces the reply is usually something along the lines of: What? What do you mean? I'll then rephrase the question: What religion did the parents of civilization, Adam, and Eve practice? What was their religion? Still, receiving no coherent answer, I'll continue: Where did they worship, what religious building or institution did they belong to and how did they conduct their prayers and religious duties? Was it a temple, mosque, synagogue, church, ashram (meditation center)? After a period of confused looks, rubbing of the chins, scratching of the heads the intelligent replies will begin to come forth: Well, actually, none of these I think. There were no buildings, no institutions. It was just them, everything was natural, perfect, there was no need for organized religion or any type of structure, everything was self-contained. There was no formality or ritual, man was free! I concede, correct I say, but that doesn't answer the question of how they communicated with God or He with them. What form of relationship did they have with God and how did they carry it out? The answer eventually surfaces: I believe they talked directly with Him and Him with them. There was no barrier, no separation between them and God at that point. Oh, at that point I reply, what point is that? Ah, you know before they sinned and ate the fruit from the tree and all that.

Okay, so let me understand this correctly, I say. What we are saying is that there was no religion, nor institutions and structures of such until after the infamous fall of man. In effort to make it clear, one could say: **Religion – is a creation of fallen man attempting to reach God after his fall from perfection and expulsion from Paradise.** In other words, before the fall man's relationship was personal and intimate. Afterward, due to the separation caused by his disobedience that direct access and relationship to his God was interrupted. He could no longer come straightaway into God's presence, nor did God any longer initiate or sanction such unrestricted access. So man had to construct a way to approach God indirectly, through a veil woven by guilt and shame. The more that guilt and shame increased through continued and habitual transgression, the thicker the veil and the more elaborate the methods for appeasing this God and shielding one's self from his punishment became. The veil turned into a wall where wailers beseeched this distant God without response. The first primitive stone altar evolved into grand cathedrals and giant edifices manned by priests, popes and pastors, rituals and rabbis, icons and imams, choirs and caliphs. All for the purpose of crying out to a God who was no longer near and now demanded such sweat and sacrifice in order to be solicited and appeased.

Now, pausing for a moment here, I do realize that this hypothetical discussion is an oversimplification of many complex arguments and opinions that could arise in a variety of settings and amongst differing groups and individuals from diverse cultures and backgrounds when this subject is raised. It is a fair representation however, based on many experiences I have had while discussing religion. Of course, there are many in our contemporary world that immediately dismiss the “**myth of the Garden**” to begin with. When I use the term “myth” I am not referring to a fable or made- up story but rather, the modern usage meaning “sacred truth.” The many Asian religions for instance, are polytheistic (believing in many gods – i.e. Hinduism) or base their philosophy and hope on the Self (i.e. Buddhism, Taoism, Confucianism etc.). These are very ambiguous when it comes to the concepts of sin, salvation, eternal life and judgment and are not consequent in respect to there being one truth, one God and one way of redemption for mankind. Generally, they don’t hold to the **tradition of the Garden of Eden**. However, I have experienced individuals from such traditions join in the conversation simply because they believe the analogy itself stands as an appropriate metaphor for the depravity of human nature and the moral conflict of good versus evil. They often bring very enlightening viewpoints and perspectives to bear. Naturally, those who hold to the three major monotheistic (believing in one God) religious traditions – Judaism, Christianity and Islam immediately recognize and affirm the “Garden myth” as a foundational truth of great importance and centrality to their doctrines concerning the advent of evil corrupting a perfectly- created world.

I am also aware that many today that deem themselves intellectual find it ridiculous to subscribe to such a fantastic account as the fall of man in the Garden of Eden. The most frequently maligned element of the story being, the **Talking Snake**! How can you expect to me they say, a reasonably intelligent person living in such an advanced, technological, scientific society to believe in a talking snake? Interestingly enough, most of these people espouse belief in a theory concerning the human being’s genesis that begins with an indefinable amoebic creature that appears in a swamp out of nowhere and then through some disconnected, continual metamorphosis works its way up to the form of an ape. This ape, then mysteriously at some unknown point in time transforms himself into a hunched over prehistoric Neanderthal. He then eventually, throws off all his animalistic traits altogether and through osmosis develops the intricate, genial brain of what we now term the Homo- sapien or human being. This Frankensteinish creature of freakish origins then stands upright and begins a millennia long career of ingenious invention and godlike development. Meanwhile, his distant cousin the ape, who for some reason didn’t finish the metamorphosis, languishes in the cage of a zoo somewhere entertaining his higher privileged relatives as they stroll by explaining to their young”: See that there Gorilla Johnny? Now, that’s where we come from. Don’t tease him too much though, he’s already jealous and angry that we got the upgrade and he didn’t.” But, don’t talk to these people about a talking snake! Let’s not be ridiculous! However, kind reader if you’d be so kind as to indulge me a short time and take a journey with me back to pre-reptilian times, I believe we can learn something very exciting and heart- warming of our true beginnings.

[This is] because the foolish thing [that has its source in] God is wiser than men, and the weak thing [that springs from] God is stronger than men. [No,] for God selected – deliberately chose – what in the world is foolish to put the wise to shame, and what the world calls weak to put the strong to shame.

First Corinthians 1:25, 27 amplified

Chapter Eleven

Where does God Weigh In?

We have dealt pretty extensively from the viewpoint of Man. How he sees God, searches for God, understands God and attempts to appease, explain and reach Him. However, what of God himself? Has He ever weighed in on the discussion and if so, what would He have to say and what form would it take? How does He see man and reflect on his creation? Does He first of all even acknowledge it? Is He indifferent to it? Does He only take the position of Judge and disappointed Despot? Or, as crazy as it sounds and as flying in the face of age-old sentiment as it may be, could He possibly take a sympathetic and even passionate stance concerning His decision to spew us forth into existence. Would we be surprised to learn of a Loving Creator who actually has fond, heart stirring memories of the moment He decided to share Himself with another? Would we even be the more shocked to discover that He takes great pride in Man as His sole, personal project and even delights in his attributes, beauty and complexity? What of the concept that we could actually fill a void for this supposedly Big, Indifferent, All Knowing and All Sufficient One who needs nothing and no one?

