

Where are we today?

Post-Christianity Laodician Faith

Introduction

The apostasy described 2 Thessalonians 2:1-4 has been interpreted in many ways.

But, when we understand it in its simplest meaning we find that it means that the faith in Christ will be forsaken by the professing believers. Thus it is called the falling away, or apostasy.

2 Thessalonians 2:1-4 :

1 “Now, brethren, concerning the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ and our gathering together to Him, we ask you,
2 not to be soon shaken in mind or troubled, either by spirit or by word or by letter, as if from us, as though the day of Christ had come.
3 Let no one deceive you by any means; for that Day will not come unless the falling away (Greek: apostasia apostasia) comes first, and the man of sin is revealed, the son of perdition,
4 who opposes and exalts himself above all that is called God or that is worshiped, so that he sits as God in the temple of God, showing himself that he is God.” (New King James Ver.)

The term apostasy (apostasia) means that where there was faith, now there is denial of faith or a compromise of faith.

How can apostasy develop?

The essential key in faith is trusting God.

The essential key in trusting God is trusting that God’s Word is absolute, authoritative and infallible.

Thus, the apostasy will be colored by the doubt and the rejection of the Word of God.

When Christians doubt the Word of God, they will doubt God Himself. Then, they will make up their own religion according to their intelligence which is inspired by demons and satanic principalities.

90% of all professing believers in Christ are not born again because Bible teachers and pastors redefined what it means to be born again. Their faith is not different from other faith except they use the name of Jesus Christ.

One of the reasons for such state is the “shepherds” who call themselves anointed pastors and leaders do not believe in God’s Word anymore, although

they pretend to have passion for Christ.

According to a recent Barna survey we discover a very sad current truth. It states that the percentage of pastors who do not believe that the Bible is absolute and authoritative Word of God are as following:

63% of all church pastors
59% of all senior pastors
87% of all associate pastors
88% of all youth pastors
96% of all executive pastors.

This means that 79% of all pastors do not believe in the Word of God.

What do they teach?
They teach nice and comforting things.

Many years ago, I was interviewed for a position to be a chaplain of a hospital. I was told that I cannot preach Christ because of the sensitivity of the different patients.
I refused that position.

Pastors first goal is to maintain their finances and their organization.

There are 21% of all pastors who believe that the Word of God is infallible, inerrant and authoritative in every area in life and in faith.

Let us examine God's revelation through His Word.

Following are four chapters from the book "Theology, Epistemology and Apologetics," which was published in May 2013.

Chapter 21 of Fundamentals of Theology, Epistemology and Apologetics

The Special Revelation

After the fall, there is a definite need for this special revelation of God about Himself. When God reveals Himself to man, He reveals certain attributes and certain Good Will of Pleasure that God had in mind for man, to be redeemed and to be restored to fellowship even adoption by Him.

This special revelation is called Scripture which reveals the theology proper. It shows to man God's comprehensive plan with respect to the universe, inclusive of his natural and his supernatural revelation.

There are different types of revelation of God. Each type of revelation implies the other and has as its source, God the Creator. Each type of revelation implies, limits and expands on all the other types of revelation.

Revelation can be divided into two categories:

- (1) Natural revelation, and
- (2) Supernatural revelation.

Revelation can also be divided into:

- (1) Natural revelation about Nature, about Man, and about God.
- (2) Direct revelation of Nature, and of Man. When God directly and positively reveals truth to man about nature or about man's psychological constitution. (This Direct revelation could also be about God's nature, but we mention God's direct revelation of Himself in point four to follow.)
- (3) Special Revelation which is God's revelation to man about His redemptive work. The special revelation is efficacious when it is given to the elect of God through the effectual calling.
- (4) Theology, which is God's revelation of Himself directly to man as in direct revelation or "in the Scripture". This point is similar to the second point above, except that we state "in the Scripture" as a safeguard against many abuses. God may reveal Himself in dreams and in visions, but non-regenerate men including nominal Christian, value their feelings and their faulty intuitions as if they are the inspiration of the Holy Spirit to them. Thus we hold securely unto

the Scripture only. Sola Scriptura.

The non-regenerate men, although they have all these revelations, they suppress the truth, thus the Scripture is fulfilled, they have eyes but they cannot see.

The general revelation although great in pointing man to the knowledge of God is by itself insufficient in the matter of redemption of Jesus Christ.

The Necessity of the Special Revelation

Special revelation is necessary to effectuate the plan of salvation for man through Jesus Christ. General revelation is not defective, but it is limited in the area of Christological redemption. General revelation, manifested in nature and in man, is perfect with regard to its object, its subject and its purpose. It is necessary and foundational prior to receiving the special revelation.

Due to man's corruption of his intellect, affect and volition, after the fall, man became helpless, guilty and polluted before God. Man cannot save himself. The general revelation points man to God and to God's laws, but the Savior, the Messiah Jesus Christ, is revealed clearly in the special revelation.

Theistic theology brings the true epistemology relating to man's position after the fall. Special revelation is necessary for the following points:

- (1) Man's failure to know truly,
- (2) Man's failure to react to spiritual things correctly,
- (3) Man's inability to interpret "natural" things rightly.

Man, after the fall, can know about God through the present general revelation alone, but not comprehensibly, nor to a large extent. Man is without excuse. Man is a slave to sin; when he interprets nature according to his own adopted principles, he does not speak the truth on any subject at all.

But, man cannot know God's plan of salvation through Jesus Christ, by the natural revelation alone. Through the general revelation man is able to know of his miserable state of sin and of his needs of God's mercy and salvation. But, man cannot know about God's grace offered in Christ.

Man's sin caused him, and the entire earth major negative consequences. Man became a slave to sin and blind to the truth in God's revelation. Man needs the light of the Scripture.

Arminian theologians, such as Butler and J. Oliver Buswell confuse the

sinfulness and the finitude of man. This is an important point, because man's problem is sin. If Arminians claim that man's problem is his weakness by virtue of his creation makeup, then it becomes God's problem and God will be the guilty one. Arminians false teachings are as follows:

- (1) They exclude man's reaction to the general revelation as a part of that revelation,
- (2) They say that man stands in a state of equilibrium before the revelation of God that is external to him,
- (3) They say that when man rejects such external revelation, he does not sin against his own nature.
- (4) They say that man would have some excuse for thinking that God might possibly not exist.
- (5) They say that man, non-regenerate, especially the little children, stand as poor and innocent before God, although they need salvation.
- (6) They say that even if the evidence in the general revelation demands a conclusion that God exists, yet man's intelligibility according to his own nature can logically justify him if he believes that God might not exist.
- (7) They say that there is an inherent and original lack of clarity or insufficiency in general revelation.
- (8) They say that the general revelation was not historically sufficient, nor adequate for its purposes for which it was given.
- (9) They contribute deficiency to the general revelation; God did not do his work well at the outset of his dealings with man.
- (10) They say that man's sin was at least partly, because God's warning signals were not clear enough so God needed to correct, and clarify the situation for man.
- (11) They say that God was really obligated morally to give man a saving revelation of himself, namely the special revelation.

