

at flies by day,
the destruction that walks in
at noonday.
a thousand may fall at your side,
and ten thousand may be slain
and; I shall not come near you,
with my bow; the reward of
the reward; you have made
my refuge, O High, your dwelling
fall you, your angels char
s angels char

91:11 + Ps.
34:7; Matt. 4:6;
Luke 4:10;
[Heb. 1:14]
91:12 + Matt.
4:6; Luke 4:11
+ lift + strike
91:14 = [Ps.
9:10] + exalt
him
91:15 + Job
12:4; Ps. 50:10
+ Is. 40:31

91:16 = [Ps.
92:2] + Ps.
92:5
+ 1 Chr.
16:36

91:11 + Ps.
34:7; Matt. 4:6;
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GOD'S PRINCIPLE
FOR THE UNIVERSE



92:10 + Ps.
89:17 + Ps.
23:5
+ Strength
92:11 + Ps. 54:7
92:12 + Num.
24:6; Ps. 52:8;
Hos.
14:5, 6
+ Full of

92:10 + Ps.
89:17 + Ps.
23:5
+ Strength
92:11 + Ps. 54:7
92:12 + Num.
24:6; Ps. 52:8;
Hos.
14:5, 6
+ Full of

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The righteous shall flourish in
He shall grow like a
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BRYCE L. PICO

The Word

God's Principle for the Universe

By Bryce L. Pico
Life Abundant Ministries

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Contents

Introduction.....	i
Chapter 1 What Is the Word?	1
Chapter 2 The Word Is Creative	12
Chapter 3 The Word Makes Order	20
Chapter 4 The Word Made Man	30
Chapter 5 The Word of the Lord	39
Chapter 6 Saying the Same Things.....	49
Chapter 7 Confessing the Word.....	59
Chapter 8 Doubting the Word.....	71
Chapter 9 The Word of the Father	80
Chapter 10 Jesus is the Word.....	89
Chapter 11 The Word Is Ours.....	100
Chapter 12 The Word Is Seed.....	113
Chapter 13 Sowing the Word.....	125

Introduction

As I sat with my wife, Rachael, in church one Sunday, it began to dawn on me what I had truly been missing.

Existence had become drudgery. My career was going nowhere. My family was straining under the weight of poverty. My spiritual life had dried up. Our own ministry was suffering.

Typically, church was uneventful. Worship ended up just being buffer time so we could get to church late. The messages didn't keep my interest and I often found my mind drifting elsewhere – sometimes to sleep. I wasn't a very good Christian, much less a useful minister of the Gospel.

But that day, things felt different. I know I shouldn't be led by my feelings, but worship had drawn me into the Father's presence like few times before. Rachael told me later, "I looked over, and you were even raising your hands!" The atmosphere of praise offered a sweet-smelling sacrifice to the Lord, and I joined in.

Once the guest speaker took the stage to preach and teach, I was ready to receive. For the first time in a long time, I was hungry to hear a sermon. The minister fed us scripture after scripture, and kept us on the edge of our seats wanting more. I didn't expect what happened next.

In the middle of the best church experience I'd had in years, this man of God, whom I'd admired from afar, stood 10 feet in front of me and cut me down to size.

"What the world doesn't need is my opinion," he said. "What it needs is the Word of God."

Maybe he didn't realize he was speaking to me, but I took it as a personal message from the Lord. Until that moment, I would have taken anything that man would have said as the "gospel truth." And, really, why wouldn't I?

Before me was a man who was raised in one of the most pre-eminent ministry families in the world and was readily welcomed as a guest speaker in the most important churches and Bible schools in

America. His wife (who led the worship that so moved me) was a woman who was trained in one of the most impactful faith churches in the nation and had released multiple worship albums. Together, they built a successful ministry, created a globally broadcast television show, were raising a beautiful family, and appeared to be the models of Godly living.

Yet, here they were saying that they had nothing to offer separate from the Word of God. With everything I learned in my Christian life, my response should have been, “Well, duh!” But those words – “the Word” – caught me off guard.

I have always been a bright and talented person. That’s not bragging, because I have the chops to prove it. I earned two graduate degrees and spent many years as a professional writer and editor. I studied multiple languages and was lauded as a gifted teacher. Yet, all of it meant nothing.

In reality, I was making decisions and living life like my unsaved neighbors. Some may say I was doing an even worse job than

they were. After years of trying to act like an adult, I was failing miserably.

All the decisions I had made, based on my own research and experience had led to misery. Despite all the time spent on trying to be successful, I was only falling farther behind. Too many sleepless nights, spent worrying about money or our next move as a family, left me exhausted and in poor health (physically, mentally, and emotionally).

Where was I going wrong? Why couldn't I make the right decisions? Why were we failing as a family and a ministry?

It all came back to that one statement: "What the world needs is the Word of God."

In this book, we will explore why the Word is so important, not just to our spiritual lives, but to our very existence. Responding correctly, in faith, to the Word of God makes the difference between success and failure.

Jesus said of man, "of the abundance of the heart his mouth speaks" (Luke 6:45). What was coming out of my mouth was

from my heart, and it wasn't the Word of God. I knew something needed to change.

The decision Rachael and I made that day redirected the course of our lives. We made a commitment to put the Word first place in our hearts. The results seemed to be slow in coming, but what we didn't realize is we were sowing seeds of faith. By making the commitment, we opened ourselves to the endless possibilities and limitless life of God.

You don't need to be a renowned scholar or deeply spiritual person to understand the Word. You just need to make a commitment to accept what it states. I heard a powerful minister once say that people with amazing testimonies are not necessarily faith giants, they are "ordinary people who read the Word of God and believed it was true."

According to Jesus, faith as small as a mustard seed can move mountains (Matthew 17:20). With the same amount faith, you can see the Word create a whole new world for you and those you love.

Chapter 1

What Is the Word?

For as the rain cometh down, and the snow from heaven, and returneth not thither, but watereth the earth, and maketh it bring forth and bud, that it may give seed to the sower, and bread to the eater: So shall my word be that goeth forth out of my mouth: it shall not return unto me void, but it shall accomplish that which I please, and it shall prosper in the thing whereto I sent it.

- Isaiah 55:10-11

Whether or not you have ever gone to church, you may have heard the term “Word of God” used as another name for the Bible – the book about God and His people. How you understand the use of “word” says a lot about how you understand the world.

Likely, most of us understand “word” as a grouping of letters used in communication (written, spoken, or otherwise) that can be

used to deliver concepts and ideas, or describe a physical object.

From the time a child can point or grunt, he is trying to get a grasp of what is going on and who is responsible for it. Once that child figures out a certain sound or gesture will get him something, he has discovered a word. Often, parents will allow “baby talk” for a short time, but they will at some point start emphasizing proper use of words – especially at the dinner table or in front of company. As a child learns words from his parents, true communication begins.

A word can mean a number of other things, as well.

Proverbs 4:1-5

1 Hear, ye children, the instruction of a father, and attend to know understanding.

2 For I give you good doctrine, forsake ye not my law.

3 For I was my father’s son, tender and only beloved in the sight of my mother.

4 He taught me also, and said unto me, Let thine heart retain my words: keep

my commandments, and live.

5 Get wisdom, get understanding: forget it not; neither decline from the words of my mouth.

As a person grows and takes on responsibility, certain discussions take place for the sake of learning or correction. Maybe a boss has asked to “have a word with you.” While this creates a sense of dread for some people, it should not always be taken as negative. To “have a word” with someone just indicates a desire for close and meaningful communication, away from other listeners. Often, it involves both parties opening up to each other in a more profound way than they otherwise would in a public setting. “A word” may simply be an intimate and important conversation.

1 Kings 18:21

21 And Elijah came unto all the people, and said, How long halt ye between two opinions? if the Lord be God, follow him:

but if Baal, then follow him. And the people answered him not a word.

If you have watched a television “news” program featuring politicians or social activists, you may have heard the host allow someone to have “the last word” before the show breaks for an advertisement. Unfortunately, that does not mean the person will stop speaking, but it does mean that the debate is coming to a close. This use of “word” refers to a declaration of fact (or, at least, someone’s version of the facts).

Galatians 3:13-15

13 Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us: for it is written, Cursed is every one that hangeth on a tree:

14 That the blessing of Abraham might come on the Gentiles through Jesus Christ; that we might receive the promise of the Spirit through faith.

15 Brethren, I speak after the manner of men; Though it be but a man’s covenant,

yet if it be confirmed, no man
disannulleth, or addeth thereto.

You may have heard it said that “a man’s word is his bond” or “a man is only as good as his word.” There was a time when, if a man said, “I give you *my word*,” then a person could count on that man doing as he said. Handshake agreements based on someone’s word were better than legally binding – no contract was needed. If a man said he would do something, he would do it no matter the circumstances. In these cases, a “word” was a promise.

A word provides structure to a person’s understanding of reality. A word is something spoken clearly and explicitly. A word requires attention and a response. A word, once revealed, cannot be revoked.

If you have a Christian background, you learn very early about the “Word” in relation to God. A minister may hold up the Bible and declare to a congregation that the Word is “the final authority” or should “be first place in your life.”

Proverbs 4:20-22

20 My son, attend to my words; incline thine ear unto my sayings.

21 Let them not depart from thine eyes; keep them in the midst of thine heart.

22 For they are life unto those that find them, and health to all their flesh.

Joshua 1:8

8 This book of the law shall not depart out of thy mouth; but thou shalt meditate therein day and night, that thou mayest observe to do according to all that is written therein: for then thou shalt make thy way prosperous, and then thou shalt have good success.

Knowing the language, culture, customs, and history of a time and place will help us better understand the people who lived then and there. In this case, we can know a lot more about the Bible. The Bible translations we have today were taken from documents written in two ancient languages: the Old

Testament in Hebrew and the New Testament in Greek.

You don't have to have to be fluent in ancient languages to have a deep and meaningful relationship with God. But I don't think any of us will fully know our benefits until we dig deeper in our study of the Bible, which was provided to us by God to reveal His plans to us.

If you had an insurance policy and suffered a loss, it would behoove you to know your benefits. I have heard many horror stories about people who didn't fully understand that to which they were entitled. I have been fortunate enough to work with agents and adjustors who were honest and forthright, but not every company is interested in restoring a person's property to its full original state.

I once heard of a woman whose husband had been in a terrible automobile accident. The man was on the brink of death in the hospital, and doctors were working feverishly to save his life. The wife, distraught and alone, waited outside the

operating room for any news on her husband's condition. She was approached by a man who had some papers he claimed she needed to sign before any treatment could continue. Assuming he was a representative of the hospital, the woman signed the documents, believing her approval was necessary to continue life-saving procedures.

Thankfully, the husband came through surgery and recovered, but the family was stuck with a staggering medical bill. The person who approached the wife in the waiting room with documents was the representative of an insurance company. The woman had unknowingly agreed to a settlement and signed away their claim on the accident, releasing the company from its obligation to cover medical expenses.

Obviously shaken by the circumstances, the woman had not taken the time to review the papers thoroughly. If she had done so – or if someone nearby had the presence of mind to step in and assist her – the bill would have been covered and the family could have concentrated on recovery with

peace of mind. Instead, their pain and suffering were exacerbated by a party who took advantage of their distress and “lack of knowledge” (Hosea 4:6).