I wish at this point in our discussion to present some monologue from God's point of view. Some of it is not very well known nor often presented when Man and his creation are taught about. Antiquity appears to have swallowed up some of these most beautiful communications as man has elected in his superior religious intellect to canonize only that, which has corresponded, with his limited and expedient interpretation of our subject. I love the following, endearing and poetic proclamation from God's heart (yes, He does have one) that I will now cite. It stirs my most holy imagination and invokes the sweetest eternal emotions when I contemplate the rich thought, creativity and love that our Creator must have employed as He set about designing and animating us. Drink in the depth and beauty of this inspired writing.

Hear Enoch, and take in these my words, for not to my angels have I told my secret, and I have not told them their rise, nor my endless realm, nor have they understood my creating, which I tell thee today.

For before all things were visible, I alone used to go about in the invisible things, like the sun from east to west, and from west to east.

But even the sun has peace in itself, while I found no peace, because I was creating all things, and I conceived the thought of placing foundations and of creating visible creation. Second Enoch 14:3 – 5

What I love most about this utterance is the touching transparency and disarming vulnerability displayed upon God's part, "I alone, I found no peace." One joyfully espies here the very foundation of humility that accompanied the created universe and continues to reign as the hallmark virtue of God's measurement and

value of all relationships and enterprises. I know that some very staunch religious souls might find offense in attributing to God such seemingly weak and fragile qualities. For we have been trained in practically every religious discipline which recognizes God as Supreme Ruler to view Him only in terms of absolute perfection, power and impenetrable wholeness. He is the one and only, absolutely sovereign and non-needing, all-powerful entity! There can be no room for such beggarly concepts as loneliness and vulnerability! However, if you would allow yourself to expand your mind beyond all your presuppositions and prejudices you will be able to see the paradoxical beauty in this apparent contradiction. For I do recall in ancient religious lore a certain “**Son of Man**” who possessed these dual attributes, humility and power. We rejoice in this identification! Therefore, God’s authority and sovereignty are by no means compromised in this ability to make Himself vulnerable and in need of companionship and adulation. Rather, His absolute power is clearly established in the awesome ability to create just upon the thought of doing it “I conceived the thought...” also, the majesty and authority of not allowing the most powerful beings occupying the universe besides Him, the holy angels, to know his secret.

For I created all forces, and there is none that resisteth Me or that does not subject himself to Me. For all subject themselves to my monarchy, and labor for My sole rule. Second Enoch 33:8

What is so astoundingly warm about this fact is that He can possess such omnipotence and yet, at the same time, display such depth of emotion and naked passion! **Intimacy is revealed and established** with Enoch, the representation of Man, through the word **Secret!** The Loving Sovereign has clasped the bewildered Enoch so tightly to His bosom that it oozes out the secrets of His heart. This is man’s distinction, his exclusive privilege to view the inner workings and most intimate thought processes of his spiritual Lover and Lord, “not to my angels have I told my secret, nor have they understood my creating”, and the most contrasting to God’s relation to man, “I have not told them their rise...”. God tells his earthly confidant, Enoch, what I have not even shared with these who co-habit Heaven with me and grace the very circumference of My Throne, I freely and longingly relate to you. These attend to my every whim and yet I have not even disclosed to them the origins of their being or the complexities of their nature. But this, **My Image**, I joyfully unfurl to you that you may know how special and unique you are and the extent of love, affection and adoration I have for you!

Chapter Twelve

The Perfection of Intimacy

On the sixth day I commanded my wisdom to create man from seven consistencies: one, his flesh from the earth; two, his blood from the dew; three, his eyes from the sun; four, his bones from stone; five, his intelligence from the swiftness of Angels and from cloud; six, his veins and his hair from the grass of the earth; seven, his soul from my breath and from the wind.

And I gave him seven natures: to the flesh hearing, the eyes for sight to the soul smell, the veins for touch, the blood for taste, the bones for endurance, to the intelligence sweetness (sc. enjoyment)

Second Enoch 30:10 – 11

The detailed nature of this description! The utter creativity and fascination that went into joining the character of these previously created elements to the total otherness of Man. The thought was definitely conceived, but not merely conceived! This was no passing fancy, no daydream. Rather, a completely premeditated, ingeniously planned out act executed with the finest precision and most expensive investment. Here, we see that wisdom that was sought out later by man under the wrong conditions and improper motivation being commanded to be fully employed in the forming of this unique, beloved creature. This doesn't carry the ring of an indifferent, aloof and disconnected Manufacturer. Rather, it portrays the most accurate, impassioned stroke of an Artist's brush gently sweeping across the canvas of His most prized masterpiece only after He has mixed the colors and prepared the background painstakingly and precisely.

And God formed man from the ground, and He blew into his nostrils the breath of life, and man became a living soul endowed with speech. Jasher 1:1

Then the Lord God formed man of the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath or spirit of life; and man became a living being. Genesis 2:7 amplified

According to the sacred Scriptures God created everything independently of Himself. Everything was created apart from and outside of Him through the medium of the spoken word "And God said, let there be..." yet, when it comes to the emergence of the first man there is a significant change in methodology. Man is not merely spoken forth but rather, God becomes intimately and instrumentally involved, He forms him! The word is loaded, because once again, it brings to mind the imagery of the passionately invested Artist taking the clay in His own hands and gently, patiently massaging it between His fingers. All the agencies and faculties of His creative Being – mental, emotional, physical fully engaged in the act of molding, sculpting, designing and minute detailing of every aspect of the masterpiece.

Oh, what care and economy must have been necessarily employed! Firstly, to ensure no imperfections and secondly, to correctly impart the perfect DNA which would not only plant into this unblemished model its wonder and brilliance, but additionally, install the program which would miraculously reproduce after itself infinitely without once repeating itself exactly the same. Unlike the supposed pioneers of genetic engineering today this Supernatural Scientist would never allow for his premier product to ever be cloned. Man would

receive and retain his uniqueness and individualism throughout eternity never to have his self boringly and conveniently replicated. He is original and all his descendents would enjoy the same godlike distinction! The word “form” denotes touch, the most tender and personal type of affection and the closest contact possible. Man was caressed upon his creation, embraced upon his emergence and tightly and closely held within his conception. There exists no more generous and guard dropping gesture than a hug. It is the closest and fullest contact between two independent agents. The initiator is truly the most selfless and humblest participant. God hugged Man in his very formative state. It was through this most intimate interaction that Man received the wondrous figure that would contain his life- force.