We, theistic theologians, believe that man, before the fall, was originally in possession of the truth, the true epistemology, because man's original subjective condition was a part of God's revelation without intrusion of corruption. Therefore, we regard that man after the fall is not just a poor innocent man, but rather a criminal who committed sin and violence against God. The objective insufficiency of present general revelation is due to the sin of man and not due to God's deficiency.

Theistic theology sees the necessity for a special revelation lies primarily in the subjective rebellion of man. This is the willful misinterpretation, on the part of man, of God's revelation. It reveals not only the "objective" work of Christ in his death and resurrection, but also it reveals the subjective change in man from this state of rebellion and enmity against God to a state of obedience, adoption and reconciliation.

The Special revelation reveals:

- (1) The Trinity in the salvation of men,
- (2) The Father establishing the Covenant of Grace and promising the Savior.
Also, the Father is holding his wrath against man in common grace,
- (3) The Holy Spirit granting regeneration,
- (4) The accomplished work of Christ and the reconciliation with the Father.

External general revelation, outside man, is objective and cannot lead to the true knowledge of the Christological redemption as declared in the special revelation.

This objective, natural, insufficiency of the general revelation regarding the revelation of grace and salvation is explained by Peter in Acts 4:12 “And in none other is there salvation: for neither is there any other name under heaven, that is given among men, whereby we must be saved.” Paul also stated that there is no righteousness from men, whether Jews or Gentiles. All men, Jews or Gentiles, kings or commons are under condemnation, and not only separation from God. Righteousness is received only from and through Jesus Christ by imputation. Such righteousness received is not of our own, but imputed to our account from Jesus Christ.

Because the theistic and the non-theistic systems may use similar words, but with different meaning; many sincere Christians who are not trained in theology follow their leaders and focus on tangential subjects, thus wasting precious time and life. For example, theistic theology and non-theistic Roman Catholic theology talk about salvation. Salvation in theistic theology is uniquely by grace and through the blood of Christ. Salvation according to Roman Catholic church is by works and through the approval of the Catholic church seven god-like authorities.

The foundational theistic presuppositions are:

- (1) The existence of the ontological Trinity,
- (2) Man’s creation in the image of God,
- (3) The temporal creation of the universe ex nihilo, and also,
- (4) God is infinite in power (omnipotent),
- (5) God is infinite in wisdom,
- (6) God is omniscient,
- (7) God is self-sufficient.

Every fact, whether scientific, or natural, or synthesized, or psychological, or historical declares and speaks of God in the imperative as well as in the declarative active voice. We can think of revelation as both declarative of the

glory and of the presence of God and also imperative; demanding us to humble ourselves on our knees, to submit and to obey God.

There has been no change as far as God's revelation, but there has been more suffering of the universe and of man. The curse pronounced on the ground, did not change God's revelation, but now God's glory is revealed, also, through the suffering which is a legitimate consequence of sin.

The Scripture as The Special Revelation

The Scripture as the Special Revelation meets and satisfies the deepest need of man. The question remains, "If man is dead in sin and unaware of his needs, how can his needs be met?"

The orthodox reformed theology says that the natural man does not really know what he needs because of his blindness and deadness in sin. Man is in enmity with God, and man is unable to know truly about God's revelation in nature or in man, whether psychologically or spiritually. Thus the Scripture does meet the need of man which man is unaware of. Imagine a husband and a wife imprisoned together for life in a jail underground. Their child was born and lives with them in prison for eighteen years without seeing the daylight sun. Good news arrives to the son, that he can leave prison. The son refuses to leave because he does not know what is life beyond the usual dark underground prison. This phenomenon has been observed scientifically, also, in animals. Similarly, non-Christians are blind to the truth, thus they do not know the truth nor what they need. The Scripture describes this in 1 John 2:11 "He who hates his brother is in darkness and walks in darkness, and does not know where he is going, because the darkness has blinded his eyes."

Certain theologians are mistaken such as Dr. Matthew Arnold who thinks that man, in himself, knows what he needs and what he wants. Other theologians are also mistaken when they think that the Scripture helps man to improve until he reaches the point of knowledge of Jesus Christ, which is salvation. This is false because salvation is not an improvement, especially because dead people do not know that they are dead.

Many theologians are also mistaken regarding the role of the Scripture in bringing the salvation to mankind such as new Modernist theology and dialectical theology, as they reflect the non-theistic epistemology. For example, Brunner in his work, Divine-Human Encounter, Reinhold Niebuhr in his work, The Nature and Destiny of Man, and also Barth, believe that salvation comes through the contrast between the principles of continuity and discontinuity. There is no real emphasis or understanding that salvation comes by grace only and by the direct powerful intervention of the Primary Cause.

Certain reformed theologians are also mistaken such as Dr. J. Harry Cotton in his work, *The Christian Experience of God*. He says: “all men come into the world as a bundle of warring instincts. These instincts must be organized. Our personal desires must be integrated.” This is a mixup, and a compromise with the evolution theories which are common not only in biology but also in psychology.

Non-Christians do not feel or think consciously that they are under God’s wrath, except for glimpses, very brief moments, of time when the sense of deity, through the inner testimony of the Holy Spirit, brings out the truth. They immediately suppress the truth to avoid self-conscious revelation. At times we see non-Christians seeking knowledge, but we need to be aware that they do have many hidden agendas, whether conscious or subconscious, which will sooner or later deviate them from the truth.

The role of the Scripture, then, is to shine the light and to keep on shining. The people will react to this light in different manners and in their own way. When the Holy Spirit accompanies the Scripture, then this is the Effectual Calling which will lead men, without resistance, to salvation from sin, to reconciliation with God, and to life eternal. We stress without “resistance” because when God, the Holy Spirit, acts as the Primary Cause, no creature can resist Him. This is called in reformed theology the “irresistible grace.”

Arminianism, liberal theology along with other theologies believe in the plenary ability of man to resist God.

The effectual calling is the Holy Spirit acting as the Primary Cause using the Scripture to regenerate and to bring life to the spiritually newly born son or daughter.

The role of the Scripture is two parts:

- (1) An external offer, as the sun shining to men who live in darkness,
- (2) A means of grace by which the Holy Spirit, through the effectual calling, effectuate a true regeneration of the soul, (the spirit of man): the intellect, the affect and the volition of man to repent and to be saved.