This is why people hire lawyers to sort through the density of legal agreements and help them to understand their rights and benefits. Likewise, God – through Jesus – has gifted His church with those who will help His people learn about Him and grow.

Ephesians 4:11-14

11 And he gave some, apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers;

12 For the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ:

13 Till we all come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ:

14 That we henceforth be no more children, tossed to and fro, and carried

about with every wind of doctrine, by the sleight of men, and cunning craftiness, whereby they lie in wait to deceive

Knowing more about God and what He has communicated to us is essential if we are to be successful at life.

2 Timothy 3:14-17

14 But continue thou in the things which thou hast learned and hast been assured of, knowing of whom thou hast learned them;

15 And that from a child thou hast known the holy scriptures, which are able to make thee wise unto salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus.

16 All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness:

17 That the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works.

Well, how did we get here? And, how do we really discover the meaning of the Word? Maybe we should start at the beginning.

Chapter 2

The Word Is Creative

In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth. And the earth was without form, and void; and darkness was upon the face of the deep. And the Spirit of God moved upon the face of the waters. And God said, Let there be light: and there was light. And God saw the light, that it was good: and God divided the light from the darkness.

- Genesis 1:1-4

These days, there is no escaping the flood of information that flows into our lives. Radio, television, the Internet, and people barrage us with words and images, trying to get our attention.

Some estimate it is possible for a person to speak and hear as many as 20,000 words a day, though maybe 500-700 of them are considered useful. That means, for every deep and meaningful statement offered by a leader, mentor, friend, or family member,

we may hear hundreds, if not thousands of wasted words throughout our day.

Some people just seem to go on and on about the most meaningless topics – mostly, their own opinions – with little or no thought given to the consequences of the words they use. For all their talking, most people just aren't saying very much. But when God speaks, things happen.

In the Bible, we see God's own words at work all the way through the first chapter of Genesis as He created the heavens, the earth, and everything in the earth, in one week.

God spoke into existence light, day, and night:

Genesis 1:3-5

3 And God said, Let there be light: and there was light.

4 And God saw the light, that it was good: and God divided the light from the darkness.

5 And God called the light Day, and the darkness he called Night. And the

evening and the morning were the first day.

God spoke into existence the atmosphere and space:

Genesis 1:6-8

6 And God said, Let there be a firmament in the midst of the waters, and let it divide the waters from the waters.

7 And God made the firmament, and divided the waters which were under the firmament from the waters which were above the firmament: and it was so.

8 And God called the firmament Heaven. And the evening and the morning were the second day.

God spoke into existence land and seas:

Genesis 1:9-10

9 And God said, Let the waters under the heaven be gathered together unto one place, and let the dry land appear: and it was so.

10 And God called the dry land Earth;

and the gathering together of the waters called he Seas: and God saw that it was good.

God spoke into existence plants and seed:

Genesis 1:11-13

11 And God said, Let the earth bring forth grass, the herb yielding seed, and the fruit tree yielding fruit after his kind, whose seed is in itself, upon the earth: and it was so.

12 And the earth brought forth grass, and herb yielding seed after his kind, and the tree yielding fruit, whose seed was in itself, after his kind: and God saw that it was good.

13 And the evening and the morning were the third day.

God spoke into existence the sun, moon, planets, stars, time, and seasons:

Genesis 1:14-18

14 And God said, Let there be lights in the firmament of the heaven to divide

the day from the night; and let them be for signs, and for seasons, and for days, and years:

15 And let them be for lights in the firmament of the heaven to give light upon the earth: and it was so.

16 And God made two great lights; the greater light to rule the day, and the lesser light to rule the night: he made the stars also.

17 And God set them in the firmament of the heaven to give light upon the earth,

18 And to rule over the day and over the night, and to divide the light from the darkness: and God saw that it was good.

19 And the evening and the morning were the fourth day.

God spoke into existence sea creatures and birds:

Genesis 1:20-22

20 And God said, Let the waters bring forth abundantly the moving creature that hath life, and fowl that may fly

above the earth in the open firmament of heaven.

21 And God created great whales, and every living creature that moveth, which the waters brought forth abundantly, after their kind, and every winged fowl after his kind: and God saw that it was good.

22 And God blessed them, saying, Be fruitful, and multiply, and fill the waters in the seas, and let fowl multiply in the earth.

God spoke into existence land animals:

Genesis 1:24-25

24 And God said, Let the earth bring forth the living creature after his kind, cattle, and creeping thing, and beast of the earth after his kind: and it was so.

25 And God made the beast of the earth after his kind, and cattle after their kind, and everything that creepeth upon the earth after his kind: and God saw that it was good.

Finally, on the sixth day, God spoke into existence mankind (man *and* woman):

Genesis 1:26-27

26 God said, Let us make man in our image, after our likeness: and let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over the cattle, and over all the earth, and over every creeping thing that creepeth upon the earth.

27 So God created man in his own image, in the image of God created he him; male and female created he them.

To say that's a solid week of work would be an understatement. At the end of all He had done to create the heavens and earth, God surveyed it all and offered His assessment.

Genesis 1:31

31 And God saw everything that he had made, and, behold, it was very good. And the evening and the morning were the sixth day.

God's words formed the earth and heavens. He took something void of purpose, spoke over it, and gave it order. Our physical existence was not a haphazard, accidental occurrence. The world was created with purpose and structure.

Genesis 2:1-3

1 Thus the heavens and the earth were finished, and all the host of them.

2 And on the seventh day God ended his work which he had made; and he rested on the seventh day from all his work which he had made.

3 And God blessed the seventh day, and sanctified it: because that in it he had rested from all his work which God created and made.

Chapter 3

The Word Makes Order

Therefore whosoever heareth these sayings of mine, and doeth them, I will liken him unto a wise man, which built his house upon a rock: And the rain descended, and the floods came, and the winds blew, and beat upon that house; and it fell not: for it was founded upon a rock.

- Matthew 7:24-25

We may not truly have a full understanding of what “word” means. In our Bibles, “word” is translated into English from a number of terms in the original languages. The two most prominent are *dabar* in Hebrew and *logos* in Greek.

For Hebrew speakers, *dabar* could often mean “word” or “thing” depending on how it was used (and could also be translated as “speech,” “speaking,” or “cause”). This is easy for us to understand today because we communicate by speaking words as a

declaration to create pictures of things in another person's mind.

For example, the word "bridge" creates a number of pictures in the minds of people, depending on their backgrounds. Card players, dentists, and musicians may have their own ideas of what "bridge" means, but for most people it refers to a man-made structure straddling a body of water while connecting two pieces of land. How each person sees the bridge in his or her own mind depends on related words (e.g., "steel bridge" or "covered bridge"). This is called context.

Now, if we were speaking about a bridge, you may see in your mind's eye a bridge of wood, metal, or stone over a creek or river. But, you also may see a different bridge than another person who is listening to our conversation.

If you were from a certain part of the Midwest, and I referred to the Fort Madison Toll Bridge, you may picture a very specific double-decked, swing-span, rail and traffic structure (the longest of its kind in the world)

that crosses the Mississippi River between Fort Madison, Iowa, and Niota, Illinois. If you've ever been over it in a car, you probably also picture a number of sharp turns in the narrow roadway that a driver would have to manage before even getting on the bridge.

If you can see that bridge in your mind's eye, from memory or by following a description, you are using your imagination. You are seeing an image, internally, of something described by words. In this case, seeing the bridge in our minds is based upon something that already exists.

An architectural engineer first had to see the bridge as an image in his mind before he could draw plans for it. Based upon surveys of the land and river, he was able to incorporate his design training and knowledge of the structural soundness of steel to create a mental picture of the bridge. From there, he drew plans and made presentations. He communicated ideas to supervisors and other stakeholders. After his

plans were approved, the engineer then gave them to builders as a blueprint.

For the bridge construction to be successful, everyone had to have an understanding of certain principles. Some, like the engineer, had a deep understanding of design and structural integrity. The actual builders had to know how to do their jobs correctly, as well.

Every member of the project team had a role to play, but they all worked *according to the same plans*. If even one person failed to follow the design plans for the bridge and relied upon his own ideas, there would have been disastrous results. It was important that everyone involved was sharing the same ideas so everyone else understood the same vision. *Words* must accurately communicate *things*.

Like *dabar*, the Greek word *logos* also had multiple meanings. It could mean “word,” like those written on a page. It could also refer to the thoughts behind the spoken words of man. A related Greek word,

logismos, is translated as “thoughts” or “imagination.”

2 Corinthians 10:3-5

3 For though we walk in the flesh, we do not war after the flesh:

4 (For the weapons of our warfare are not carnal, but mighty through God to the pulling down of strong holds;)

5 Casting down imaginations, and every high thing that exalteth itself against the knowledge of God, and bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ;

Words give structure to ideas and concepts, which is why we derive the English word “logic” from *logos* and *logismos*. What we speak, then, is related to what we think.

When ancient Greek philosophers spoke of *logos*, they may have been referring to an even higher concept. In the pursuit of life’s meaning, the great minds of Greek culture would often refer to “The Word.” Just as

words gave structure to thoughts, they also gave structure to the forces at work in nature and human culture. Many philosophers saw a unifying “Word” behind the “words” of mankind, or the “Thing” behind all “things.” For those who were influenced by Greek thought, language, and culture, *logos* used in a certain way referred specifically to the single “structuring principle” that holds the universe together and gives it order.

Logos, The Word, was the true god of the philosophers – the rational and logical force behind the natural laws of man’s existence. It is this god to which Paul referred on Mars Hill when he introduced the Athenians to the personal and living God of the Bible. Paul connects *Logos* – the structuring principle of the universe – to a person.

Acts 17:22-23

22 ... Ye men of Athens, I perceive that in all things ye are too superstitious.

23 For as I passed by, and beheld your devotions, I found an altar with this

inscription, TO THE UNKNOWN GOD.

Whom therefore ye ignorantly worship,
him declare I unto you.

24 God that made the world and all
things therein, seeing that he is Lord of
heaven and earth, dwelleth not in
temples made with hands;

25 Neither is worshipped with men's
hands, as though he needed anything,
seeing he giveth to all life, and breath,
and all things;

26 And hath made of one blood all
nations of men for to dwell on all the
face of the earth, and hath determined
the times before appointed, and the
bounds of their habitation;

27 That they should seek the Lord, if
haply they might feel after him, and find
him, though he be not far from every one
of us:

28 For in him we live, and move, and
have our being; as certain also of your
own poets have said, For we are also his
offspring.

The Word is not an unknowable, unfeeling, force. He is a person Who designed us to be like Him.

If we look elsewhere in the Bible, there are a number of scriptures that remind us that God was a person and had a plan in mind. Just as we live intentionally, planning our days and nights, nothing about Creation was random.

Hebrews 3:4

4 For every house is builded by some man; but he that built all things is God.

Some people think something as relatively simple as a house – a collection of wood, nails, screws, wires, and pipe – required sophisticated design work, while everything else in the universe happened by accident. We can only build houses because God Himself is a builder.

Amos 9:6

6 It is he that buildeth his stories in the heaven, and hath founded his troop in the earth; he that calleth for the waters of

the sea, and poureth them out upon the face of the earth: The Lord is his name.