Chapter Thirteen

The Kiss of Life

Man was now a gorgeous form lying upon the ground possessing all the potential equipment and ability necessary for life. Only one thing was lacking – animation. How would man come to life? Once again, we would assume that this could be simply commanded from the mighty Giver of Life. However, this would not suffice, for love desires to give something precious and costly of itself! There is no greater and more stimulating reward for the Lover than to see that what is imparted from the most private parts of His heart is

reacted to by an exhilarating response, “And He blew into his nostrils the breath of life, and man became a living soul.”

God now draws from the deepest part of His Being and **breathes a piece of Himself into** His crowned creation. An Eternal Kiss possessed of everlasting life itself! Receiving the nonrefundable Image of the forever committed Partner Who has fully relinquished control by activating the imperishable will of another. Up to this point, there has been no risk incurred within terrestrial creation. All things would be ordered and commanded by the Eternal Word and the boundaries set by the same. However, this is different! For, inherent within the crown of glory this transcendent creature receives is the will to act upon independent agency, a god under God, one free to choose and at liberty to draw close to his Creator or conversely, to pull away into the never-ending exploration of the self. Love has acted, for it gives requiring nothing in return and grants the loved its choice of response no longer retaining the right to order the outcome.

I conceived a cunning saying to say, I created man from invisible and visible nature, of both are his death and life and image, he knows speech like some created thing, small in greatness and again great in smallness, and I placed him on earth to have my wisdom, and there was none like him of earth of all my existing creatures.

Adam has life on earth, and I created a garden in Eden in the East, that he should observe the testament and keep the command.

I **made the heavens opened to him**, that he should **see the Angels** singing the song of victory, and the gloomless light. And he was continuously in paradise... Second Enoch 30:12, 31:1 – 3a

Through this shared breath man receives the power to speak, not only to articulate his thoughts but inherent in this faculty is the ability to create. This is not just the ability to formulate ideas, process thoughts and devise invention; but to speak these things into existence just like his Creator. He is not operating by mere instinct like the animals, aware of their environment only on an existential level with no relationship to its meaning. No, he is now sovereign, “none like him on earth,” as well in every word he speaks and action he takes. He is sharing in the progression of things and causing perpetual consequence on everything he touches and every action he executes. This shared godhood enables him not only to rule over all creatures and creation beneath him on the hierarchy of existence, but to peer also into the heavens above him. His world is not divided, dysfunctional nor compartmentalized. Heaven and earth are fitly joined together without separation, one bleeding into the other forming a perfect whole, “I made the heavens open to him that he should see the Angels...” Heaven and earth are both operating in one synchronized symmetry producing a constant, beautifully orchestrated symphony, “the Angels singing the song of victory in the gloomless light...” The loss of this later, would take its place among the greatest griefs associated with the **Fall!**

And Adam said to Eve, “Look at thine eyes, and at mine, which afore beheld angels in Heaven, praising, and they too without ceasing.

But now we do not see as we did: our eyes have become of flesh; they cannot see in like manner as they saw before.

Then Adam wept and said, “O God, when we dwelt in the garden, and our hearts were lifted up, we saw the Angels that sang praises in Heaven, but now we do not see as we were used to; nay, when we entered the cave, all creation became hidden from us.”

Then the Lord God said to Adam, “When thou wast under subjection to Me, thou hadst a bright nature within thee and for that reason could thou see things afar off. But after thy transgression thy bright nature was withdrawn from thee; and it was not left to thee to see things afar off, but only near at hand; after the ability of the flesh; for it is brutish.” First Adam and Eve 4: 8 – 9, 8:1 – 4

Man was given the illustrious privilege of looking into Heaven, espying God’s perfect government of love, joy and victory! Then subsequently, being exalted to the kingship of bringing that wisdom to the earth, “I placed him on earth and to have my wisdom...” That wisdom was clothed in a **bright nature** that could see as God saw, a heavenly perspective and not just an earthly one, shortsighted and fastened to the ground. The first man could take flight in his consciousness transcending all the limitations of finiteness and return to the ground installing the riches of the invisible, limitless realm into the temporal and inferior one. He exercised absolute power of attorney and was the chief and sole heir of his Father’s Kingdom of love and richness. A trust fund baby born with a silver spoon in its mouth and a blank check in its hand, carte-blanche benefits and a bottomless well of life-giving water! Until one day, when an attorney entered this ideal environment and started talking about fine print and hidden clauses in the contract. This **devil’s advocate** intended to sell him what he already possessed and drop some extra baggage off which would spoil the simplicity, rape the innocence and bring to an abrupt halt the free flow of unrestricted reward. **Hath God said?**

Chapter Fourteen

It’s all about Image

And God said, Let us make man in our image, after our likeness, and God created man in his own image. Jasher 1:1

God said, Let Us [Father, Son, and Holy Spirit] make mankind in our image, after our likeness, and let them have complete authority over the fish of the sea, the birds of the air, the [tame] beasts, and over all of the earth.

So God created man in His own Image, in the image and likeness of God He created him; male and female He created them. And God blessed them... Genesis 1:26 – 28a amplified

Breath, thought, action, creativity, the power of speech, eyes that see and senses that perceive without measure. These, all being part and parcel of a much greater and glorious endowment from the Liberal Creator – **Image**. God would share not only these amazing attributes with man but would crown the whole package by encasing it in His very own Image. He would share not only His life force from the deepest center of His Being but would additionally, impart the reflection of His own glory and celestial beauty in His new creation. As beautiful and all striking as the angelic hosts are (for many have fallen as dead men just at the appearance of one, i.e. Daniel 8:17 – 18, Revelation 22:8 – 9) nothing is ever mentioned in any inspired writing proclaiming that they bear the image or are the reflection of the Almighty Himself. Yet, man once again is exalted in the creative order and in the rapturous thoughts of his progenitor to the ranks of sharing in the very essence, shape, form, type and origin of the Divine One. God is not content drawing from His inner Being the life-giving breath to share with man and actively sculpting the very figure of **His Image**; but, in the process transmits His very own unique life's form, an inferior, fragile representation thereof nonetheless, an age enduring reflection of Himself upon the earth. Like the Monarch who relinquishes his throne to his Firstborn male heir, the King is stepping aside, but leaving the very “like” Image of Himself in His stead. One who retains His appearance, tradition, mindset, passion and unique genetic structure. The Heir has “proceeded” from the King and reflects back to Him His very own Image and likeness while he carries out his Father's will and extends His Rule and Domain (“let them have dominion...”). This image of course, is not restricted merely to the physical realm. Although, as revealed in various sections of the sacred Scripture, we see the Almighty sharing some distinctive physical features with man albeit, in spirit – God's hand, His outstretched arm, His backward parts shown to Moses, His finger writing the Commandments upon tablets of stone or the message on the wall at Belshazzar's feast upon Babylon's demise. He sits upon a throne; the Earth is His footstool. One can look upon His Face, even if at the peril of death. All these instances, without taking into account the incredible revelation of the “**Son of Man**”, who subsequent to His Eternal Presence revealed in the heavens actually subjects Himself to time and space reality in the **Incarnation** by taking on the very image He imparted. He now not only imparts the reflection, but also takes part in and shares in the reflecting back to Him. In so doing, making life temporal and eternal a perfect circle beginning with Him, proceeding out from Him, reflecting upon creation **His Perfect Image** and returning to Him the very foundation of all existence.