The Biblical truth regarding the Role of the Scripture can be summed up as:

- (1) Man is a sinner and unaware of his needs.
- (2) Man has never been able to find complete satisfaction in any interpretation of life whether in science (nature), or in psychology,
- (3) The Scripture represents God reaching out to shine the light, and to revive dead, and to get them out of the underground prisons and tombs.

Common Grace (Non-saving Grace)

This common grace keeps men in a transitional state, although they are dead, yet they are not banished or punished by death yet.

Also, such common grace allows certain men to have momentary glimpses of enlightenment which do disappear as soon as they are suppressed by the sinful nature in man. Such a formal similarity to the truth of Christianity, is called upon by Paul, for example in his sermon to the Athenians. Paul appealed to these moments or glimpses of truth, by pointing to the fact that, in addition to the gods they worship, (as they think, knowingly), they have also an altar to the unknown God. Paul also referred to their poets when they say that “We are the offspring of god” although not the true God, but the Greek gods.

Such common grace should not be confused nor given a higher significance in the process of salvation. Its main role is:

(1) Keep dead men awaiting for the effectual call of God unto salvation.

Salvation requires the Special Revelation.

(2) Keep men who are under the wrath of God from punishment and banishment until the last day, the Day of Judgment.

Contradictions between Science, Psychology and the Scripture

There are certain facts that we affirm, not only as a theistic theologian, but also as a State-licensed clinical therapist, and also as a true researcher scientist in Physics, Chemistry and Medicinal sciences:

(1) There is absolutely no contradiction between true science, or true psychology, and the Bible, not even in the minutest detail.

(2) There are contradictions between bad (false) science, or false psychology and the Scripture. Bad science, and false psychology are characterized by biased conclusions, and false theories. For example, there are nine billion fossils collected and studied all over the world as of today. But, none of these fossils shows any transitional stage, yet scientists do lie and conclude falsely that fossils prove evolution. They claim that there are imaginary transitional stages and thus evolution must be true. Another example, scientists should conclude from the so called “Cambrian explosion” that life must have occurred all at once in its most complex form without evolution. It also confirms the flood of Noah and the creation. Yet, they claim that there must exist some imaginary life before that even though the evidence is totally lacking and against such claim. Thus, they conclude falsely that evolution must have occurred. A true scientist should find that fossils disprove the evolution beyond any shadow of a doubt, and should confirm only one possibility, namely, the creation.

(3) There can also be contradictions between true science, or true psychology, and false biblical interpretations. For example, the Roman Catholics misinterpreted the Bible as to think that the earth was flat while Galileo proved that the earth is a globe. The true biblical teaching mentions clearly that the earth is a globe, (circular). This proves that the Roman Catholics did not really study the Bible, but rather, they followed their seven god-like authorities claiming that the earth was flat.

Isaiah 40:22 “It is He who sits above the circle of the earth, And its inhabitants are like grasshoppers, Who stretches out the heavens like a curtain, And spreads them out like a tent to dwell in.” Proverbs 8:27 “When He prepared the heavens, I was there, When He drew a circle on the face of the deep...”

(4) The natural man cannot interpret nature, natural revelation, correctly because he is enslaved to sin and his constitution is corrupt thus blind, and suppresses the truth.

(5) Only a truly born-again regenerate man, can be a true scientist, if he uses the theistic system of epistemology. This point is of extreme importance as it shows that true epistemology whether about nature, or about man, or about God cannot

truly be except in the regenerate who is using the theistic system. Every statement reflecting true science, or true psychology, requires a theistic presuppositions. Such theistic presuppositions are not limited to the correct a priori and a posteriori, but they include the restored relationship with God through Jesus Christ and by means of the Scripture.

We should accordingly avoid the error of separating too sharply between science, psychology and the Bible for there is no contradiction, if we are faithful to theistic system of reasoning. We should seek always true biblical interpretations and true scientific interpretation and then we shall find complete agreement. God, created the universe, and He is the master scientist and designer. Everything is made in a perfect order, therefore there is no contradiction between science and the Bible.

Any statement about the phenomenal world without God in the background presupposes its independence of God and ultimate value above God. Thus, it is a denial of God, either a denial of his presence or a denial of his attributes.

It is plain, too, that Christianity says something very definite about the physical universe, and that what it says about the physical universe must be true, if what it says about “spiritual” things is to be true.

This is particularly the case with respect to miracles. Miracles are events that relate to natural laws. If these natural laws are not themselves the creation of God, but only products of chance, the meaning of the term “miracles” is nullified. In that case, they would no longer be miracles in the biblical or in the true sense of the term. A miracle in a chance universe is a contradiction in terms.

But, to add to the problem, certain scientists admit to believe in God. This does not mean that they are theistic nor regenerate. Non-regenerate men have made a spiritual systems for themselves which does not relate to the true God, the Creator. For example, Dr. Albertus Pieters, in his work, “Science and the Bible,” says: “The question of miracles lies outside the subject we propose to discuss in this paper, for the reason that modern science and the Bible are obviously entirely in harmony on that subject. The only thing that science can say about a real miracle, like the Virgin Birth or Resurrection of our Lord Jesus Christ, is that it is impossible under the laws of nature; and this statement is made by the Christian with no less emphasis than by the scientist.”

Such a statement by Dr. Pieters is misleading. It pretends that Christians, regenerate men, and the natural man, scientists, whether regenerate or non-regenerate, agree on the natural laws and understand them in the same manner. This is not true at all.

The Christian, regenerate man, thinks of science and the natural laws as God's mode of operation of the universe. Miracles, then, are done when God temporarily sets aside these laws.

Furthermore, the proper theology says that if God utilizes secondary causes then an appearing miracle, is not a true miracle. True miracles, by definition, according to theistic theology, are acts done directly by God as the Primary Cause. Because what is unknown to us, or what is supernatural does not constitute a true miracle. Only the acts of the Primary Cause are true miracles.

The theistic system places God in the center of everything. In contrast to this, the non-regenerate or the non-theistic Christian, believes that science alone stands on its own merit without God, as a valid, and an ultimate method of investigation. This means that the world and the scientific laws are acting on their own without God. This reminds us of the false liberal theology which represents God as the Grand Clock Maker. According to these systems, a miracle is nothing more than an out of the ordinary chance, which is false.

There is no agreement at all between the theistic Christian and the non-theistic natural systems.

Chapter 22 of Fundamentals of Theology, Epistemology and Apologetics

Theophany (Angelophany, Christophany)

Theophany is a mode of Special Revelation, besides the Scripture.

In these three chapters, we will discuss three main modes of the Special revelation.

Special revelation, besides the Scripture, can be exercised by God, even in our days, through Theophany, Prophecy and Miracles.

Theophany is God appearing to man. When God shows Himself in the form of a man, but without true incarnation, except in Jesus Christ who was a true incarnation.