There are parts of the oceans so deep that not even mankind in its collective brilliance has explored them all. That said, God knows the depths and all that are in them.

Psalm 33:6

6 By the word of the Lord were the heavens made; and all the host of them by the breath of his mouth.

God completed all of His creative works with His Word and the breath of His Spirit. He brings forth His ideas and concepts into reality with words.

Jeremiah 32:17

17 Ah Lord God! behold, thou hast made the heaven and the earth by thy great power and stretched out arm, and there is nothing too hard for thee.

While some people marvel at the complexity of the universe and require the most powerful of telescopes to see even halfway across it all, it was easy for God to make them with a thought and a word.

Psalm 121:1-2

1 I will lift up mine eyes unto the hills,
from whence cometh my help.

2 My help cometh from the Lord, which
made heaven and earth.

Many people feel so hopeless and powerless in the face of everyday struggles. Yet, if we just recognize God as Creator of the Universe – the One who made it all with words – our perspective will change. We would probably be more likely to call on Him for help when we need it most.

Renewing our minds to the reality that God made everything, gave order to existence, and formed all that we know from His own faith, will help us reorient our world and bring us into understanding.

Chapter 4

The Word Made Man

Then the word of the Lord came unto me, saying, Before I formed thee in the belly I knew thee; and before thou camest forth out of the womb I sanctified thee, and I ordained thee a prophet unto the nations.

- Jeremiah 1:4-5

Going back to the sixth day of Creation, we see that God made man different from the animals. Mankind was to rule the earth in His name and was intended to do it the way God would. Otherwise, there would be chaos.

In Genesis 1:26, God was speaking to man as he was being made, powerfully creating someone in His likeness. We know this by taking into account the essential meaning of “Let there be light” in Genesis 1:3 as it was actually spoken.

God was not acting passively or asking for permission when He spoke. What He actually said was far more assertive and

direct: “Light, be!” All throughout Genesis 1, we can renew our minds to this thing: God directly spoke things into existence without permission from anyone else. If this is so, then we may understand Genesis 1:26 and the following verse better:

Genesis 2:7

7 And the Lord God formed man of the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living soul.

God, face to face with man, breathed life into his very soul. But what did that look and sound like? It certainly wasn't as if God blew air into man and tied him into knots like a clown making a balloon animal. If we understand how we speak (using air from within, empowering our speech), then we have a picture of how God speaks.

In the Old Testament, “breath” is sometimes translated from a word – *něshamah* in Hebrew – used to refer to God's life-giving Spirit, as well as the spirit

of man. It is the same word used in Genesis 2:7. We know, then, the Holy Spirit gave life to man and empowered the words spoken into him. Mankind was inspired.

The Greek equivalent word for “inspiration” is *theopneustos*, or “God-breathed.” This is the term used by the Apostle Paul.

2 Timothy 3:16-17

16 All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness:

17 That the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works.

Let’s meditate on Genesis 1:26-27 and 2:7 with this picture in mind: Man’s form, taken from dust, is set lifeless before God until the Spirit moves upon him with the words, “Man, be in Our image and have dominion over the earth and all its creatures!”

This puts things in proper perspective. We often don't realize our own immense value in God's eyes. The world likes to think that everything, including people, was an accident of millions of years of random evolution. God on the other hand, had a plan for His Creation and for us – we were to rule and reign over God's world for His glory.

God taught the man how to work as His image – a projection of Himself into the physical realm – calling “things which be not as though they were” (Romans 4:17). The first man was placed in a garden and all the animals of creation were brought before him by God.

Genesis 2:18-19

18 And the Lord God said, It is not good that the man should be alone; I will make him an help meet for him.

19 And out of the ground the Lord God formed every beast of the field, and every fowl of the air; and brought them unto Adam to see what he would call them: and whatsoever Adam called

every living creature, that was the name thereof.

20 And Adam gave names to all cattle, and to the fowl of the air, and to every beast of the field.

As man named the animals, he defined their character and nature. He saw in them God's intention and spoke words to make them real and whole. With God teaching and directing him, man came into agreement with the Creator through his words and things came to be.

God brought the animals forth not only to teach man how to speak and use his words creatively, but to illustrate a difference between a man and the animals.

When the first man was created, he was made a "speaking spirit" like God. The man also learned none of the animals were equal or complementary to him. It was then that God finished His creation with woman.

Genesis 2:21-22

21 And the Lord God caused a deep sleep to fall upon Adam, and he slept: and he took one of his ribs, and closed up the flesh instead thereof;

22 And the rib, which the Lord God had taken from man, made he a woman, and brought her unto the man.

Man began to get the message. He was different from the animals – and so was his mate. While we read that she was taken from his ribcage, in reality the woman was pulled (or uncaged) from within the man to stand alongside him as an equal partner.

Looking over God's gift to him, man said:

Genesis 2:24

24 ... This is now bone of my bones, and flesh of my flesh: she shall be called Woman, because she was taken out of Man.

Once man and woman – *iysh* and *ishshah* in Hebrew – stood before God as

equals and counterparts, He was then able to speak a blessing over them. Our word “blessing” is often translated from the Hebrew word *barak* which means, among other things, “to kneel.” God knelt down to the level of mankind and delegated His authority to them to rule as co-regents over all Creation.

Genesis 1:28

28 And God blessed them, and God said unto them, Be fruitful, and multiply, and replenish the earth, and subdue it: and have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over every living thing that moveth upon the earth.

God then gave them the key to existence – the life-bearing power of the seed.

Genesis 1:29-30

29 And God said, Behold, I have given you every herb bearing seed, which is upon the face of all the earth, and every tree, in the which is the fruit of a tree

yielding seed; to you it shall be for meat.
30 And to every beast of the earth, and
to every fowl of the air, and to
everything that creepeth upon the earth,
wherein there is life, I have given every
green herb for meat: and it was so.

While plants and their produce were available as food to all, only mankind was given power to reproduce something other than himself. By use of the seed (or as it may be better understood, “seed for seeding”), man and woman would rule over the world and manage its prosperity.

Genesis 2:15

15 And the LORD God took the man, and put him into the garden of Eden to dress it and to keep it.

God had given the first couple the power to rule and sow. Mankind was positioned to expand God’s mandate beyond the garden to establish order and righteousness. God could work with them and teach them how to use their authority rightly.

Man and woman were set apart from the rest of creation by words and were given authority. Unlike animals, they spoke intelligently like their Creator. Like God, their words were empowered to call things into existence. All they needed was the correct wisdom and their own agreement to make their words work for good.

Genesis 2:25

25 And they were both naked, the man and his wife, and were not ashamed.

Chapter 5

The Word of the Lord

For the word of the Lord is right; and all his works are done in truth. He loveth righteousness and judgment: the earth is full of the goodness of the Lord. By the word of the Lord were the heavens made; and all the host of them by the breath of his mouth.

- Psalm 33:4-6

God is a person, and we are persons. If we are made in God's image, then we must work the way He does. God imagined things and then spoke them, not for communication but for creation. It must be, then, that we have the same power available to us.

Now, we should not expect that we can use our imaginations, say words such as "car," "house," or "tree," and have those things immediately appear before us. But we can start speaking words that draw things toward us from the spiritual realm to the physical. God wants certain things to come to pass, and He needs our help.

Mark 11:23

23 For verily I say unto you, That whosoever shall say unto this mountain, Be thou removed, and be thou cast into the sea; and shall not doubt in his heart, but shall believe that those things which he saith shall come to pass; he shall have whatsoever he saith.

Here, Jesus says we are expected to speak words of faith to things and situations, to bring order out of chaos and concepts into reality. Jesus said this to His disciples as they marveled over a fig tree that withered at the Lord's command. The Son of God told common men that they had access to the same power and authority He had.

“But wait,” you may be thinking, “isn't God sovereign? Isn't *He* in control? Can't God just do whatever *He* wants, whether we like it or not?”

You are correct: God is sovereign. But in His sovereignty, God put mankind in charge over all He created.

God is the Creator Spirit, while we are created spirits. God has ultimate authority and we have delegated authority. God limited Himself to work exclusively through us in His universe.

When God made the universe in Genesis 1, he had nothing to stop him. Once God gave authority to mankind, His will had to be exercised through the willing. When God blessed the first man and woman (giving them authority and seed) He did so not just with His words, but with His *Word* – the principle that brought all things into being and held them together. God created all things from faith, first picturing them in His mind and speaking them forth just as an architect designs a bridge and directs a team of builders.

Hebrews 11:1

11 Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen.

God is Creator and all things are His to command. As God taught mankind to work in His will, it was expected that they would agree with Him and follow through on His wishes. Mankind would do it by speaking *His* Word rather than their own words.

We saw man speaking forth the Word in Genesis 2, when he named the animals in the Garden of Eden. With God forming each one before him, man learned about the Creator's intent for each creature. Based upon what he heard, man was then able to call the animal by its name in his voice, exercising dominion.

You may be thinking, "What do you mean, 'heard'?"

Well, think about what happened in Genesis 1: The earth was "without form and void" until God spoke to it. The formless matter of faith took shape. It's likely, then, that when God formed the animals for His man, He *spoke* them into shape. The man, with perfectly good ears, heard God speaking as the Spirit worked. From there, it was easy for the man to *hear* how the

various animals were constructed, and *speak* their character and purpose (or their calling) into their names.

Along with *logos*, the Greeks used another term for “word” — *rhema*. The use of *rhema* was typically in reference to a spoken declaration. In certain circumstances, though, it was used when speaking of God’s Word.

Matthew 4:4

4 But he answered and said, It is written, Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word (*rhema*) that proceedeth out of the mouth of God.

Based upon what Jesus said here, God speaks as He did in Genesis 1, and directly to mankind. When man was created, God spoke into him words of life through the Spirit. God still gives life to man with words more important than bread, the foundation of all sustenance.

While a *rhema* could declare good things, it could also be viewed as something evil

when spoken contrary to the Word, with dire consequences.

Matthew 12:34-37

34 O generation of vipers, how can ye, being evil, speak good things? for out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh.

35 A good man out of the good treasure of the heart bringeth forth good things: and an evil man out of the evil treasure bringeth forth evil things.

36 But I say unto you, That every idle word (*rhema*) that men shall speak, they shall give account thereof in the day of judgment.

37 For by thy words thou shalt be justified, and by thy words thou shalt be condemned.

What we speak, then, could bring forth God's will or things contrary to it. If God is Creator and we are to serve Him as rulers over creation, why are we saying so many idle, useless, and evil things? Let's start by

looking at our relationship to God in its proper perspective.

To understand how we are to receive and speak the Word of God, it helps to understand the lord-servant relationship. For those of us living in the modern Western world, we've lost a lot of the context of the Bible, especially when we read about the word "lord." In the United States, especially, there is no frame of reference for it since we do not have a nobility. But the first English translations of the Bible (specifically, the King James Version) were written in a time when lordship was a daily reality.

When English-speaking Christians of the 17th century heard about Abraham, his servants, and his household, they had a firmer grasp of those relationships than we do today. Most people had an idea of what it was like to live under a lord as a landed servant – the feudal system.