Now He is the exact likeness of the unseen God – the visible representation of the invisible; He is the Firstborn over all creation.

For it was in Him that all things were created, in heaven and earth, things seen and things unseen, whether thrones, dominions, rulers or authorities; all things were created and exist through Him (by His service, intervention) and in and for Him.

And He Himself existed before all things and in Him all things consist –cohere, are held together.

Colossians 1:15 – 17 amplified

There I beheld the Ancient of Days, whose head was like white wool, and with Him another, whose countenance resembled that of man. His countenance was full of grace, like that of one of the holy Angels, who went with me, and who showed me every secret thing, concerning this **Son of Man**, to whom righteousness belongs; with whom righteousness has dwelt; and who will reveal all the treasures of that which is concealed: for the Lord of Spirits has chosen Him; and His portion has surpassed all before the Lord of Spirits in everlasting uprightness.

In that hour was this **Son of Man** invoked before the Lord of Spirits, and His **Name** in the Presence of the Ancient of Days. Before the sun and the signs were created, before the stars of heaven were formed, His **Name** was invoked in the Presence of the Lord of Spirits. A support shall He be for the righteous and the holy to lean upon, without falling, and He shall be the light of nations.

Therefore, the **Elect** and **Concealed One** existed in His Presence, before the World was created and forever. In His Presence He existed... First Enoch 46:1 – 2, 48:2 – 3, 5 – 6a

Then the Jews said to Him, You are not yet 50 years old, and have you seen Abraham? **Jesus** replied, I assure you, I most solemnly tell you, before Abraham was born, I Am. John 8:57 – 58 amplified

Was it in the Supreme Architect's consciousness from before the creation of time and visible space itself to draft a perfect circle encapsulating all of His ethereal and natural works and concentrate them within the very frame of this eternal creature – Man? Man was not just a reflection of his Creator upon the earth but also, housed within his own consciousness and anatomy everything inherent within God's creation outside of himself. Man was one with His Creator and with his home – **Creation**, a perfect unity palpating in every breath of the Almighty and His exact Image – Man. They shared every heartbeat and flowed in and out of one another's thoughts like the birds careen the skies effortlessly melting into the liquid firmament carelessly, joyfully, unhindered and unashamed. Oh, the oneness of things! Unity splashed against the background of diversity! Independence without separation, individuality without rebellion, uniqueness without self-preoccupation love without loss!

Chapter Fifteen

A Poor Imitation

It is no surprise therefore, that we the human race and particularly, in modern-day culture, are so “obsessed” with image! **Image is everything! It’s all about Image!** Our most celebrated and equally monetarily rewarded industry is built purely on the creation, exultation and exploitation of image – the entertainment industry. In spite of the endless revelations of the depraved and self-destructive ends that so many of Hollywood’s most worshiped shooting stars have suffered. The public and especially, the hyper marketing machine behind their meteoric rises and swift catastrophic crashes continue to propagate the myths of their **invented images**. Full disclosure of their truly empty, sad, lonely and pathetic private lives has done nothing to reduce the idolatrous commitment to make of them what they want to believe about them. Their tragic deaths are romanticized and sensualized to produce an immortal image of what they were used for to propagate – licentious living, lust, excess, lack of self-control, addiction, confusion, love of money, vanity, the deepest and most grotesque and warped perversions, all the vices that their adoring audiences long to live through their fabricated images vicariously. The media voyeur never tires of hearing and seeing the sordid yet, celebrated accounts of the tormented lives and premature deaths of the Marilyn’s, Michael’s, Elvis’, James Dean’s, Kennedys, Tupac’s, Heath’s, Che’s, Morrison’s, Hendrix’s, Cobain’s, Whitney’s etc., all the way back to the Cleopatra’s! These gods are kept alive on the altar of fantasy by those who wish to escape the tyranny of the ordinary and revel in the romantic rebellion of those who dared to live out their dreams even if they ended as nightmares! There is something hopelessly alluring about the contradiction. Something teasingly titillating in the sexy risk of it all! Something these deluded fans would never possess the means nor courage (guts) to act out for themselves. For, they are at heart, truly cowards who desire to taste a piece of the rush which accompanies recklessness without having to pay the price, a very ugly, selfish human quality. These idols however, persist larger-than-life and even appear deceptively to have cheated death through craftily perpetuated exploitation of their postmortem images, which freeze them in time at their most youthful, beautiful, and virile moments in life. These images paraded on posters, paintings, T-shirts and even much more ridiculous forms of memorabilia portray and perpetuate the lie of an everlasting youthful immortality just like the Greek gods of old. Dead as a door nail as they are and as eternally punished and suffering in the abyss of torment as they very well may be, the illusion of their incorruptibility through manufactured images seems to breathe a twisted hope of immortality into the idolatrous fan as well.

Whereas, this used to be a privileged phenomenon reserved for the few it has now been benefacted through modern technology to the ordinary individual as well. Today, everyone from housewife to construction worker to teen idol wannabe can immortalize themselves with the same quality photo spreads, chat pages, CDs and video shoots as the stars do. From the privacy of their own bedrooms or living rooms people can exploit and prostitute themselves with use of the same professional paraphernalia as used to require thousands of dollars and a sophisticated marketing monster to achieve this for the megastars only a decade or so ago. **Everybody can be a Star today!** We have graduated from the **exploitation of the extraordinary to the exaltation of the ordinary!** One viewing of one of the newest trend competition shows nauseatingly dominating the airwaves today brings the whole argument into absolute clarity. A picture paints 1000 words, ad nausea. Everybody wants to be celebrated and applauded, **“Look at me!”** is the heart wrenching cry today which screams from the depths of the insecure soul suffocating in low self-esteem and starving for affection and attention due to a lack of identity and healthy self-worth. This is the perversion of the godlike creative inheritance we have just examined. God Himself rejoiced, showcased and celebrated our image before the entire created universe. He put us on display before the heavens and the earth to the joy and the wonder of the lower created beings and contrarily, to the chagrin and jealousy of certain angelic hosts.