In paradise God walked and talked with man, but the Scripture does not indicate that Adam or Eve have seen God. They spoke with God, and they felt God's presence walking in the paradise. The Scripture does not indicate also that Cain or Noah have seen God, but they heard His voice. Therefore, these are theophany due to the personal presence of God, although we are not told that God showed Himself visually in a form.

Moses talked with God, but he was unable to see God. He saw only the effect of God's passing glory in front of him. This is also a theophany.

Theophany of the Angel of the Lord

Angels are creatures. Theophany means God, the Creator, appears (qeojanew), but it does not mean God becomes incarnate as a man or as a creature or even becoming an angel.

The Scripture uses the term "Angel of the Lord" without clear specification if such Angel of the Lord is the Lord, God, or is an angel sent by the Lord. Christians do interpret that in both ways.

There are 66 references in the Scripture that has the expression "the Angel of the Lord". Six references refer to an angel, thirty-four references refer to the Lord God, who is the Second Person of the Trinity, and twenty-six references

refer to either the Lord God or to an angel. It is the opinion of some theologians that hundred percent of the references apply to the Lord God. Therefore, we believe that it is an expression that indicates theophany inconsistently.

Dr. Geerhardus Johannes Vos says “The place, where His ‘name’ is, is called His habitation.” “Jehovah causes His Name to dwell there.” Deuteronomy 12:15; 11:21; 14:23–24; 16:2, 6, 11; 26:2. The Angel of Jehovah can, therefore, be none other than the second person of the Trinity who will soon come into the flesh. And, he in whom the fulness of the Godhead dwells bodily, Colossians 1:19; 2:9 will dwell with men on earth.”

The Summit of Theophany is
the Incarnation of Jesus Christ

1 Timothy 3:16 “And without controversy great is the mystery of godliness: God was manifested in the flesh, Justified in the Spirit, Seen by angels, Preached among the Gentiles, Believed on in the world, Received up in glory.”

The incarnation of Christ is unsurpassed theophany. It is incomprehensible even by the angels in heaven. The incarnation of Christ was not merely a revelation of God in man, but also the very existence of God as a man. This incarnation maintains the clear distinction between Creator and creature. God, remains fully divine exactly before and after the incarnation of Christ. In Christ, there is neither fusion, nor confusion, nor separation, nor dichotomy between the Divine and man. In Jesus Christ’s incarnation the divine nature and the human nature were brought into an indissoluble union in the person of Christ.

The incarnation of Jesus Christ did neither make the human nature divine, no did make the divine nature human.

The incarnation is Jesus Christ is not a metaphysical transfusion; Christ revealed God the Father to us in greater fullness than had ever been revealed before, although in paradise, God might had revealed Himself to Adam and Eve in a special manner unbeknown to us.

Jesus Christ, the only begotten of the Father has declared the Father to us. Such declaration is not limited to the incarnation, but also to the life, the work, the teaching, the death and the resurrection of Christ.

Man cannot see God and live, especially after the fall. God is infinitely Holy and man after the fall is miserably filthy in sin.

There are three impregnable barriers between man and God:

(1) Enmity of man against God. Man hates God passionately, intellectually and

volitionally.

(2) God's Holy character refuses to be polluted. God is Just and Holy and as such cannot commune with man because of his pollution.

(3) God's wrath and judgement consequent to sin in man, namely, the spiritual death.

God does not commune with sinful man.

God does communicate with man through His revelation in nature, in science, and in man's constitution, his psychology. And, at times, God bring His Direct Revelation for specific purposes.

Such is a gloomy picture of mankind history and future. But, all of the sudden we see in the prophecies of Isaiah, the name of Jesus Christ as "Immanuel," meaning "God is with us." This represents man's regeneration and the Holy Spirit indwelling in man. This is called the "special principle" or the "redemptive principle" of which Christ is the center. This is not a metaphysical principle, but rather it is a moral-ethical principle.

If this is a metaphysical principle, then this would mean that man becomes divine, a god, after his regeneration, which is false. Man was a creature, a human being, before the fall, after the fall, after his regeneration by Christ and also to the very end when man lives with Jesus Christ on the new earth. There is no metaphysical change in man. The transformation is moral-ethical only.

God walked and talked with Adam in Paradise before the fall. Christ, who is God, was incarnate and came to earth and walked and talked with man again. Christ saved man, the elect, imputing His righteousness to make man worthy of redemption and of adoption. Man had nothing, but all is given to him by grace, undeservedly by faith alone.

The very last theophany, when Christ returns, will endure for ever as Christ will live with his elect, the Messianic believing Jews and the true regenerate Christians, on the new earth for ever.

Modern theology mixes the two categories of the ethical and the metaphysical in its view of the regeneration of man by Jesus Christ. Due to this mixup certain religions, cults and sects believe that man becomes divine when saved, or eventually at sometime in the future.

Barth also confuses the metaphysical and the ethical. He believes that man's sin

lies in his finitude and man is to be condemned simply because he is temporal. The concept of sin and willful rebellion against God is not true in the Barthian theology or in the modern theology. Thus man should not feel that he is responsible for sin which is a false theology.

The principle of redemption means that Christ is Immanuel; God is dwelling in man (with man).

But, it would be a heresy to think that God's dwelling with men is limited to the person of Jesus Christ. Before the birth of Jesus, God dwelt in men at times, but not permanently. In Christ, we see the glory of God manifested. John 1:14 "And the Word became flesh, and dwelt among us and we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the father, full of grace and truth."

God was with his people and now He is in his people. John 14:17 "The Spirit of truth, whom the world cannot receive, because it neither sees Him nor knows Him; but you know Him, for He dwells with you and will be in you."

Modern theology and neo-orthodoxy

Barthianism denies that God talked and walked with Adam and Eve in the paradise. They also speak of the fall of man as neither historical event, nor significant. For example, Dr. Cotton, says: "The story of the first sin is psychologically true." As if the historicity is of no importance.

Barth rejects the idea that one historical act can affect the entire history of humanity.

Neo-orthodoxy theologians, such as Karl Barth, do not believe in the Scripture as factual or literal. Barth says: "There is not any one people in distinction from others to whom God has given revelational content. As far as content is concerned we may go to Moses, to Plato, or anywhere else." Barth identifies the term "Jews" as used by Paul with the term "righteous men," that is, with "good" moral and religious people wherever they may be found. This view is false and renders the Scripture of no value whatsoever.