Lords were landowners who needed workers to cultivate their land, raise crops, and tend livestock. In exchange for their labor on a plot of land, servants were

provided benefits including shelter, food, clothing, and protection. The servants were expected to produce an increase (harvest or offspring), pay rent or taxes (by providing the best of the increase or harvest), fight in the lord's militia, and generally serve at the lord's pleasure. Often, the lord would add new parcels to his land by recruiting people who were already farming, annexing their property in exchange for the benefits of servanthood and providing seed to be sown.

In biblical terms, a lord was head of the household, and everyone who served him was part of it. We see this in the story of Lot's capture by King Chederlaomer.

Genesis 14:14

14 And when Abram heard that his brother was taken captive, he armed his trained servants, born in his own house, three hundred and eighteen, and pursued them unto Dan.

As we'll find later, servants had all the rights of adopted sons, even receiving an

inheritance when their lord and head of the household dies.

The feudal system, has been part of mankind's existence for thousands of years. In much of the world, there are still remnants of it at work. Even in America, we receive police protection, safe roadways, and free schooling from our local governments in exchange for taxes. If you think you are truly free from the feudal system, try not paying your property taxes for a while. You will soon find out there are no "natural sojourners" or "sovereign citizens." We each have a lord of some kind.

Romans 13:7-8

7 Render therefore to all their dues:
tribute to whom tribute is due; custom to
whom custom; fear to whom fear;
honour to whom honour.

8 Owe no man anything, but to love one
another: for he that loveth another hath
fulfilled the law.

It was in a lord's interest to provide everything possible to make his servants prosperous. Whatever tools or resources were needed to generate a bountiful harvest, the lord would make them available to his servants. They were also provided the best seed to plant in the fields. A servant never had to want for anything, because if he and his family were prosperous, the lord would be prosperous. A servant's success brought glory to his lord.

Chapter 6

Saying the Same Things

Let us hold fast the profession of our faith without wavering; (for he is faithful that promised;)

- Hebrews 10:23

At this point, we should talk about the terms “confession” (acknowledgment) and “profession” (declaration) in relation to our own words and God’s Word.

The Greek word from which we draw “confession” and “profession” is *homologia*. We can understand the biblical meaning more clearly by breaking *homologia* into parts: *homos* meaning “same” and *logos* meaning “word.” What we see, then, is that to confess or profess something is to “use the same words” or “say the same thing” as someone else.

In the Bible, we often read of someone confessing God or Jesus as “Lord.” When someone agreed to become servant of one lord, he was expected to make a public

declaration to “say the same things” as his lord. Any business conducted by the servant would be done on behalf of the lord. As such, it was expected that the servant would first learn the wishes of his lord and then agree with him, submitting his own will to that of his lord.

If a servant consistently said and did the same things as his lord, he was deemed good and faithful (Matthew 25:23). It pleased a lord to know his servants were faithfully executing his will rightly. In such a relationship, promotion is driven by obedience.

You may remember that we discussed the idea of “a man’s word is his bond” or “a man is only as good as his word.” In common practice, if a person says one thing, then does another, his word is no good.

James 1:8

8 A double minded man is unstable in all his ways.

While we may know this as a character flaw of someone with whom we may do business today, it was a big problem in biblical times for a servant to speak against his lord – and God.

James 3:3-10

3 Behold, we put bits in the horses' mouths, that they may obey us; and we turn about their whole body.

4 Behold also the ships, which though they be so great, and are driven of fierce winds, yet are they turned about with a very small helm, whithersoever the governor listeth.

5 Even so the tongue is a little member, and boasteth great things. Behold, how great a matter a little fire kindleth!

6 And the tongue is a fire, a world of iniquity: so is the tongue among our members, that it defileth the whole body, and setteth on fire the course of nature; and it is set on fire of hell.

7 For every kind of beasts, and of birds, and of serpents, and of things in the sea,

is tamed, and hath been tamed of
mankind:

8 But the tongue can no man tame; it is
an unruly evil, full of deadly poison.

9 Therewith bless we God, even the
Father; and therewith curse we men,
which are made after the similitude of
God.

10 Out of the same mouth proceedeth
blessing and cursing. My brethren, these
things ought not so to be.

To say the same thing as someone is to submit to (bless) that person, while contradicting people in authority is to stand against (curse) them. In the Old Testament book of 2 Kings, we learn how confession and profession are rewarded, along with how unfavorable it could be for an unfaithful servant.

Naaman, a captain in the Syrian army, was struck with leprosy. Seeking relief, he reached out to a Jewish prophet, Elisha. The prophet gave Naaman a command to wash in the River Jordan seven times to be

cleansed of leprosy. The Syrian was offended, but his servants (who understood how to respond to a lord's command) encouraged their master to give it a try.

The servants knew that if Naaman submitted himself to the word of Elisha, that he would be making the prophet his lord. These servants knew from experience that if they submitted themselves to their own lord (who they also referred to as "father"), saying the same things and doing as they saw him do, they would be prosperous. If Naaman did the same, he would receive the prophet's reward (Matthew 10:41).

2 Kings 5:13-14

13 And his servants came near, and spake unto him, and said, My father, if the prophet had bid thee do some great thing, wouldest thou not have done it? how much rather then, when he saith to thee, Wash, and be clean?

14 Then went he down, and dipped himself seven times in Jordan, according to the saying of the man of God: and his

flesh came again like unto the flesh of a little child, and he was clean.

Naaman did as the prophet commanded, and was healed with fresh new skin. In his joy, the man tried to reward Elijah, but the prophet turned down his gifts.

2 Kings 5:15-16

15 And he (Naaman) returned to the man of God, he and all his company, and came, and stood before him: and he said, Behold, now I know that there is no God in all the earth, but in Israel: now therefore, I pray thee, take a blessing of thy servant.

16 But he (Elijah) said, As the Lord liveth, before whom I stand, I will receive none. And he urged him to take it; but he refused.

This could have been the end of the story, but we then have the opportunity to learn how not to confess and profess as a faithful servant.

2 Kings 5:20-22

20 But Gehazi, the servant of Elisha the man of God, said, Behold, my master hath spared Naaman this Syrian, in not receiving at his hands that which he brought: but, as the Lord liveth, I will run after him, and take somewhat of him.

21 So Gehazi followed after Naaman. And when Naaman saw him running after him, he lighted down from the chariot to meet him, and said, Is all well?

22 And he said, All is well. My master hath sent me, saying, Behold, even now there be come to me from mount Ephraim two young men of the sons of the prophets: give them, I pray thee, a talent of silver, and two changes of garments.

Naaman, still riding a spiritual and physical high, was more than happy to reward Elijah through his servant – trusting the servant of such a powerful man would only truly say what his master would say.

2 Kings 5:23-24

23 And Naaman said, Be content, take two talents. And he urged him, and bound two talents of silver in two bags, with two changes of garments, and laid them upon two of his servants; and they bare them before him.

24 And when he came to the tower, he took them from their hand, and bestowed them in the house: and he let the men go, and they departed.

Unfortunately, Gehazi's master was a prophet. Being anointed has its privileges, one of those being the operation of the gifts of the Spirit. Elijah delivered a word of knowledge, exposing his servant's dirty deeds and lying tongue.

2 Kings 5:25-27

25 But he went in, and stood before his master. And Elisha said unto him, Whence comest thou, Gehazi? And he said, Thy servant went no whither.

26 And he said unto him, Went not mine

heart with thee, when the man turned again from his chariot to meet thee? Is it a time to receive money, and to receive garments, and oliveyards, and vineyards, and sheep, and oxen, and menservants, and maidservants?

27 The leprosy therefore of Naaman shall cleave unto thee, and unto thy seed forever. And he went out from his presence a leper as white as snow.

Gehazi did not say the same things as his master and payed the penalty for his disobedience. Elijah was able to receive the leprous Naaman without threat of infection because, as a prophet, he heard what his own Lord, God, said first in the Spirit. Then, as a good servant, Elijah spoke as he heard his Lord speak.

Gehazi, on the other hand, spoke contrary to the wishes of his master, sought a reward from someone other than his lord, and attempted to enrich himself. Since he did not operate as a servant under the prophet's anointing and went against the

Word of *the* Lord, Gehazi was left with the same reward he would have received if he had made contact with Naaman before he was healed – he contracted leprosy himself.

Chapter 7

Confessing the Word

But the mercy of the Lord is from everlasting to everlasting upon them that fear him, and his righteousness unto children's children; To such as keep his covenant, and to those that remember his commandments to do them.

- Psalm 103:17-18

Thankfully, we can see an example of a good and faithful servant saying the same thing as his lord in Genesis 24.

Genesis 24:2-4

2 And Abraham said unto his eldest servant of his house, that ruled over all that he had, Put, I pray thee, thy hand under my thigh:

3 And I will make thee swear by the LORD, the God of heaven, and the God of the earth, that thou shalt not take a wife unto my son of the daughters of the Canaanites, among whom I dwell:

4 But thou shalt go unto my country, and to my kindred, and take a wife unto my son Isaac.

Abraham, as lord, was asking his servant to execute his will in this matter. Though Abraham does not give his servant specific words to say, he is highly trusted (and known to us by name).

Genesis 15:2

2 And Abram (Abraham) said, LORD God, what wilt thou give me, seeing I go childless, and the steward of my house is this Eliezer of Damascus?

Abraham had built a successful agricultural business. His household flocks had multiplied so much that he split them with Lot, allowing his nephew to take sheep and servants and go his own way in the Vale of Siddim. Even after parting with lot, Abraham had enough work to keep 318 men busy.

Abraham could hardly be expected to oversee every detail of his flocks, trade

relationships with other families, and business dealings. By promoting Eliezer, Abraham acknowledged that someone else had to manage his business, or serve as steward, on his behalf. Eliezer had risen to such a place of prominence that he stood to inherit the estate if Abraham died without natural born children of his own, since servants are considered sons of the lord's household.

Eliezer, born into a servant family, was likely identified as a particularly bright and diligent child by Abraham. As such, when he was old enough to work under his master's watch, he had the opportunity to learn Abraham's business. He watched how Abraham bred the flock, dealt with servants, handled business deals, settled disputes, made bargains, and conducted himself in general. Most importantly, Eliezer listened to how Abraham spoke and what he would say – even in his conversations with God.

After serving his apprenticeship, Eliezer was placed in a stewardship role. In this position, the chief servant was trusted to

conduct all business on behalf of his master – to the point that when Eliezer spoke he was expected to *confess* (acknowledge) Abraham as his lord and *profess* (declare or say the same thing as) his master.

It was because Eliezer would speak the words of his master in all affairs that Abraham entrusted him with such an important mission. Though Abraham had appointed his natural-born son, Isaac, as heir, Eliezer could still receive the inheritance if the natural heir went unmarried and died childless. In such a sensitive situation, a lord would have only sent someone to find a wife for his son if he knew that servant would do exactly what his lord would do and say what his lord would say. In this case, Abraham trusted Eliezer to sacrifice his own desires (a chance to inherit all the master's riches) and execute his lord's will.

Genesis 24:10-12

10 And the servant took ten camels of the camels of his master, and departed; for all the goods of his master were in

his hand: and he arose, and went to Mesopotamia, unto the city of Nahor.

11 And he made his camels to kneel down without the city by a well of water at the time of the evening, even the time that women go out to draw water.

12 And he said O LORD God of my master Abraham, I pray thee, send me good speed this day, and shew kindness unto my master Abraham.