And Michael went out and called all the Angels saying, Worship the image of God as the Lord God has commanded. And Michael himself worshiped first; then he called me (Satan) and said: Worship the image of God the Lord. And I answered, “I have no need to worship Adam.” And since Michael kept urging me to worship, I said to him, “Why dost thou urge me? I will not worship an inferior and younger being than I. I am his Senior in the creation, before he was made was I already made. It is his duty to worship me. When the Angels who were under me heard this, they refused to worship him.

Vita Adae ET Avae and Apocalypse of Moses (Satan versus Michael)

This glory however, as we have explored, was in connection with the glory of God shared with us and through us. The illumination and limitless beauty radiated from Him, through us, out to all visible creation. Divorced from the Lifesource of this glory there is only a pale, dim and distorted reflection of the original image. This is what we are plagued with today. This is why no matter how well we dress, adorn and exalt our own **independent images**, how illustrious and sophisticated a setting we give ourselves as a backdrop, we know something is desperately wrong! There is something so fundamental and awesome missing. We were created for His glory not just our own and when we usurp His we lose our own. Was not that bright nature which we received and reflected the ultimate stage for our uniqueness and specialness? When this was forfeited the games began! The competition with Him and one another commenced and dawned the age of chaos, incompleteness, disharmony and disillusionment. We feign to love ourselves yea, to be in love with ourselves. Yet, lurking deep within us is a self-hatred, a self-loathing indescribable and a void so bottomless it can never be filled. The gnawing self-revelatory feeling of “the glory has departed” and “Paradise lost” drowns out any white noise of self-promotion and levels us with the truth about ourselves. **We are fallen from our original perfection!**

As the two friends approach the casket they fulfill their obligation at the viewing and pay their last respects. The first man comments, "He looks good they did a good job fixing him up." The second man gazes on the lifeless body and then on the first man with consternation "He's dead man!" You see, once the **gift of the breath of life** is retracted the glory departs and the beauty is a dead, contrived one absent of true life!

Chapter Sixteen

Prop Up the Image

Things, things, things and more things, the advertisement industry heaps upon us! Things to make us look better, feel better, know more, achieve more and have more! Things that cause us to trump our neighbor, outdo him, out earn him, and outspend him! **We need all these things and more!** For we must outshine our peers, one better our colleagues, impress our friends and make our relatives unduly wracked with envy! Our image will rise like the phoenix from the ashes and alight aloft the pinnacle of our worldly success and worship at the altar of our self-made temple of achievement! Cars, houses, jewels, money, toys and more toys! Fame, fortune, accolades! These are the **new icons**, the **modern idols** we have constructed with our own hands and bow down to worship, reminiscent of our ancestors who carved an image out of wood or stone and bowed down and worshiped it. We worship at the shrine of our own industry and make a sacrifice to it. A **new pagan religion of self-worship** decked out with the ornaments of man-made invention for the sole aim of carrying out unchecked passion and unrestrained pleasure. These little gods serve us in our quest for self realized godhood. They are “created in our image and after our likeness.” Oh, not that they look like us so much as they reflect our poor inner values. What we prize the most – **our image**. What we want people to see in us and about us. How we want them to look at us, think of us and most importantly envy us!

And I saw that all labor and all achievement spring from man’s envy of his neighbor. This too is meaningless, a chasing after the wind. Ecclesiastes 4:4 NIV

The ancients believed that certain gods (handcrafted, sculpted images) would bring them what they so ardently strove after – prosperity, success, companionship, fame and notoriety. He who owned the best, most expensive and rarest gods was a great man who won wide influence and far acclaim within his society.

He burns part of the wood in the fire; with part of it he [cooks and eats] flesh, he roasts meat and is satisfied; also he warms himself and says, Aha, I am warm, I have seen the fire!

And from what is left of the log, he makes a god, his graven idol. He falls down to it, he worships it and prays to it, and says, Deliver me, for you are my God! Isaiah 44:16 – 17 amplified

Is it so different today? What man doesn’t dream of peeling out in his suped-up overpriced sports car from his elaborate mansion, arriving at an uptown elite apartment building, getting out in his trendy wardrobe and flashing jewelry ranking in the thousands and picking up the youngest, most popular, beautiful woman. Then, escorting her to the most hopping party downtown where all the rich and powerful gather? This young goddess has done and acquired many favors and connections herself in order to attain the status of being this privileged

passenger and has dreamt many a lonely night of flaunting her voluptuous form before those who matter and can bring her places virtue and virginity would never afford. **Vanity of vanities, all is vanity!** Now, not all of the favors our ancient forebears clamored the heavens for and prostrated themselves before their nature-based idols for were for such ignoble gains. Most of their petitions were for the very basic necessities of life – rain for their crops, fertility, repelling of sickness and promises of health, food and shelter for the family. Good things, as we would turn them, proper desires, noble goals. Then wherein lays the problem? **In the source and the image!** There is nothing inherently wrong in any of these human needs (“for your Father knows you have need of these things”). The focus has turned however, from the One Whose Image we have been given to the poor, pitiful images we have constructed for ourselves. We turn away from the rich, bountiful, exhaustless resource of the All Sufficient One to the poverty of our own wretched distorted images of ourselves. Even going as far as to form these icons (gods) in the form of base, lowly and disgusting things. Have you visited the Temple of the Phallus (penis) in India? Well actually, a trip to the Washington Monument would accomplish the same result.

Since then we are God’s offspring, we ought not to suppose that Deity – the Godhead – is like gold or silver or stone [that is, of the nature of] a representation of human art and imagination or anything constructed or invented.