Theophany as an act of revelation of God, continues on, even today. This point may not be supported by many theologians. The evidence we take from the words of our Lord, Jesus Christ in Matthew 25:34-40 ³⁴Then the King will say to those on His right hand, 'Come, you blessed of My Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world: ³⁵for I was hungry and you gave Me food; I was thirsty and you gave Me drink; I was a stranger and you took Me in; ³⁶I was naked and you clothed Me; I was sick and you visited Me; I was in prison and you came to Me.' ³⁷Then the righteous will answer Him, saying, 'Lord,

when did we see You hungry and feed You, or thirsty and give You drink? ³⁸ When did we see You a stranger and take You in, or naked and clothe You? ³⁹ Or when did we see You sick, or in prison, and come to You?' ⁴⁰ And the King will answer and say to them, 'Assuredly, I say to you, inasmuch as you did it to one of the least of these My brethren, you did it to Me.'"

And also in Hebrews 13:1-2 "Let brotherly love continue. Do not forget to entertain strangers, for by so doing some have unwittingly entertained angels."

Some theologians may say that these verses in Matthew 25 say that if we love and treat well the regenerates, God's people, it is considered as if we loved Jesus personally. This is true, but we see also a theophany for the following reason:

- (1) The regenerate is recreated, thus the image of God is restored. Consequently, the regenerate reflects the restored image of God, assuming obedience to God, of course,
- (2) Christ does come and visit us in people and through people,
- (3) The regenerates are God's instruments and tools, but God can also use people, especially young children, to manifest himself from time to time.

This does not mean that once a man is born again, then he is necessarily reflecting God or becoming a theophany. This would be a heresy.

The regenerate man, is neither a theophany nor divine.

Theophany at this age is rare, but also true. God may use us from time to time, but in no wise we are divine. Furthermore, no Christian should assume authority based on the possibility that God may use him in a meaningful manner. If Christ shows himself, then we can only see humility, love and Scriptural affirmation; anything against that is not from God. If the human emotion or the human self is glorified, then this would be an evidence that God is not the author for what men are saying or doing.

Let us take for example a charismatic service, whether evangelical or Roman Catholic. If God uses the minister to affect miracles and healing, this is not a theophany. Also, if the minister becomes popular due to these services, then this does not reflect God. And, if the minister becomes rich, this is against God. Ministry is a service to the Lord and not to self glory, or riches, or popularity.

Regenerate men can sin and do sin which is completely against God's nature and morality.

Chapter 23 of Fundamentals of Theology, Epistemology and Apologetics

Prophecy

Prophecy is one of the modes of Special Revelation, besides the Scripture.

Prophecy started in paradise as Adam and Eve understood perfectly that they are the progenitors of the human race, and that they are to be reinterpreters of God's revelation.

Eve, thought in her mind, that she can gain higher level of knowledge by eating the fruit of the Tree of Knowledge. She discovered quickly that she lost her ability to true knowledge. However, she did gain experiential knowledge of evil. She, now, shares with Lucifer, Satan, his knowledge. Man followed the woman in this regard. After the fall, mankind believed that they are the ultimate reference in deciding what is the truth independently of God.

A most important prophecy made by God to our first parents, was the promised coming of the Messiah, the Savior in Genesis 3:15.

It is proper to consider Adam, before the fall as a true prophet; he understood God's revelation and he was theistic, obedient to God and also he pronounced God predication to himself, to his wife, and to the whole world evidenced by naming the animals and having dominion over the earth.

After the fall, sin entered man's heart and he was enslaved by sin. From that moment on, all man's interpretation were false. Except for God's direct revelation, Adam and his descendants would go completely astray from God and all righteousness. God's direct revelation, including the carryover from paradise, allowed man to have a remnant of truth and prophecy in him.

God arranged to have certain anointed men who were declared prophets by God, and who carried the prophetic Word of God, the Scripture. This is called the special revelation.

Finally, the last true prophet came, not only to declare the truth of salvation, but also to be the Savior, and the only way to salvation, Jesus Christ. He did not abrogate any previous prophecy, because the author of all true prophecy is One, who is God, Christ the Lord. At the very same time, Christ was not only a prophet, but also a theophany of the true God incarnate on earth. He alone gave

the complete and full interpretation of the prophecy and in Him all ceremonial laws and God's demands are fulfilled completely.

True prophecy did not start with Christ, but it started with Adam and continued through all canonical prophets and completed in Christ. (The term canonical is a safeguard for the true Scripture, as contrasted against false apocrypha.

The Jewish priests, (the kohanim), the rabbis, and the disciples (the prophets of the New Testament) canonized God's inspired books in the Tanakh: Torah, Neviim and Ketuvim, and the New Testament.)

A true prophet, like Adam before the fall, was receptively reconstructive of God's Word and God's revelation in nature, science, and in his constitution, psychology.

A false prophet, like men after the fall, attempt to be creative and constructive. This may sound logically good, yet it is univocal, or at times equivocal, reasoning. It is man removing God and making himself a god. Such false prophets, if they seek communications from higher being, they never seek God, but rather their imaginary powers and at times demons. The end result is that their declarations, even if they appear logical, are not determinative in their lives as from the true God.

False prophets are:

- (1) Uncertain,
- (2) Biased according to the intellectual culture of the day,
- (3) Immoral, although they appear ethical,
- (4) Changeable,
- (5) Judgmental,
- (6) Destructive of the Scripture, of the Jewish people and of the Christian faith,
- (7) Assume absolute authority
- (8) May use political powers,
- (9) May use murder and blood claiming that it is God's will to spread their power.

Non-Christian prophecies and religions are authoritarian and not authoritative. They can be described as:

- (1) They are "religions of authority."
- (2) Their authority is at most a refuge they adhere to when all other attempts to make sense of reality are exhausted and failed.
- (3) This authority is that of the expert, usually a philosopher pretending to be religious. They are the declaration of a more accomplished person claiming superior knowledge to others.

(4) This authority demands acceptance by everybody through intellectual and media force.

(5) At times, demonic authorities are manifested.

Christian faith is truly the only authoritative spiritual faith. It is authoritative through the conviction of the Holy Spirit. Christian faith should never force others to obedience, but should pray that God, the Holy Spirit, regenerates men to accept His authority.

It is a grave mistake for Christians to spread the faith by force. Thus we condemn the Roman Catholic Crusades which killed thousands of Jews and Moslems. We condemn the westernization, (Anglo-Saxons conformity), in missionary work which demands that all people in different countries must adopt the Anglo-Saxon model to be Christians. We condemn all forms of racism in America, in England and in Germany and other countries, which pretending Christians practice in our churches, our schools and our businesses. Actually, we consider force as a clear indication that such pretending Christians are false Christians. There is no true Christian who is racist.

A true Christian is humble in spirit. Arrogance is characteristic of Satan.

Christianity is a faith of the Holy Spirit, not of violence or of power. All other religions are religions of human spirits or demonic spirits, but not of the Holy Spirit. The prophecies in Christian faith have true authority, but this authority has to come from the Holy Spirit and not from men.