Eliezer made a vow to select the woman whom God revealed to him. He sought a woman with a servant's heart.

Genesis 24:13-14

13 Behold, I stand here by the well of water; and the daughters of the men of the city come out to draw water:

14 And let it come to pass, that the damsel to whom I shall say, Let down thy pitcher, I pray thee, that I may drink; and she shall say, Drink, and I will give thy camels drink also: let the same be she that thou hast appointed for thy

servant Isaac; and thereby shall I know that thou hast shewed kindness unto my master.

15 And it came to pass, before he had done speaking, that, behold, Rebekah came out ... with her pitcher upon her shoulder.

16 And the damsel was very fair to look upon, a virgin, neither had any man known her: and she went down to the well, and filled her pitcher, and came up.

Rebekah understood the role a host must play in her culture. In the ancient Middle East, as it is today, hospitality was a highly valued virtue. She was ready to welcome the visitor and provide for his needs.

Genesis 24:17-20

17 And the servant ran to meet her, and said, Let me, I pray thee, drink a little water of thy pitcher.

18 And she said, Drink, my lord: and she hasted, and let down her pitcher upon her hand, and gave him drink.

19 And when she had done giving him drink, she said, I will draw water for thy camels also, until they have done drinking.

20 And she hastened, and emptied her pitcher into the trough, and ran again unto the well to draw water, and drew for all his camels.

After Rebekah did as Eliezer had prayed, he sought confirmation of her heritage so that he would fulfill his master's wishes.

Genesis 24:21-24

21 And the man wondering at her held his peace, to wit whether the LORD had made his journey prosperous or not.

22 And it came to pass, as the camels had done drinking, that the man took a golden earring of half a shekel weight, and two bracelets for her hands of ten shekels weight of gold;

23 And said, Whose daughter art thou? tell me, I pray thee: is there room in thy father's house for us to lodge in?

24 And she said unto him, I am the daughter of Bethuel the son of Milcah, which she bare unto Nahor.

Nahor was the brother of Abraham, while Milcah was the sister of Lot. This meant Rebekah was, in fact, a child of Abraham's family.

Genesis 24:26-27

26 And the man bowed down his head, and worshipped the LORD.

27 And he said, Blessed be the LORD God of my master Abraham, who hath not left destitute my master of his mercy and his truth: I being in the way, the LORD led me to the house of my master's brethren.

Rebekah ran to tell her family all about the generous stranger.

By calling Eliezer "lord," Rebekah submitted her will (retrieving water for her family) and became a faithful servant (meeting the needs of the one to whom she submitted). For this, she was rewarded with

a small sample of what Eliezer's master offered. In becoming the bride of Abraham's son, Rebekah joined in Isaac's inheritance.

Another story from Genesis illustrates obedience to a lord, but without the positive results one would typically expect from confession and profession.

When King Nimrod's subjects began building the Tower of Babel, "the whole earth was of one language, and of one speech (*dabar*)" (Genesis 11:1). Their creative power did not restrain them from potentially reaching great heights.

Genesis 11:6

6 And the LORD said, Behold, the people is one, and they have all one language; and this they begin to do: and now nothing will be restrained from them, which they have imagined to do.

They worked well together and communicated their ideas effectively because they were picturing the same things and saying the same words as their lord and

king. Unfortunately, for the Babylonians, they were not saying the same thing as God – the ultimate Lord.

In the wake of the Great Flood, God again blessed mankind, charging Noah and his family with reordering the world out of chaos.

Genesis 9:1

1 And God blessed Noah and his sons, and said unto them, Be fruitful, and multiply, and replenish the earth.

Genesis 9:7

7 And you, be ye fruitful, and multiply; bring forth abundantly in the earth, and multiply therein.

By the time of the Tower, Nimrod's kingdom had become a great city with many people living in one place. Instead of spreading outward and fulfilling God's will to restore the earth, they were building upward for their own sake.

They broke agreement with God, refused to do as He said, and attempted to be great on their own.

Genesis 11:4

4 And they said, Go to, let us build us a city and a tower, whose top may reach unto heaven; and let us make us a name, lest we be scattered abroad upon the face of the whole earth.

They had exchanged God's glory for their own, frustrating the will of God. In response to pride, God allowed them to become confused through the inability to communicate and say the same things as each other.

Genesis 11:7-8

7 Go to, let us go down, and there confound their language, that they may not understand one another's speech.
8 So the Lord scattered them abroad from thence upon the face of all the earth: and they left off to build the city.

You see, rebellion typically leads to more rebellion. They could no longer be in agreement with their words and say the same things as their king. Once they no longer had a shared vision or mission, everything stopped, and everyone went his own way.

James 3:16

16 For where envying and strife is, there is confusion and every evil work.

While, in a worldly sense, it is profitable to do and say as one's master would, it is more important that we say the same things as God if we want His will to come to pass. The Babylonians paid a steep price for their poor confession and profession.

But this was not the first time someone had chosen to agree with someone other than God.

Chapter 8

Doubting the Word

*For Adam was first formed, then Eve.
And Adam was not deceived, but the woman
being deceived was in the transgression.*

- 1 Timothy 2:13-14

After God had placed mankind in the garden, giving them authority to rule and seed to sow, he set boundaries for their behavior and tested their allegiance.

Genesis 2:16-17

16 And the Lord God commanded the man, saying, Of every tree of the garden thou mayest freely eat:

17 But of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, thou shalt not eat of it: for in the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die.

In the third chapter of Genesis, we see Satan challenge God's authority. Too weak to wage a frontal attack against God Himself, he instead attempts to crack the image of

God by going after mankind. Taking the form of a serpent (a creature over whom man and woman were to have dominion), the enemy attempts to deceive the woman by sowing confusion.

Genesis 3:1

1 Now the serpent was more (subtle) than any beast of the field which the Lord God had made. And he said unto the woman, Yea, hath God said, Ye shall not eat of every tree of the garden?

Notice, Satan did not outright challenge the woman to eat of the forbidden fruit. He went after the thing that held Creation together: God's Word. By asking "hath God said," the deceiver put a seed of doubt in the mind of someone who had never known God to be anything but good. In her response, we see confusion take root.

Genesis 3:2-3

2 And the woman said unto the serpent, We may eat of the fruit of the trees of the garden:

3 But of the fruit of the tree which is in the midst of the garden, God hath said, Ye shall not eat of it, neither shall ye touch it, lest ye die.

The man and woman had never thought to question God's Word. The serpent made them think about what God said, exposed their uncertainty, and took advantage.

Genesis 3:4-5

4 And the serpent said unto the woman, Ye shall not surely die:

5 For God doth know that in the day ye eat thereof, then your eyes shall be opened, and ye shall be as gods, knowing good and evil.

Now, the man and woman had an alternative "word" to consider. God made them and gave them authority over all He created. Up to that point, God had not done anything to make them think anything other than good things about Him. But according to the serpent, God was withholding something from them. Although God

established Himself as their provider, Satan (as the serpent) sowed the thought that they could become god-like by circumventing His gracious provision and *take* from His tree.

The evil spirit of Satan inserted itself into the lives of mankind by offering the man and woman an essential part of his own nature – pride.

Genesis 3:6

6 And when the woman saw that the tree was good for food, and that it was pleasant to the eyes, and a tree to be desired to make one wise, she took of the fruit thereof, and did eat, and gave also unto her husband with her; and he did eat.

By falling prey to the first temptation, the first couple set the course for future generations. Satan does not have any new tricks. The same tactics he used in the garden work against us today.

1 John 2:16

16 For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, is not of the Father, but is of the world.

The Word comes from God and should set the boundaries of our daily lives. When we allow the word of another to take the place of God's Word, pride rises up in us. We take the opportunity to choose an alternative rather than submit ourselves to the structuring order of things.

It is at that point we come into rebellion against God, reject His provision, and are then obligated to provide for ourselves. For the man and the woman in the garden, the harvest of their rebellion revealed itself immediately.

Genesis 3:7

7 And the eyes of them both were opened, and they knew that they were naked; and they sewed fig leaves together, and made themselves aprons.

While under the authority of God's Word, they remained innocent and whole. The man and the woman were connected to God intimately, knowing themselves only through Him and in His ways. They were exposed – self-aware and independent. Man and woman were spiritually dead and separated from God.

Genesis 3:9-11

9 And the Lord God called unto Adam, and said unto him, Where art thou?

10 And he said, I heard thy voice in the garden, and I was afraid, because I was naked; and I hid myself.

11 And he said, Who told thee that thou wast naked? Hast thou eaten of the tree, whereof I commanded thee that thou shouldest not eat?

When God entered the garden, seeking His children, He found them hiding. This was not because God did not know where they were. He was giving them an

opportunity for repentance. Sadly, both the man and woman failed in their responses.

Genesis 3:12-13

12 And the man said, The woman whom thou gavest to be with me, she gave me of the tree, and I did eat.

13 And the Lord God said unto the woman, What is this that thou hast done? And the woman said, The serpent beguiled me, and I did eat.

God then pronounced the curse over mankind, informing them of the consequences of their actions.

Genesis 3:16-17

16 Unto the woman he said, I will greatly multiply thy sorrow and thy conception; in sorrow thou shalt bring forth children; and thy desire shall be to thy husband, and he shall rule over thee.

17 And unto Adam he said, Because thou hast hearkened unto the voice of thy wife, and hast eaten of the tree, of which I commanded thee, saying, Thou

shalt not eat of it: cursed is the ground for thy sake; in sorrow shalt thou eat of it all the days of thy life;

Separated spiritually from God and His Word, having aligned with the word of Satan, man and woman were no longer able to freely receive from their Creator.

Their pride would breed jealousy and suspicion. Confusion brought about envy. The man's first act under the curse – an evil work – created strife between himself and his wife.

Genesis 3:20

20 And Adam called his wife's name Eve; because she was the mother of all living.

No longer equals – *iysh* and *ishshah* – the man and woman became rivals. By naming her as he did the animals, Adam sought to define the woman's character.

Trust had been broken between the man and the woman, and between mankind and

God. Their world – God’s perfectly structured world – was out of order.

Before pronouncing the curse on man and woman, God turned to the serpent, pronouncing a curse over it, and over the spirit that had used it to bring mankind into ruin.

Genesis 3:14

14 And the Lord God said unto the serpent, Because thou hast done this, thou art cursed above all cattle, and above every beast of the field; upon thy belly shalt thou go, and dust shalt thou eat all the days of thy life:

15 And I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed; it shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise his heel.

Chapter 9

The Word of the Father

My son, hear the instruction of thy father, and forsake not the law of thy mother: For they shall be an ornament of grace unto thy head, and chains about thy neck.

- Proverbs 1:8-9

Kids often play “make believe” to see themselves as movie stars, famous athletes, wizards, pirates, or princesses. Even though children may be in a real setting, they are projecting inner images into their play. They, in a sense, are creating a new reality – even if it’s only temporary.

When I was a young boy, I was fascinated with sports. Football, baseball, and basketball were my passions. After watching the television broadcast of a game, I would immediately grab a ball, run outside, and re-enact what I had seen. Over time, I

began to play my own games, pretending to be real players.