Neither is He served by human hands, as though He lacked anything, for it is He Himself Who gives life and breath and all things to all people. Acts 17:29, 25 amplified

Is it any wonder then that the first two commandments God gave according to the law of Moses deal so strongly with this phenomenon, the inclination in us to shift our focus from our true Lifesource and provision and construct our own faulty, frail and impotent gods instead? One must see clearly why this is such an affront to the Living God who wills to freely give us all things.

You shall have no other gods before or besides Me.

You shall not make yourself any graven image [to worship it] or any likeness of anything that is in the heavens above, or that is in the earth beneath, or that is in the water under the earth: You shall not bow yourself down to them or serve them, for I the Lord your God am a jealous God.

Exodus 20:3 – 5 amplified

Chapter Seventeen

Just Another Day in Paradise

And the Lord God planted a garden toward the east in Eden (meaning delight), and there He put the man whom He had formed (framed, constituted)

And out of the ground the Lord God made to grow every tree that is pleasant to the site or to be desired good, (suitable, pleasant) for food; the tree of life also in the center of the garden...

And God blessed them, and said to them be fruitful, multiply and fill the earth and subdue it [with all its vast resources], and have dominion over the fish of the sea, the birds of the air, and over every living creature that moves upon the earth.

And God said, See, I have given you every plant yielding seed that is on the face of all the land, and every tree with seed in its fruit; you shall have them for food. Genesis 2:8 – 9, 1:28 – 29 amplified

On the third day God planted the garden in the East of the earth, on the border of the world eastward, beyond which, towards the sun rising, one finds nothing but water that encompasses the whole world, and reaches to the borders of heaven.

First Adam and Eve 1:1

I planted Paradise and enclosed it, and placed as armed guardians flaming Angels, and thus I created renewal.

Adam has life on earth, and I created a garden in Eden in the East, that he should observe the testament and keep the command. I made the heavens open to him that he should see the Angels singing the song of victory, and the gloomless light. And he was continuously in paradise... First Enoch 30: 1b, 31:1 - 3a

It's just another day for you and me in paradise, just think about it... Phil Collins

A perfect environment, perfect conditions, perfect temperature, climate, nature, no pestilence, tamed beasts, fruit, honey, all natural and exotic delights, tropical foliage, pure streams to bathe in on and on and on... It is simply beyond our comprehension to even begin to fathom a perfect environment. I lay here in beautiful, idyllic, sunny Florida by the water under the palm trees, rich summer's sun beating down its massaging rays upon my skin, smooth breeze blowing through my hair as I pen this romantic thesis. Many call this paradise and in comparison to many other locations on this war torn, cold earth I can see their point. However, this troubled little paradise is fraught with unemployment, foreclosure, homelessness, high cost of living, crime, illegal immigration etc. etc. etc. We cannot even begin to imagine what a perfect environment is

like. Why? **We have no reference point!** We have never experienced it. Moreover, our parents or older relatives cannot tell us either, for they have never experienced it. Nor their parents, nor theirs before them and so on and so on as far back as we can speculate. Oh, they tell us of the good old days sometimes, but we know those days were really not better than these and possessed their own insurmountable obstacles and challenges.

For thousands of years man has dwelt in a non-perfect world where lack, depravity, injustice, inequity, corruption, catastrophe and tragedy have been the rule of the day. Even when things are status quo, absent of any major crisis there is still an inbred drudgery and lack of satisfaction in all that we do that accompanies our journey and colors our every triumph or trial, “In the sweat of your face shall you eat bread...” It is practically inconceivable for us to believe that there was a time in ancient antiquity when this was not the case, a time when kingdom was not against kingdom and nation against nation and every man’s sword against his neighbor. A time void of floods, famines, disease, earthquakes, wars and rumors of wars, poverty, pollution, economic distress and political upheaval, a time absent of family crisis, divorce, sexual and physical abuse, abandonment, drug addiction, alcoholism, human trafficking on and on and on! A time without budgets, taxes, deficits, treaties, coalitions, reforms, revolutions, genocide, Holocaust! I could paint the picture darker, but the canvas is already dripping pitch black puddles onto the floor. **We are not living in paradise!** Despite, all our efforts to make our anxious, perplexing and fleeting stay here on this planet more comfortable and bearable we have far from arrived. In spite of all our breakthrough technological advances and enlightening discoveries and inventions on the surface, deep down underneath we long for a much simpler time way back when, when things weren’t so stressful and difficult and mercilessly complicated.

But understand this, that in the last days there will set in perilous times of great stress and trouble hard to deal with and hard to bear.

For people will be lovers of self and [utterly] self-centered, lovers of money and aroused by an inordinate (greedy) desire for wealth, proud and arrogant and contemptuous boasters.

They will be abusive (blasphemous, scoffers), disobedient to parents, ungrateful, unholy and profane.

[They will be] without natural (human) affection (callous and inhuman) relentless – admitting of no truce or appeasement.

[They will be] slanderers – false accusers, troublemakers; intemperate and loose in morals and conduct, uncontrolled and fierce, haters of good.

[They will be] treacherous (betrayers), rash and inflated with self conceit.

[They will be] lovers of sensual pleasures and vain amusements more than and rather than lovers of God.

Second Timothy 3:4 amplified

An unbelievably, accurate description of our present age, chronicling in vivid and precise detail the character and conduct of our modern culture. The astounding element however being, that this statement was made 2000 years ago! There was a time however, at the very beginning when this was not the state of the union. As we have mentioned already, upon the initial creation of man, the Author of Perfection had purposed

in His heart and mind and concurrently, carried out in loving action the transference of that very perfection into His protégé of promise – Man. He had conceived him in His creative thought, formed him with His own hand, breathed the very spirit of life into that frame and bestowed His own Image upon and within him as the final stamp of approval. God transferred the perfect nature of Heaven into man's inner environment. An equally ideal outer one would now house this perfect inner environment. Up until this point, all this intimate and priceless treasure which man had received he had received in a passive state. Until now, he was only a receiver and responder. The time had now arrived for him to arise, stand upon his own two feet and become the chief actor in this unfolding drama. He would no longer passively and unconsciously drink in life and respond merely, with animated reaction. He would now arise to independent thought, emotion and action. God no longer loomed over him surveying his motionless, primitive form prophetically pronouncing and priming his potential reign. Man rose up now, an **independent being** still dependent upon his Master for life itself; but no longer helpless, lifeless and vacant of personal will. For this relationship to continue it must now assume another form. God was no longer acting on him, but would now begin acting with him. Breath turned to speech, touch turned to companionship. The images would walk side-by-side, in concert with each other, in communion with one another. Love took on legs, surpassed infancy and entered the new phase of sharing life. **The love affair had begun!** God would now perform the ultimate act of humility, not being equal, rather infinitely superior, but condescending to His creation and meeting man where he is, dealing with him as a firstborn son and heir of all good fortune.