Christian faith demands the correct presuppositions of God, as the Creator, and man, as the creature. The Scripture declares that true Christians, regenerate men, become as such 'servants' acknowledging God's supreme rule over them. John begins the book of Revelation by saying: "The Revelation of Jesus Christ, which God gave him to show unto his servants ..." A servant is submissive, obedient and receptive to the prophecies of God. A servant reinterprets God's interpretation. A servant has no authority except on his own life and his own family.

A true Christian needs to become a positive and active citizen, but should never assume power and authority to force others to do what man deems right. Our role is to encourage, to explain, to bring the light to people and to pray that the Holy Spirit enlightens them.

We need to remember, in humility, that we are but servants, and we have nothing to boast about, except for the grace of God, the suffering, the death and the resurrection of Christ. Therefore, we need to remember to be humble before all, and thus we become true prophets reinterpreting the Scripture correctly.

Prophecy and Special Revelation Four Stages:

- (1) In Paradise: God spoke with Adam and Eve.
- (2) Before Jesus Christ and After the fall:
 - (A) The Scripture in the Old Testament: Torah, Neviim and Ketuvim:
 - (B) The Urim and Thummim,
 - (C) Dreams, in Genesis 20 we have the story of Abimelech who received a revelation from God through a dream. Genesis 40, Pharaoh's baker and butler received true revelations from God through dreams. Judges 7 When Gideon came into the camp of the Midianites he found that one man told another a dream about the destruction that was about to come,
 - (D) Visions, the prophets were called Seers,
 - (E) Direct spiritual communication by the Holy Spirit to the prophets. This is not the illumination that believers receive to be able to understand the revelation. Illumination is not a new revelation, but only a reinterpretation of the special revelation in the Scripture.
 - (F) Lot is used also as a tool for prophecy.
- (3) The New Testament, after the first coming of Jesus Christ:
 - (A) A new prophetic revelation contiguous to the Old Testament
 - (B) An interpretation of the Old Testament by God Himself.
 - (a) The lot,
 - (b) Dreams,
 - (c) Visions,
 - (d) Direct spiritual communication by the Holy Spirit to the prophets, the apostles.
- (4) The Great Prophet, the God-man, Jesus Christ. Jesus Christ is the Great Prophet promised by Moses. He is the Messiah.

Deuteronomy 18:15, 18¹⁵ "The LORD your God will raise up for you a Prophet like me from your midst, from your brethren. Him you shall hear, ...¹⁸ I will raise up for them a Prophet like you from among their brethren, and will put My words in His mouth, and He shall speak to them all that I command Him.

Jesus Christ is the very person of God, the Creator. He became incarnate as a man, thus he is called the "Son of Man". He is true God, the Second Person in the Trinity, thus he is called "Son of God."

He fulfilled every prophecy about him, more than eight-hundred prophecies. He is the essence of revelation, and He is God's revelation in Himself. Hebrews 1:1-4 "God, who at various times and in various ways spoke in time past to the fathers by the prophets, has in these last days spoken to us by His Son, whom He has appointed heir of all things, through whom also He made the worlds; who being the brightness of His glory and the express image of His person, and upholding all things by the word of His power, when He had by Himself purged

our sins, sat down at the right hand of the Majesty on high.”

Jesus Christ is the most glorious theophany and prophet of God. He is not only a prophet, but also the King of kings, and also the Priest, the High Priest for ever; He is the Messiah.

Certain theologians talk about progressive revelation. Certain false religions assume to be progressive revelation, they claim that God gave up on the Jews, and changed his mind about the Christians so He made new progressive religions such as: Islam, Jehovah Witness and Mormonism.

We disagree with the use of the term progressive revelation as non-Christians, and non-theistic Christians take it to signify :

- (1) That the human spirit has gradually evolved and improved on its own and thus man is able to know more and more about reality.
- (2) That God readjusts his revelation according to the changes in people,
- (3) that God made errors or incomplete revelations which He corrected in the later revelations.

This is characteristic of natural theology and many current philosophies and false religions also.

- Idolatry is false theophany.
- Divination is false prophecy.
- Philosophy is false theology.
- Non-theistic pastors, teachers, leaders and Christians are false prophets.

Theophany, prophecy and miracle are organically interlaced together, which is an evidence to their truth.

The Test For True Prophecy

A true prophecy from God must have and pass all the following five points:

(1) The Test of Unity: Each individual prophecy must be interpreted in relation to the whole body of prophecy. And, the whole body of prophecy must then be taken into relation to the whole body of theophany and the whole body of miracle. The prophecy compared with previous prophecy in the Bible must be of one accord,

(2) The Test of Fulfillment: The declared prophecy must be correctly fulfilled in events, or in miracles, or in theophanies: Deuteronomy 18:21-22 “And if you say in your heart, how shall we know the word which the Lord has not spoken? When a prophet speaks in the name of the Lord, if the thing follow not, nor come to pass, that is the thing which the Lord has not spoken; the prophet has spoken it presumptuously, you shall not be afraid of him.” Also in 2 Kings 20:11 Isaiah gave Hezekiah a sign affirming his true prophecy with respect to his healing. The sign was that God will cause the sundial to work backward instead of forward at a certain time which indicates that the entire earth rotation was reversed for a certain period. Scientifically, it has been proven at NASA research laboratories, that at the time of Hezekiah there was actually 40 minutes missing from the calendar according to computers exhaustive analysis.

(3) The Test of Theology: True prophecy must be conform to theistic theology. It must affirm God the Creator and no other gods beside Him, Deuteronomy 13:1-4. It must be conform to Christ’s person and works. Galatians 1:8-9 “But even if we, or an angel from heaven, preach any other gospel to you than what we have preached to you, let him be accursed. As we have said before, so now I say again, if anyone preaches any other gospel to you than what you have received, let him be accursed.”

(4) The Test of Purpose: The end goal of the prophecy must be the glory of God and the service of God. All prophecy needs to bring God’s love, revelation and redemption to people in humble spirit.

False prophets are many; pastors and teachers who may teach the Word of God for their own interest. They are politically correct using the Bible in a safe manner to promote receiving personal profit, popularity and admiration of men.

(5) The Moral Test: While man should never be the judge of one another in what pertains to God, yet when a prophet willfully disobeys the Ten Commandments, although his words are sweet and politically correct, he is a false prophet. Such prophecy that appears correct should not be accepted, even if he repeats words from the Bible.

The danger here is that while he may say one thing to be true, the next thing will be false. This is how many theologians are mixed up as they compromise God's Word with human philosophies. When a man has a good theology, he has a good morality, and when a man has a good morality, this is an indication that he may have a good theology, assuming that he is regenerate.

Prophecy, theophany and miracles are mutually dependent and corroborative, not only regarding the purpose, but also in origin, means, purpose and destination.

Dr. Cornelius Van Til says: "Prophecy without miracle is an abstraction, and miracle without prophecy is an abstraction, as both are abstractions unless related to theophany."