As I grasped the rules of the games and read more about the various teams and leagues in newspapers, magazines, and books, I began to play out whole seasons in my backyard, carefully keeping standings and statistics for each league, team, and player. (At this point, I should mention that I was an only child with few friends). These seasons would even include night games (played under street lights). Whether it was sunny, rainy, snowy, or downright frigid, I was going to play.

For example, when playing football alone, my need to accurately portray what I saw in my imagination meant I had to run while avoiding invisible defenders, throw passes to myself, kick field goals over clothesline posts, and even keep time with a digital watch. I also fell down and ended plays with tackles (or sometimes a fumble). These games typically resulted in grass-

stained jeans, scraped knees, and torn coats, much to my parents' frustration.

One Christmas, I received an overflow of football-related gifts. My parents gave me an official leather ball and kicking tee, along with a bunch of apparel related to my favorite team. There was a replica uniform (helmet, jersey, and pants), a team stocking cap, and a satin jacket in team colors (purple with gold stripes running down the sleeves). You can imagine how excited I was and how often I wore the uniform (all of it) to play my re-enacted seasons.

There was an unseasonably warm spell later that winter and much of the snow and ice had melted away. That Saturday, my mom was at work which left me to be parented by my dad. My dad was a good and kind man, but I knew that I only had one chance to follow his directions or there were going to be consequences. In our house (or at least with me) his word provided structure – and it was final authority.

Watching the temperature creep toward 50 degrees that afternoon, I asked to go outside and play football in my new satin jacket. My dad, seeing the mud outside, didn't think that would be a good idea (knowing my rough-and-tumble play). Dad told me that he didn't want my new jacket torn or stained, but I promised him I wouldn't fall down in the mud. I gave him *my word* that I would honor *his word*.

Not allowed to hit the ground, I had to get creative. Professional football isn't two-hand touch, after all. I noticed there were still some sizable patches of snow on the ground. I figured that if I was "tackled" in the snow, my jacket would only get wet. The snow was relatively clean and my clothes would likely be dry by the time I went back inside.

Unfortunately, my plan was not foolproof. About 10 minutes into playing, I fell down on a patch of snow thinking I had outsmarted my dad. What I didn't know was

my neighbors' schnauzer had left an unpleasant surprise on the lawn just before the last snowfall – and I discovered it with my left elbow.

Now, it would have been one thing if I had disobeyed my dad and fallen in mud (which could have been washed out). But after soiling my new jacket with dog doo, I knew things would not go well for me.

Though he was angry about what I had done, my dad didn't dole out the discipline I expected. Instead, I had to live with the consequences of my actions: My snazzy satin football jacket – that I had owned less than a month – was totally ruined.

My father warned me of consequences if I did not avoid a certain act. While not doubting that he was right, I chose not to obey him. By going against his word, I was then relying upon *my own* word. I was going by what was seen (clean snow) instead of what was unseen (a mess under the snow). I

relied upon my own word, which did not stand up against my father's word.

In biblical times, it was customary for a man to groom his eldest son to take over the family business. He would do this by bringing along his son, once he reached adolescence, to trade and conduct business. The father would also teach him whatever trade he plied. The goal was to make the son chief apprentice – someone who would someday step into his father's role as master.

Proverbs 22:6

6 Train up a child in the way he should go: and when he is old, he will not depart from it.

As the son learned at his father's side, the boy would watch everything he did while asking questions and receiving hands-on training. The son's skills would be developed to be as sharp as those of his father.

Proverbs 4:1-2

1 Hear, ye children, the instruction of a father, and attend to know understanding.

2 For I give you good doctrine, forsake ye not my law (teachings).

When it came time to sell, trade, barter, or commission work, the son would also follow along and listen to his father speak. The boy would pick up certain nuances to conducting business profitably and fairly.

Proverbs 4: 10-13

10 Hear, O my son, and receive my sayings; and the years of thy life shall be many.

11 I have taught thee in the way of wisdom; I have led thee in right paths.

12 When thou goest, thy steps shall not be straitened; and when thou runnest, thou shalt not stumble.

13 Take fast hold of instruction; let her not go: keep her; for she is thy life.

As the son grew into adulthood, and his father into old age, the younger man would become a reasonable replacement for the elder. So much so that at some point – typically around the age of 30 – the father would bring the son into the marketplace where business was conducted and make an announcement.

The father would notify the men of the city that the son had been at his side, learning the trade and the business. The father would express his pleasure in the son's faithfulness, executing his will while developing skills and business savvy. The father would then place a special garment – denoting his particular trade or office – on the son and announce that any further deals would be conducted with the younger man and that the elder would be overseeing the business from afar.

In other words, the father had trained his son as a means of providing for his own retirement. The father would own the

business until his death and reap profits from it, but the son would handle the day-to-day affairs and make decisions. If any servants or associates had any needs from the father, they would have to work with the son. Anything needed from the father would have to be accessed in the name of the son.

The only way a son could take over his father's business is if he honored his father's word. Not listening to the father, not confessing his word, and not agreeing in action led to shame and embarrassment.

Proverbs 17:25

25 A foolish son is a grief to his father,
and bitterness to her that bare him.

Chapter 10

Jesus is the Word

In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.

- John 1:1

Instead of asking “What is the Word?,” maybe we should ask, “*Who* is the Word?” John thought of “The Word” as a person – specifically, Jesus. If there was any doubt as to what he meant, all we have to do is read the first chapter John’s gospel.

People could argue that John was the disciple who knew Jesus best. Peter gets all the hype, but John was the disciple “whom Jesus loved” (John 13:23). John was so comfortable with his Lord that he laid his head on Jesus’ chest.

Knowing this, why then does John, who knew Jesus as a flesh-and-blood man, refer to a person as “The Word”?

The prologue of John’s Gospel focuses on the concept of the Word, or *Logos*. He

was doing something very specific when he referred to Jesus as the *Logos*. John was communicating a concept that his readers would clearly understand. Just as Paul equated the *Logos* with a personal living God, John was saying that Jesus, a man, was the structuring principle of the universe – He was the Son of God.

People who lived in the same generation of Jesus, who saw and heard Him, may have had a hard time equating this man, made of flesh, with the spiritual power of God.

John 1:5

5 And the light shineth in darkness; and the darkness comprehended it not.

But if they read the first chapter of John's gospel, and compared it to John's other writings, it becomes fairly clear to them that he was referring to a person when he wrote of the Word.

John 1:14

14 And the Word was made 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.

We can also read more about the “Word made flesh” in the first letter of John.

1 John 1:1-3

1 That which was from the beginning, which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, which we have looked upon, and our hands have handled, of the Word of life;

2 (For the life was manifested, and we have seen it, and bear witness, and shew unto you that eternal life, which was with the Father, and was manifested unto us;)

3 That which we have seen and heard declare we unto you, that ye also may have fellowship with us: and truly our fellowship is with the Father, and with his Son Jesus Christ.

Let’s look at the son-and-father dynamic, again. A son, who followed his father, learned at his side, and honored his word,

stood to inherit the family business. It was a lifelong endeavor, but at a certain age the son would step into the father's office. How, then, could a man be the Son of God and inherit His business?

By all rights, Jesus should have been learning the family business of his stepfather. As the eldest son, He was rightful heir and would have been working alongside Joseph, the husband of Mary. However, when Jesus was left behind in Jerusalem by His parents, His true nature was revealed.

Luke 2:46-49

46 And it came to pass, that after three days they found him in the temple, sitting in the midst of the doctors, both hearing them, and asking them questions.

47 And all that heard him were astonished at his understanding and answers.

48 And when they saw him, they were amazed: and his mother said unto him, Son, why hast thou thus dealt with us? behold, thy father and I have sought thee

sorrowing.

49 And he said unto them, How is it that ye sought me? Wist ye not that I must be about my Father's business?

Wasn't Jesus supposed to be back in Nazareth at Joseph's workshop, learning how to be a carpenter? This did not lineup with tradition. Even Jesus' parents were perplexed.

Luke 2:50

50 And they understood not the saying which he spake unto them.

Mary was so focused on the affairs of day-to-day life, raising a growing family, that she had lost perspective on who Jesus really was. The incident lit a spark in Mary that brought to mind the visitation of Gabriel and the covering of the Holy Spirit.

Luke 2:51

51 And he went down with them, and came to Nazareth, and was subject unto

them: but his mother kept all these sayings in her heart.

As the years passed, and Jesus followed a path different than that of Joseph, Mary watched Him learn about His real Father.

Luke 2:52

52 And Jesus increased in wisdom and stature, and in favour with God and man.

What was the family business that Jesus stood to inherit? Jesus was in the creation business, just like His Father.

Genesis 1:1

1 In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth.

John 1:2-5

2 The same was in the beginning with God.

3 All things were made by him; and without him was not anything made that was made.

4 In him was life; and the life was the light of men.

According to John, God was the structuring order of the universe. He was the *Logos*. When God spoke, the formless and void universe was filled with His glory through the spoken Word. Jesus, as God's faithful Son, would say the same thing as His Father and Lord.

As Jesus grew, he would have spent time with God in the spirit, watching Him at work and listening to Him speak. At the right age, God placed His mantle upon Jesus and declared Him heir.

Matthew 3:13-17

13 Then cometh Jesus from Galilee to Jordan unto John (the Baptist, not the disciple), to be baptized of him.

14 But John forbad him, saying, I have need to be baptized of thee, and comest thou to me?

15 And Jesus answering said unto him, Suffer it to be so now: for thus it

becometh us to fulfil all righteousness.

Then he suffered him.

16 And Jesus, when he was baptized, went up straightway out of the water: and, lo, the heavens were opened unto him, and he saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove, and lighting upon him:

17 And lo a voice from heaven, saying, This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased.

Throughout John's gospel, we can find Jesus at work, creating new things, giving life, and restoring order. He did it all with His words, just as His Father in heaven.

John 6:63

63 It is the spirit that quickeneth; the flesh profiteth nothing: the words that I speak unto you, they are spirit, and they are life.

John 10:10

10 The thief cometh not, but for to steal, and to kill, and to destroy: I am come

that they might have life, and that they might have it more abundantly.

John 5:19-20

19 Then answered Jesus and said unto them, Verily, verily, I say unto you, The Son can do nothing of himself, but what he seeth the Father do: for what things soever he doeth, these also doeth the Son likewise.

20 For the Father loveth the Son, and sheweth him all things that himself doeth: and he will shew him greater works than these, that ye may marvel.

John 12:49

49 For I have not spoken of myself; but the Father which sent me, he gave me a commandment, what I should say, and what I should speak.

Jesus' very first miracle demonstrates the power of His words and His place as the Word. Not long after His baptism, Jesus joined His mother, Mary, at a wedding celebration in Cana.

John 2:3-5

3 And when they wanted wine, the mother of Jesus saith unto him, They have no wine.

4 Jesus saith unto her, Woman, what have I to do with thee? mine hour is not yet come.

5 His mother saith unto the servants, Whatsoever he saith unto you, do it.

Notice that Mary puts an emphasis on what Jesus will *say*. This incident took place many years after she and Joseph found Jesus in the Temple being about His Father's business. Over the years, she watched Him grow in wisdom – received from His Father.

John 2:6-10

6 And there were set there six waterpots of stone, after the manner of the purifying of the Jews, containing two or three firkins apiece.