Who, although being essentially one with God and in the form of God [possessing the fullness of the attributes which make God God] did not think this equality with God was a thing to be eagerly grasped or retained.

But He stripped Himself [of all privileges and rightful dignity] so as to assume the guise of a servant (slave) in that He became like men and was **born a human being**.

Philippians 2:6 – 7 amplified

And in the midst of the trees that of life, in that place, where the Lord rests, when he goes up into Paradise... Second Enoch 8: 3a

And they heard the sound of the Lord God walking in the garden in the cool of the day.

But the Lord God called to Adam, and said to him, where are you? He said, I heard the sound of you walking in the garden... Genesis 3: 8a, 9 – 10a amplified

Oh, to be sought, to be desired and longed after by One so much greater and more powerful than I! I have nothing to give in exchange for all He continues to shower upon me. In fact, all that I have I have only received from Him at His generous Hand. Yet, **He seeks me out!** He wishes to look upon my form and hear

my mortal voice, to know my finite thoughts and trod the landscape of my fancies, aspirations and observations. He has so much to teach me and will do so still, with a loving Hand and a gentle Voice, which echoes through the lush garden of wonders He has constructed solely for me. Will I not sit at His Feet and listen as He unfolds to me the mysteries of His universe and the counsel of His just rulings in the heavens? He will whisper delicate truths reserved only for my ears and tell tales of ages past and epoch's future not withholding His most infinite plans and intimate secrets. He will also warn me of the peril and lot of those celestial beings who were created before me, but did not prize and cherish as I do now, the great wealth, beauty and privilege of my first estate. They have also viewed from a distance, my rise and appraised my strengths and weaknesses, but He is my Protector and has stationed His forces roundabout me for my safety and will show me the right way, the true way, the good and pleasant trail. The one that attains and maintains Eternal Life! I need not fear, there is no danger if I but stay in His Company, drink from His Wisdom and learn of His unfailing Love.

What lofty mysteries were unveiled! What titanic truths were posited! What was the nature and what were the topics that occupied the banter of those walks through the garden in the cool of the day? As a bridegroom longs after and discovers his bride, winning her over and ravishing her with gifts and affection so the Creator reveled in the accomplishment of His greatest work of art and labored to bring him into his deepest confidence and most luxurious accommodations.

A garden enclosed and barred is my sister, my [promised] bride, a spring shut up, a fountain sealed.

Your shoots are an orchard of pomegranates, or a paradise with precious fruits, henna with spikenard plants, Spikenard and saffron, calamus, and cinnamon, with all trees of frankincense, myrrh, and aloes, with all the chief spices.

You are a fountain springing up in a garden, a well of living waters, and flowing streams from Lebanon.

You have called me a garden, she said. O, I pray the cold North wind and the soft south wind to blow upon my garden, that its spices may flow out [in abundance for you in whom my soul delights]. Let my beloved come into his garden, and eat its choicest fruits.

I am come into my garden, my sister, my [promised] bride; I have gathered my myrrh with my balsam and spice. From your sweet words I have gathered the richest perfumes and spices; I have eaten my honeycomb with my honey; I have drunk my wine with my milk.

Eat, O friends [feast on O' revelers of the palace; you can never make my love disloyal to me!] Drink, yes, drink abundantly of love, oh precious one [for now I know] you are mine, irrevocably mine! ...

Song of Songs for: 12 – 16, 5:1 amplified

Behold, I stand at the door and knock; if anyone hears and listens to and heeds my voice and opens the door, I will come into him and will eat with him and he [shall eat] with me. Revelation 3:20 amplified

Chapter Eighteen

The Beauty of Oneness

Let Us make man in Our Image...

As we have been discovering thus far, everything on earth and particularly, within the nature and structure of man had its original foundation in and was a reflection of what already existed in the heavens. Even this glorious greenhouse, this aquarium which housed paradise on earth was modeled on and as we saw earlier, connected to its mother model in the heavens.

Its root is in the garden at the Earth's end.

And paradise is between corruptibility and incorruptibility.

And two springs come out which send forth oil and wine, and they separate into four parts, and go round with quiet course, and go down into the Paradise of Eden, between corruptibility and incorruptibility.

This place O Enoch is prepared for the righteous, who walk without fault before the face of the Lord, and serve Him alone, and for them is prepared this place of eternal inheritance.

Second Enoch 8:5 – 6, 9: 1a, c

Then he said to Jesus, Lord; remember me when you come in your kingly glory! And he answered him, truly, I tell you; today you shall be with me in Paradise. Luke 23:42 – 43 amplified

In today's major religious and contemporary thought there is a monumental gulf fixed between this world and the next. It is very much reminiscent of the old Greek "Gnostic" view of the absolutely fleshly (carnal) and earthly and the extremely contrary, heavenly or spiritual. The Earth is associated with the body and all its evil desires, impulses and animalistic excesses, whereas, the soul, the purely spiritual part of man is completely married to an otherworldly ethereal sphere totally divorced from the depravity and filthiness of the fleshly

existence. As Francis Schaeffer explained a couple of decades ago, there exists for modern-day thinkers and religious believers alike, an **upper story** and **lower story** mentality. The upper story, being completely comprised of the spiritual, non-earthly and contrarily, the lower story embodying all that fills the lower base existence of the temporal, earthly realm. This twain shall never the two meet! Meaning that, according to this school of thought, that which is physical is purely physical and that which is spiritual is purely spiritual. The properties of one have nothing to do with the characteristics of the other. The spiritual (soul) is only otherworldly, lofty and pure and is not in any way, tainted with the impure, unclean nature of the physical, temporal world of which there is nothing enduring or redeemable in it. The spiritual world, is uncompromisingly transcendent from the physical and therefore, untouched and uncorrupted by its finiteness and imperfection.