Chapter 24 of Fundamentals of Theology, Epistemology and Apologetics

Miracles

Miracles are a mode of Special Revelation, besides the Scripture.

God's gracious plan of redemption is not limited to giving man a message in the Scripture. God planned changes in the objective sphere, as well as, in the subjective sphere.

The central miracle of God's redemption, as well as in the entire universe, is the very person and work of Jesus Christ. The entire Scripture points to Christ. Such greatest theophany is also the greatest miracle and the greatest prophecy of God manifesting Himself in Himself.

Intellectualism follows the Scroatic elitism in assuming that knowledge is virtue, power and freedom. But, the fact of the matter is that knowledge alone, of objects, does not have much value unless correctly interpreted.

Intellectualism assumes that the only thing that the sinner needs is true information. This is false, because man will not be able to interpret, nor to understand such information unless his heart is recreated, regenerated. For example, Nature is suffering the curse due to man's willful sin. Nature cannot be suffering due to lack of information. Nature needs a miracle to be redeemed and recreated also. Sin is not only misinformation; it is also a power of perversion in the soul.

There are six powerful consequences of sin in man after the fall:

(1) Sin enters and now resides in the heart of man, in the mind of man and in his volition. Sin becomes associated with every action and every memory repertoire of the non-regenerate man. If you imagine the memory as trillions of snapshots of time and events, you will see simultaneously several trillions of sin memories stored alongside in the man's repertoire of memories. These are carried from childhood to the grave, unless the Holy Spirit recreates man's constitution. The Scripture says in 2 Corinthians 5:17 "Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; old things have passed away; behold, all things have become new." And, Galatians 6:15 "For in Christ Jesus, neither circumcision nor uncircumcision avails anything, but a new creation."

(2) Sin causes intellectual blindness, emotional depravity, and fearful and feeble will to do what is morally right before God.

(3) Sin enslaves man's intellect, affect and volition. All the thought, the passions and the action of man obey the master sin nature in him. Man becomes the servant of, and the slave to sin. Man cannot but sin.

(4) Sin introduced death. All men had become dead spiritually. If man does not receive God's common, non-saving, grace, man will immediately banish with fire and eternal condemnation.

(5) Sin has natural and metaphysical consequences. Every action must have a reaction as a secondary cause. Sin in man continues to harvest evil and harmful consequences. This is the reason why suffering continues in the world, in families and in individual lives.

(6) Sin propagates more sins constantly, not only in self, but also in others.

Sin brought every sphere of human life in subjection to misery and death; by miracle God brings all these spheres back to life and to health.

The central miracle of the person and work of Christ is pivotal in bringing the redemption to mankind and reconciling man to the infinitely Holy God.

Jesus performed many miracles. These miracles were performed neither to show off, nor to impress people.

The purposes of these miracles are:

(1) They are a revelation of God. At times they are direct revelations, and at other times, they are special revelations:

(A) They reveal that God exists.

(B) They demonstrate part of the character and of the nature of God.

(C) They reveal God's power and grace to lead certain men, the elect, to salvation.

(2) They are means of Grace performed by God to redeem certain people, the elect.

(3) They have symbolic functions.

An example of symbolism of miracles is in Luke 8:24. Jesus calmed the storm on the sea of Galilee. This symbolizes God's protection and our trust in Him during

the stormy times of our lives.

In 1 Kings 18:36 when God's power was manifested in the fire that came down and accepted Elijah's sacrifice while rejected the other false prophets and false priests. Another example is when God provided miraculously the lamb to Abraham to sacrifice instead of his own son Isaac. The symbol here is that this lamb represents the true Lamb of God, who is God's own Son, Jesus Christ.

The Exodus of the Israelites manifested many miracles. God freed the Israelites with a mighty hand, from the slavery of the Egyptians. The symbol here is that the Egyptians represented satanic and sinful slavery which attempts to keep God's elect under bondage, and destroy them. God continued showing his miracles and mighty hand as He led the Israelites to their promised land.

Paradise is paradise only because God is there. After the coming of Christ, we shall be on the new earth which will be our final paradise because Christ will live with us there for ever.

Jesus promised the believing thief on the cross to be with him in paradise that night. The spirit of that regenerated thief was with Christ that night, thus is paradise. We can call the place where all the sleeping regenerate men's spirits are waiting as a paradise, because they are with Christ now. When Christ comes back again, they will rise in their flesh from the grave and will be caught with Christ in the air, and then on the new earth, the final paradise.

In apologetics Christian apologists seek to make the Christian faith appear reasonable to the non-believer. But, we need to use only theistic apologetics because no matter what argument we may have to prove the truth, it is impossible for the unbeliever to be satisfied. It is the work of the Holy Spirit that convinces and convicts the non-believer.

For example, many Christians and Christian apologists use the miracles to help the non-believer to learn about God's work. But, these Christians use merely denotative instead of the connotative definition of miracles; they indicate the miracles, and their power, but they do not explain their deeper meaning, symbolism and value; they talk about the object, but ignore the subject.

For example, Dr. Clark attempts to persuade scientists of the possibility of miracles. Dr. Clark says: "There is in all observation of a scientific sort, always a margin of error. There is the threshold beyond which no investigation can go. There is therefore always room for the exceptional. Thus the scientist himself must allow for the possibility of miracle. It becomes then a matter of mere historical investigation whether the alleged miracles of Christianity have actually occurred."

Dr. Clark's argument has four faults:

(1) It utilizes the natural method instead of the theistic method, thus it does not bring God and His character immediately in the discussion. It uses the rationalistic method which makes man the ultimate measure and reference of everything. It will give the determination to the natural scientist without any theistic presupposition.

(2) What happens when scientists believe that miracles occur? They will reinterpret their values in many directions according to their bias. Non-believers, even pragmatists, may accept the possibility of miracles. But, they will have no significance, except as a chance possibility that has no further value.

(3) Dr. Clark is using the margin of error as the scientific domain that allows error, hence miracles. Such view would subject miracles to the natural laws, thus they are no longer miracles. This view will insist that miracles could be explained by science in the normal range or in the margin of error range. The margin of error comes from the inaccurate measurement of units which when calculated as propagation of error they lead to the margin of error. Miracles are acts made by the hand of God, directly, as the Primary Cause. They are not a possibility of error within the natural laws. Thus, Dr. Clark misinterpreted the miracles in his attempt to appeal to natural scientists.

(4) Miracles, according to Dr. Clark's view, would be void of their symbolic and didactic value. They cannot predicate God's plan, they simply become a variance in the scientific method.

The non-Christian scientist and philosopher can allow for the possibility of miracles and other facts only on the condition that they are stripped out of any Christian connotation or value. Also, we need to remember that Christianity and redemption is not only a matter of information, but a matter of recreation, regeneration, and of the inner soul, spirit of man.