7 Jesus saith unto them, Fill the waterpots with water. And they filled them up to the brim.

8 And he saith unto them, Draw out now, and bear unto the governor of the feast.

And they bare it.

9 When the ruler of the feast had tasted the water that was made wine, and knew not whence it was: (but the servants which drew the water knew;) the governor of the feast called the bridegroom,

10 And saith unto him, Every man at the beginning doth set forth good wine; and when men have well drunk, then that which is worse: but thou hast kept the good wine until now.

Like Naaman's servants, the servants at the wedding knew the power of submitting to a lord's word. By submitting to Jesus' command, they saw a creative miracle – wine made from grapes that never existed.

This was the Word at work through the Man who was reclaiming the authority given by God to the first man and woman.

Chapter 11

The Word Is Ours

But what saith it? The word is nigh thee, even in thy mouth, and in thy heart: that is, the word of faith, which we preach

- Romans 10:8

Adam and Eve yielded their authority to Satan, whose only power over them was the fear of death. By submitting to his word, he became their lord and the head of their household – their spiritual father. Mankind was bound by this relationship for thousands of years, and was correctly diagnosed by Jesus.

John 8:44-45

44 Ye are of your father the devil, and the lusts of your father ye will do. He was a murderer from the beginning, and abode not in the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he speaketh a lie, he speaketh of his own: for he is a liar, and the father of it.

45 And because I tell you the truth, ye believe me not.

In the Old Testament, Abram set the model for redemption by yielding to God as Lord. When his nephew, Lot, and the people of Sodom were taken captive by King Chederlaomer, Abram rallied his men to save them. After defeating Chederlaomer, spoiling his kingdom, and freeing the captives, Abram was offered a deal by the wicked king of Sodom: Give back the people and Abram would be allowed to keep all their goods, which were also recovered in the raid.

Genesis 14:22-23

22 And Abram said to the king of Sodom, I have lift up mine hand unto the LORD, the most high God, the possessor of heaven and earth,

23 That I will not take from a thread even to a shoelatchet, and that I will not take any thing that is thine, lest thou shouldest say, I have made Abram rich

Earlier in the story, Abram had offered a tenth of the spoils of Chederlaomer (not what he had recovered that belonged to the people of Sodom) to God through His high priest, Melchizedek, king of Salem.

Genesis 14:19-20

19 And he blessed him, and said,
Blessed be Abram of the most high God,
possessor of heaven and earth:

20 And blessed be the most high God,
which hath delivered thine enemies into
thy hand. And he gave him tithes of all.

Sodom (as we would later find out) was stained by its people's ungodly behavior. The local culture was heavily influenced by the Babylonian mystery religion sex cult. You see, King Nimrod was called a "mighty hunter" (Genesis 10:9) not because he bagged a buck on opening day each year, it was because he hunted people – he was a human trafficker.

Abram knew that by turning the people over to the king of Sodom, he was selling

them back into sex slavery. Although the people (including Lot) *chose* to go back to Sodom, it wasn't because Abram sought to profit from their misery. Instead, he gave glory to God.

In response to Abram professing Him as Lord, God promised Himself in return.

Genesis 15:1

15 After these things the word of the LORD came unto Abram in a vision, saying, Fear not, Abram: I am thy shield, and thy exceeding great reward.

He also blessed Abram, who up to that point did not have a blood heir, with children.

Genesis 15:5

5 And he brought him forth abroad, and said, Look now toward heaven, and tell the stars, if thou be able to number them: and he said unto him, So shall thy seed be.

6 And he believed in the LORD; and he counted it to him for righteousness.

Abram accepted the word of his Lord, and came into agreement with it. He would confess this word later in life when God changed his name to Abraham, which means “father of multitudes.” Out of these descendants would come One who would set everything right between God and mankind, sealing His lordship over them.

Genesis 22:17-18

17 That in blessing I will bless thee, and in multiplying I will multiply thy seed as the stars of the heaven, and as the sand which is upon the sea shore; and thy seed shall possess the gate of his enemies;

18 And in thy seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed; because thou hast obeyed my voice.

The prophecy was fulfilled in Jesus, who became the Seed of Abraham (Hebrews 2:16). This revelation was not well received by many of those who first heard it.

John 8:56-58

56 Your father Abraham rejoiced to see my day: and he saw it, and was glad.

57 Then said the Jews unto him, Thou art not yet fifty years old, and hast thou seen Abraham?

58 Jesus said unto them, Verily, verily, I say unto you, Before Abraham was, I am.

To defeat Satan, Jesus gave Himself as the perfect sacrifice, as the Lamb of God who came to take away the sin of the world (John 1:29).

Hebrews 2:19

9 But we see Jesus, who was made a little lower than the angels for the suffering of death, crowned with glory and honour; that he by the grace of God should taste death for every man.

Jesus didn't just die for us, however. He did something far more threatening to Satan's stolen kingdom.

Hebrews 2:14-15

14 Forasmuch then as the children are partakers of flesh and blood, he also himself likewise took part of the same; that through death he might destroy him that had the power of death, that is, the devil;

15 And deliver them who through fear of death were all their lifetime subject to bondage.

Jesus declared that He would rise from the dead.

Mark 8:31

31 And he began to teach them, that the Son of man must suffer many things, and be rejected of the elders, and of the chief priests, and scribes, and be killed, and after three days rise again.

Matthew 12:40

40 For as Jonas was three days and three nights in the whale's belly; so shall the Son of man be three days and three nights in the heart of the earth.

John 2:18-19

18 Then answered the Jews and said unto him, What sign shewest thou unto us, seeing that thou doest these things?

19 Jesus answered and said unto them, Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up.

Of all the things Jesus did on earth, it was these claims that made His enemies the most angry. They even troubled one of His faithful disciples, Peter.

Mark 8:32-33

32 And he spake that saying openly. And Peter took him, and began to rebuke him.

33 But when he had turned about and looked on his disciples, he rebuked Peter, saying, Get thee behind me, Satan: for thou savourest not the things that be of God, but the things that be of men.

As Jesus went to the cross, His followers lost heart. Their leader, the One they thought was the Messiah, was gone. Jesus was as dead as any other man and, apparently,

subject to the same end and master as they were.

What they did not know, however, was that while Jesus body lay in the tomb and His spirit sat in the realm of the dead, His father was ready to create again. Just as He breathed life into the first man, God was ready to make a new creature, never before seen on earth (2 Cor. 5:17).

The Father spoke words that quickened Jesus' spirit, bringing Him to life, raising Him from the dead. This time, not as the only begotten Son, but the first born of many brethren.

Hebrews 1:6-9

6 And again, when he bringeth in the firstbegotten into the world, he saith, And let all the angels of God worship him.

7 And of the angels he saith, Who maketh his angels spirits, and his ministers a flame of fire.

8 But unto the Son he saith, Thy throne, O God, is for ever and ever: a sceptre of

righteousness is the sceptre of thy kingdom.

9 Thou hast loved righteousness, and hated iniquity; therefore God, even thy God, hath anointed thee with the oil of gladness above thy fellows.

With death's power broken, and Satan – as the head of mankind – crushed, Jesus assumed His rightful place as the lord, king, and head of mankind, the inheritor of heaven and earth.

Hebrews 1:3

1 God, who at sundry times and in divers manners spake in time past unto the fathers by the prophets,

2 Hath in these last days spoken unto us by his Son, whom he hath appointed heir of all things, by whom also he made the worlds;

3 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 on the right hand of the Majesty on high:

4 Being made so much better than the angels, as he hath by inheritance obtained a more excellent name than they.

It was in that moment that Jesus fully and completely took over the family business from His Father, allowed us to be adopted into His family if we accepted Him as Lord, and put the angels (including Satan, a fallen angel) in their rightful place.

Hebrews 1:10

10 And, Thou, Lord, in the beginning hast laid the foundation of the earth; and the heavens are the works of thine hands:

11 They shall perish; but thou remainest; and they all shall wax old as doth a garment;

12 And as a vesture shalt thou fold them up, and they shall be changed: but thou art the same, and thy years shall not fail.

13 But to which of the angels said he at

any time, Sit on my right hand, until I
make thine enemies thy footstool?

14 Are they not all ministering spirits,
sent forth to minister for them who shall
be heirs of salvation?

We, as believers in the Resurrection,
serve under our Lord Jesus – the heir of
God’s Creation – and join His family.

1 Corinthians 15:20-22

20 But now is Christ risen from the dead,
and become the firstfruits of them that
slept.

21 For since by man came death, by man
came also the resurrection of the dead.

22 For as in Adam all die, even so in
Christ shall all be made alive.

We submit our wills to Jesus, with the
understanding that His Father will take care
of us and meet our needs. We, as His
adopted brethren, receive all the benefits
accorded to the Son.

John 12:25-26

25 He that loveth his life shall lose it;
and he that hateth his life in this world
shall keep it unto life eternal.

26 If any man serve me, let him follow
me; and where I am, there shall also my
servant be: if any man serve me, him
will my Father honour.

Chapter 12

The Word Is Seed

And he said, "Unto you it is given to know the mysteries of the kingdom of God: but to others in parables; that seeing they might not see, and hearing they might not understand. Now the parable is this: The seed is the word of God."

- Luke 8:10-11

Often, Jesus taught in parables. These stories helped Jesus describe the Kingdom of God to His listeners using concepts they already understood. One particular parable stands out among the rest.

Jesus told the story of a sower who went out to spread seed in his field.

Luke 8:5-8

5 A sower went out to sow his seed: and as he sowed, some fell by the way side; and it was trodden down, and the fowls of the air devoured it.

6 And some fell upon a rock; and as

soon as it was sprung up, it withered away, because it lacked moisture.

7 And some fell among thorns; and the thorns sprang up with it, and choked it.

8 And other fell on good ground, and sprang up, and bare fruit an hundredfold. And when he had said these things, he cried, He that hath ears to hear, let him hear.

Jesus' disciples, who have unfairly received a bad reputation for being slow to catch on, usually let His parables go by with few questions. But this one caught their interest.

Luke 8:9

9 And his disciples asked him, saying, What might this parable be?

Jesus wasn't just teaching people how to run a successful farm, he was teaching about the Kingdom of God. In a kingdom, the people are ruled by a king. The king sends forth decrees – his word – that determine how things run. Whole armies respond to the

word of the king. Life and death hinge on every word from the king's throne.

In a kingdom, the word of the king is the coin of the realm. A servant speaking the will of the king in his name can open any door and conduct any business on his behalf, so long as he is authorized

In the parable of the sower, Jesus was illustrating that *the Word of the King* worked like seed. In God's Kingdom, mankind is authorized by the Son to serve and sow. As servants under Jesus' lordship, the seed we are provided is the very best seed of all – His Word.

Isaiah 55:10-11

10 For as the rain cometh down, and the snow from heaven, and returneth not thither, but watereth the earth, and maketh it bring forth and bud, that it may give seed to the sower, and bread to the eater:

11 So shall my word be that goeth forth out of my mouth: it shall not return unto me void, but it shall accomplish that

which I please, and it shall prosper in the thing whereto I sent it.

When we sow God's Word, it will be successful and yield a bountiful harvest – but only if we follow the direction of our Lord. Remember, when we become servants, we agree to work His land at His command. He provides seed, and tells us where sow.