This relentless school of thought has ultimately given birth to the modern depictions and perceptions of the eternal world (afterlife) and widespread doctrine of a place called Heaven with a capital H. Whether preached from multitudinous pulpits or depicted in fantasy oriented novels and Hollywood films, this glorious place called Heaven is presented as an absolutely otherworldly abode of departed, righteous or enlightened spirits now devoid of and delivered from any earthly remnants of the former temporal, evil world. The images of floating clouds, harps and winged baby angels come to mind. Everything appears as pure white as a commercial for linen softening and stain removing detergents. There is nothing earthly or “human” to be any longer tolerated or suffered. This however, as we can gather from the above Scriptures was not the traditional view held for millennia nor the initial design and purpose of our Social Creator. As we have spoken earlier, God created everything between the heavens and the earth in a perfect unity, harmony and symmetry. He desired no division or partition between these two worlds that were in fact, for Him, one. I find it very revealing that in many of the sacred Scriptures we are told that **God created a Paradise in the heavens and mirrored that with a Paradise on the earth**. In our preceding Scripture quotations, we are told that He even **joined the two together** being divided only by the enduring nature of one against the other. The heavenly version being celestial and not subject to corruption, whereas, the earthly being terrestrial and subject to ruin, dependent upon man’s stewardship and faithfulness to His Creator’s mandate. From the beginning it was always God’s intention to bestow upon earth through man, the glories and transcendent inheritance, which already existed in His Heavenly realm. Even after the infamous fall of man and loss of his original inheritance God would continue albeit, in a much more limited and detached form to impart the reflection of His glorious abode through man to the earth when he found one obedient and submissive enough.

We know that much later on in history Moses, the great leader and harbinger of the law of God to the holy nation of Israel, would receive the blueprints from which he would construct God’s temple on earth based upon what already existed in the heavens (Exodus, Numbers). Much later still in Israel’s history, King Solomon would actually be drawn into the Heavenly Paradise through a supernatural dream to receive his commission to do the same (First Kings 3). Perfection on earth is always reflective of its origin in the heavens and manifests itself in indivisible and unadulterated unity! This **beauty of oneness** that the Father of Creation

was laying down as a precedent for His relationship with man, and connection to his perfect environment was also an echo of the most profound instance of sharing love, life and existence that has ever been initiated and this before the dawn of time and space “**Let Us make man...**”

We have spoken about how God shared Himself with that which is outside of Himself through His gift of creation. How even more profoundly, He shared from the depth of His very Being, a part of Himself in the creation of man by imparting to him generously of His very breath and Image. However, this also was not without precedent! For, before the existence of not only time and space, but matter and all visible substance itself, God’s selflessness desired to indulge itself in the loving act of sharing.

For, before all things were visible, I alone used to go about in the invisible things... Second Enoch 14: 4a

God would share Himself even with Himself! He would divide Himself within His very essence and substance and birth two adjoining and abiding presences and expressions of His very Being. He would bring forth the everlasting, eternal principle of love and unity from within His very Self! He was willing to share His multifaceted Self by emanating from the womb of His Life-force, **abiding and accompanying manifestations of His Person**. Sacrificially, allowing them to assume their own forms and establish their own Personhood. He was pregnant with the vision of beholding, illuminating, partaking and sharing of His own Glory and Charity and would **beget** two abiding Presences Who would indulge with Him in the expression and genesis of His visible creation. These “proceeded out from Him” and filled the cosmic vacuum and produced the very Light and Breath that would serve as the seedbed of creation. The Unity of this Lovebond shared between and within this “**Trinity**” would express itself in perfect harmony and miraculous intervention in the affairs of men and the world throughout all time and occupy and provide the glorious atmosphere and authority of eternity!

Whereupon Jesus called out as He taught in the Temple porches, Do you know Me, and do you know where I am from? I have not come on my own authority and of my own accord and self-appointed, but the One who sent me is true (real, genuine, steadfast) and Him you do not know!

I know Him [Myself] because I come from his very presence, and it was He [personally] who sent me. John 7:28 – 29 amplified

Philip said to Him, Lord, show us the Father – cause us to see the Father, that is all we ask; then we shall be satisfied.

Jesus replied: Have I been with all of you for so long a time and do you not recognize and know me yet, Philip? Anyone who has seen me has seen the Father. How can you say then, show us the Father? Do you not believe that I am in the Father and that the Father is in Me? John 14:8 – 10a amplified

I came out from the Father and have come into the world... John 16:28a amplified

And now Father, glorify Me along with Yourself and restore Me to such majesty and honor in your presence as I had with you before the world existed. John 17:5 amplified

Now on the final and most important day of the feast, Jesus stood forth and He cried in a loud voice, If any man is thirsty, let him come to Me and drink!

He who believes in Me – who cleaves to and trusts in and relies on Me – as the Scripture has said, Out from his innermost being springs and rivers of living water shall flow (continuously). But He was speaking here of the Spirit... John 7:37 – 39a amplified

But when the Comforter (Counselor, Helper, Advocate, Intercessor, Strengthener) comes whom I will send to you from the Father, – He Himself will testify regarding Me. John 15:26 amplified

In the beginning God created... Genesis 1: 1a amplified

In the beginning [before all time] was the Word [Christ], and the Word was with God, and the Word was God Himself. John 1:1 – 3 amplified

The Spirit of God was moving... Genesis 1: 2b amplified

The Father brings forth the Eternal Son and the Father and the Son collectively release the Spirit as the ultimate expression of their Life and Oneness! Who, in turn, at the Will of the Father and the Word of the Son manifests visible reality and brings structure and beauty to that which is enveloped in utter darkness and buried in formless chaos.

The earth was without form and an empty waste, and darkness was upon the face of the very great deep. The Spirit of God was moving, (hovering, brooding) over the face of the waters.
Genesis 1:3 amplified

This triune symmetry would be revealed in many aspects of the physical creation, Air, land, sea – steam, water, ice – body, soul, spirit – man, woman, child – life, death, resurrection. The Son proceeds out from the Father. The Spirit is the love product and perpetual expression, inheritance and gift of their union. So it is with the family, the woman is created out from the man, the child is the miraculous offspring of their coming together and becoming one flesh in a selfless giving of one to the other, sharing their very body, soul and spirit in the most exhilarating, sensual, pleasurable and emotionally fulfilling act of passion. Both of these scenarios, one in the heavens, the other on earth are birthed in love, bonded in unity and completed in the creation, release and propagation of Divine Life. This **Unified Deity** from above would initiate, partake of and execute the origin, pro-generation, preservation and eventually, the redemption and regeneration of life on earth and within man's triune being!