The Power of God as a Miracle

God manifested his infinite powers in finite miracles. The miracles we see do not show but a minute part of the power of God.

By His Word, God created the heavens and the earth and everything in them.

God manifests of His power to enable the elect to receive redemption and the recreation of man.

God's power maintains the universe. At times we assume falsely that secondary causes do not manifest God's power. Secondary causes chain reactions are designed by God. They are intricate and dependent on each other, so that if one event escapes God's knowledge, the entire universe will collapse. This is beyond understanding. This is an awesome miracle when you imagine the complete tapestry of all secondary causes and God in the back, who is their Primary Cause.

God's power is not given to the sinners, the non-regenerate men. It is given to the elect to sustain them through life's trials, temptations, and persecution, and to redeem them through the work of Christ by means of the special revelation.

God allows His power to come to the non-believers in the form of common, non-saving, grace thus delaying their final judgement. Those who are elect, will be saved and the common grace to them will sustain their life until the creative power of God renews them.

A miracle is an act by the very finger of God. It is an act done by the Primary Cause in person.

Also, we notice that the Scripture emphasizes that believers do not need to test God by asking Him to prove Himself by miracles. Actually in the situations when miracles were performed, usually they were done for the non-believers, or for the weak believers sake.

Therefore, we affirm that while God is performing many miracles in our lives, we are not to test God and demand these miracles as of a right. We can ask for them as of a grace, and a privilege only. We should be content, when our requests for miracles are not fulfilled.

We need to learn to be content and submissive to the Lord. We need also to remember that God is not our servant, but rather, we are His servants.

It is important to distinguish miracles from what is not a miracle to clear up many confusions in the minds of people, Christians and non-Christians alike.

What is NOT a miracle:

(1) God's coincidental providence: At times, certain strange events cause us to change our life direction. Even if this appears unexplainable or extremely out of the ordinary in our eyes, it is not a miracle.

For example, if you are slowed down in traffic in an out of the ordinary manner, and you missed your airplane flight. Later you hear that this flight exploded in the air. Then everybody will assume that God saved your life by a miracle. Actually God did save your life, but by secondary causes which He directed and orchestrated. This means it was not a miracle. God directs everything and every event in the universe sovereignly to achieve His plans. Every event is not a miracle.

(2) Psychological:

(A) Man's perception of reality: When man is overpowered by feelings, or through hypnotic suggestion, without hypnotic trans necessarily, such a man may see or hear or feel what is not of reality. A good example, is the appearance of Mary in Lourdes, France, or in other places in the world. Many people who affirmed that they saw her, did not really see her, but they had a total fixation which is fulfilled in their mind.

(B) Psychosomatic: Under hypnotic suggestion, or under strong faith in the directives, or promises of a man, there may be physical healing. Such healing can be of true nature, but it is assisted by the psychosomatic human power.

Such psychosomatic power is extremely effective in causing diseases, or in healing diseases. A good example, is the fact many people are healed immediately after they see a doctor, before taking any medication at all. They report that they already feel better just by talking with the doctor.

(3) Angelic actions: God orders the angels to perform many acts in His Service. At times, God allows an angel to manifest or to show his power, even in answering prayers. Such manifestation is not a miracle, because it did not happen directly and immediately by God, the Primary Cause. These events happen by the angels who are a secondary cause. At times, we cannot know if the action is done by the Primary Cause, God Almighty, or by his angels. In these cases, we need to be quiet and not make a judgment. For example, we are not sure how did the walls of Jericho fall down after Joshua encircled them seven times. If God, in person is the one who demolished them, then it was a miracle. If angels demolished the walls, then it was not a miracle.

A supernatural act, by itself, is not necessarily a miracle. A supernatural act is

necessarily an unknown act to man. But, unknowability does not imply a miracle every time.

(4) Demonic actions: Satan and his demons are also angels, they attempt at times to affect certain manifestations or events. They cannot approach a believer who claims the blood of Christ on him. Such manifestations, which are evidenced in many cultures among non-believers, are not miracles. For example, seances and talking with evil spirits. False religions may manifest supernatural strange, even bizarre acts. These are done by demonic power. They are not miracles. Again, we reaffirm that unknowability, or supernatural quality of an event does not mean that it is a miracle.

(5) An anomaly in nature: An anomaly is an exception in a structure, or in a phenomenon. For example, an exception in the DNA can produce a mutation which may make certain bacteria sensitive, and die when exposed to salty solutions. If someone discovered that salty solutions can kill this bacteria contrary to their normal strain, then this is not a miracle. It is an anomaly, i.e. alteration in the genome. Another example, if there is an exception in the wind pattern which causes hail storms in the desert. Such a very strange event is not a miracle.

(6) Magic: A magic can be a trick, or a hex, or a demonic assisted event. A magic is not a miracle.

David Hume, (1711-1776), is a British, Scottish philosopher and empiricist. He denied all miracles. He said that intelligent people should not believe in miracles. He had four theses:

- (1) Natural law describes regular events.
- (2) A miracle is a rare event.
- (3) Evidence is more sure for the regular events than for the rare events.
- (4) Smart people should believe only the sure events. Thus, he says: "We should not believe in miracles." His argument is false.

Mr. Hume is an example of the willful blindness and bias in rejection of the truth of miracles using empiricism - rational scepticism.

The Bible clarifies this subject in Exodus 7. One may have wondered why did the Bible mention about the Egyptian magicians turning their rods into serpents? Were these true serpents? What is their significance?

God described that the Egyptian magicians were able to turn their rods into real serpents by magic. That was neither a hypnotic trans state, nor a miracle because it was done by secondary causes, namely, demons. While, God's

turning the rod of Aaron was a true miracle.

Exodus 7:8-13 ⁸Then the LORD spoke to Moses and Aaron, saying, ⁹"When Pharaoh speaks to you, saying, 'Show a miracle for yourselves,' then you shall say to Aaron, 'Take your rod and cast it before Pharaoh, and let it become a serpent.'" ¹⁰So Moses and Aaron went in to Pharaoh, and they did so, just as the LORD commanded. And Aaron cast down his rod before Pharaoh and before his servants, and it became a serpent. ¹¹But Pharaoh also called the wise men and the sorcerers; so the magicians of Egypt, they also did in like manner with their enchantments. ¹²For every man threw down his rod, and they became serpents. But Aaron's rod swallowed up their rods. ¹³And Pharaoh's heart grew hard, and he did not heed them, as the LORD had said."

These verses were inspired by God in the Scripture, to show us the difference between miracles and secondary causes events, even if they appear similar. The Egyptian serpents were counterfeit events. This demonstrates the importance of learning the theistic theology.

[Fin]