Luke 8:12-15

12 Those by the way side are they that hear; then cometh the devil, and taketh away the word out of their hearts, lest they should believe and be saved.

13 They on the rock are they, which, when they hear, receive the word with joy; and these have no root, which for a while believe, and in time of temptation fall away.

14 And that which fell among thorns are they, which, when they have heard, go forth, and are choked with cares and riches and pleasures of this life, and bring no fruit to perfection.

15 But that on the good ground are they, which in an honest and good heart, having heard the word, keep it, and bring forth fruit with patience.

When God created the universe, he set mankind at its center. God gave man authority over everything, and empowered him with seed.

Genesis 2:15

15 And the LORD God took the man, and put him into the garden of Eden to dress it and to keep it.

All man and woman had to do was follow their Lord's directions and sow seed where He instructed. Everything – all plants, animals, angels, and elements – were in their rightful places and playing their prescribed roles. The sowing of the physical seeds (cultivating plants and breeding animals) would teach the man and woman how to sow spiritual seeds (increasing by use of words).

Through sowing seed and speaking God's Word, man and woman would maintain God's order over His creation. Through their disobedience, they lost authority over the spiritual realm and, in turn, the physical. The world descended into chaos – in line with Satan's desire for all-out rebellion against God and His design. This may explain the earth's current biodiversity and the seeming appearance of random evolutionary development.

However, when we receive Jesus as Lord, we are restored to God's order away from Adam's disorder.

1 Peter 1:23

23 Being born again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, by the word of God, which liveth and abideth forever.

We, as faithful servants, are now expected to say the same things as Him. We are instructed to speak the Word as Jesus would. When we come into agreement with

our words and actions, God backs us and meet our needs.

The first instance of a man confessing the Lord Jesus and His Word after He rose from the dead is found on the Day of Pentecost.

Jesus had commissioned the disciples as apostles, to sow His Word into others as He commanded.

Matthew 28:18-20

18 And Jesus came and spake unto them, saying, All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth.

19 Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost:

20 Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world. Amen.

In the same scene recorded by Luke, Jesus tells the apostles they should receive

something specific from Him before sowing His Word.

Acts 1:8

8 But ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you: and ye shall be witnesses unto me both in Jerusalem, and in all Judaea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth.

Among the many things a lord provided to his servants were garments that identified them with his household. These would be worn while working, conducting business, or trading. They would also be the uniform of his militia and be a sign of his authority. In this case, the garment Jesus was placing upon His servants was the Holy Spirit – what was promised to Abram by God in Genesis 15:1.

Acts 2:1-4

1 And when the day of Pentecost was fully come, they were all with one accord in one place.

2 And suddenly there came a sound from heaven as of a rushing mighty wind, and it filled all the house where they were sitting.

3 And there appeared unto them cloven tongues like as of fire, and it sat upon each of them.

4 And they were all filled with the Holy Ghost, and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance.

The work of sowing seed and restoring order began immediately. The Jews who had gathered for the festival heard the scriptures in a way as never before – illuminated by the Spirit and fulfilled by the testimony of Jesus.

Acts 2:11

11 ... we do hear them speak in our tongues the wonderful works of God.

12 And they were all amazed, and were in doubt, saying one to another, What meaneth this?

In the wake of the outpouring of the Spirit, Peter – the man who seemed to make a habit of inserting a foot every time his mouth was open – spoke the Word of God clearly and powerfully.

Acts 2:22-24

22 Ye men of Israel, hear these words; Jesus of Nazareth, a man approved of God among you by miracles and wonders and signs, which God did by him in the midst of you, as ye yourselves also know:

23 Him, being delivered by the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God, ye have taken, and by wicked hands have crucified and slain:

24 Whom God hath raised up, having loosed the pains of death: because it was not possible that he should be holden of it.

Acts 2:38-41

38 Then Peter said unto them, Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the

name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost.

39 For the promise is unto you, and to your children, and to all that are afar off, even as many as the Lord our God shall call.

40 And with many other words did he testify and exhort, saying, Save yourselves from this untoward generation.

41 Then they that gladly received his word were baptized: and the same day there were added unto them about three thousand souls.

Just as mankind's rebellion under the lordship of Satan set the world on a course for chaos, Jesus' obedience started it on a path toward order. Peter and the apostles, as His servants, began spreading the Word as sowers in a field, cultivating a harvest, and restoring God's order. At Pentecost, they were led to good soil, and 3,000 people received the seed of the Word that day.

When we receive the gift of the Spirit as they did, we take on the garment of our Lord. God lives inside, on, and through us, by His Spirit. And we live in Jesus, as members of His household. We become sowers, given seed to sow by our Lord.

Chapter 13

Sowing the Word

Take heed therefore how ye hear: for whosoever hath, to him shall be given; and whosoever hath not, from him shall be taken even that which he seemeth to have.

- Luke 8:18

The Word is the structuring order of our lives. How, as servants of the Lord, do we build our world using the seed of the Word? We start the same way as God, with faith.

Hebrews 11:1-3

1 Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen.

2 For by it the elders obtained a good report.

3 Through faith we understand that the worlds were framed by the word of God, so that things which are seen were not made of things which do appear.

In the beginning, God – the *Logos* – started with a vision of what he wanted. These were the things He hoped for. He then spoke faith-filled words as the substance of those things. Those words were seeds that grew into the reality we see around us.

Our hearts are like soil, according to Jesus. How do we get faith to grow from within us? We start by sowing the Word.

Romans 10:17

17 So then faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God.

The Kingdom of God works like a sower planting seed. According to the parable of the sower, to get the best results with His best seed, we need to sow into ground free from stones and weeds. When we confess Jesus as Lord, our hearts are reborn in the Spirit and we move into Kingdom territory – the best real estate available for sowing.

1 Corinthians 6:9-11

9 Know ye not that the unrighteous shall not inherit the kingdom of God? Be not

deceived: neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor effeminate, nor abusers of themselves with mankind, 10 Nor thieves, nor covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor extortioners, shall inherit the kingdom of God.

11 And such were some of you: but ye are washed, but ye are sanctified, but ye are justified in the name of the Lord Jesus, and by the Spirit of our God.

Jesus, in another parable about the Kingdom, again spoke of seed.

Matthew 13:31-32

31 ... The kingdom of heaven is like to a grain of mustard seed, which a man took, and sowed in his field:

32 Which indeed is the least of all seeds: but when it is grown, it is the greatest among herbs, and becometh a tree, so that the birds of the air come and lodge in the branches thereof.

The mustard seed was considered unusual among all seeds in that it grew

unusually large for its relatively small size. In Jesus' parable, it demonstrated the growth potential and power of faith.

Matthew 17:20

20 ... If ye have faith as a grain of mustard seed, ye shall say unto this mountain, Remove hence to yonder place; and it shall remove; and nothing shall be impossible unto you.

Based upon the teaching of our Lord, we servants should be diligently sowing the Word, which is of faith, into the good soil of the Kingdom. When we do, we are promised a "hundred-fold" harvest.

So, how do we do it? How do we sow and reap the Word, like Jesus wants us to? We start by listening to God's Spirit, letting Him find the exact seeds we need. The Spirit will help us understand the Word and sow it (by speaking) appropriately.

1 Corinthians 2:12-13

12 Now we have received, not the spirit of the world, but the spirit which is of

God; that we might know the things that are freely given to us of God.

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

14 But the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God: for they are foolishness unto him: neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned.

15 But he that is spiritual judgeth all things, yet he himself is judged of no man.

16 For who hath known the mind of the Lord, that he may instruct him? but we have the mind of Christ.

When we have a need, our Lord provides seed. For example, if we need healing in our bodies, we search out scriptures (Word seed) that promise us health. Finding multiple scriptures builds a strong case against the attacks of Satan, who tries to put sickness on us.

2 Corinthians 13:1

1 ... In the mouth of two or three witnesses shall every word be established.

Let's look at three passages on healing benefits we receive through our Lord Jesus.

Isaiah 53:4-5

4 Surely he (Jesus) hath borne our griefs, and carried our sorrows: yet we did esteem him stricken, smitten of God, and afflicted.

5 But he was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities: the chastisement of our peace was upon him; and with his stripes we are healed.

Acts 10:38

38 How God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Ghost and with power: who went about doing good, and healing all that were oppressed of the devil; for God was with him.

Romans 8:10-11

10 And if Christ be in you, the body is dead because of sin; but the Spirit is life because of righteousness.

11 But if the Spirit of him that raised up Jesus from the dead dwell in you, he that raised up Christ from the dead shall also quicken your mortal bodies by his Spirit that dwelleth in you.

Once you have found seed, you then sow it with your mouth by speaking faith-filled words based on His Word. The Word of the King is the law of the land. Your body (or that of a person who is willing to receive a prayer for healing) is empowered to respond to the commands of Jesus.

As servants, you and I have the authority to do business and speak in Jesus name. When we confess the Word, sickness must leave.

Philippians 2:10

10 That at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in heaven, and

things in earth, and things under the earth

This works not just with healing, but with finances, freedom from addiction, emotional/mental well-being, and many other things in the abundant life Jesus promises.

Hebrews 4:12

12 For the word of God is quick, and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart.

In this verse, “two-edged” is translated from the Greek word *dístomos*, which also means two-mouthed. Satan tries to give us an alternative solution which is always bad, but God’s Word is stronger and can cut through confusion.

The Word of God gives our world structure and order. If Jesus is your Lord,

you have every right to live in His goodness. We can live as He did – empowered by the Word.

1 John 4:17

17 Herein is our love made perfect, that we may have boldness in the day of judgment: because as he is, so are we in this world.

If you want order in your life, go to your Lord and find seed that you may sow to put things right, just as God intended in His Creation. Then, follow the leading of the Spirit to sow it into good soil, and expect a harvest of abundance.

Now that we know Jesus redeemed us from death, is willing to bring us into His household, and give us the seed of His Word, how do we receive all His benefits?

Romans 10:8-13

9 That if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved.

10 For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness; and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation.

11 For the scripture saith, Whosoever believeth on him shall not be ashamed.

12 For there is no difference between the Jew and the Greek: for the same Lord over all is rich unto all that call upon him.

13 For whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved.

If you want to make Jesus your Lord, just say out loud, or however you can express yourself, that Jesus Christ is Lord and that He rose from the dead (defeating Satan). By doing so, you are saying that you believe in your heart that what God says is true and you're saying the same thing (confessing His Word). Receive the Spirit as a gift (so He may be your reward and shield) and begin speaking in your heavenly prayer language, building yourself up to be a spiritually strong and faithful servant.

About the Author

Through writing and teaching, Bryce L. Pico examines God's relationship with His people through Jesus Christ. He helps people understand what they believe, why they believe it, and how their beliefs shape their lives. He is called to empower others to discover their God-given talents and purpose in building the Kingdom. He served in media and prayer ministries and earned a degree from Oral Roberts University. He serves with his wife, Rachael, at Life Abundant Ministries.

About Life Abundant Ministries

Our purpose is to educate people about the abundant life available in Jesus Christ (John 10:10). We are called to teach and preach, and equip the Body of Christ so that they may be ready always to give an answer for the hope that is within them (1 Peter 3:15). Through live teaching, books, and media resources, we aim to reveal Jesus to people so that they may see Him at work in their everyday lives.



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