

Our Spirit Connection - Accessing His Power

Series Article 2 – ‘Tradition Hinders Spiritual Growth’

Our link with the Holy Spirit is one of the most basic working realities in the Christian life. For that reason, we should be motivated to understand the dynamics of this interface since it governs how each individual believer, leader, and assembly is “led” as we serve the Lord (Rom. 8:14; Gal. 5:18).

Nonetheless, we’ve all heard the conflicting views which throw a monkey-wrench into how Christians perceive our Spirit connection. These mixed messages cause some to be confused about how they’re personally empowered while others are unsure how to communicate with fellow Body members who hold differing opinions on this subject. Then, a point further muddling the water is virtually every perspective of how the Spirit performs can be supported from examples found somewhere in the Bible. So, what is the answer for this predicament? To me, it lies in the question: What does Scripture directed to the Body of Christ teach about our relationship with the Spirit? Proceeding on this path, my goal is to define the nature of this bond from the Church Epistles.¹

This exposition isn’t intended to be a comprehensive documentary on the Holy Spirit. I won’t focus on His Person, deity, relationship with the Father and Son, or actions outside of His current link with believers. Accordingly, two themes will be deliberated. In an upcoming article I’ll cover the array of activities in which Christians are empowered by the Spirit. But first, this article seeks to define the process by which we gain access to His power for a productive resurrection life. Specifically, it addresses the question: Do believers have a choice in generating good works, or does the Spirit cause them in us? From revelation given to the Church, I’ll show we play an integral part in producing godly deeds. For, since we were made alive in Christ, now we can choose to tap our indwelling Spirit for the capacity to perform.

At the end of the day, I believe Christians simply want to be confident our actions are empowered by the Spirit and not generated by the other possible source – our flesh. Therefore, each of us should ask, ‘Is my concept of how I obtain divine power **Based on Appropriate Application of Scripture or Prompted by What I was Traditionally Taught?**’ Because any thought or act we engage in outside of the Spirit’s current method of assistance *will handicap our networking with Him and hinder our spiritual growth.*

Now, with reference to discrepancies of how the Spirit functions throughout the Bible, those who attempt to decipher every way He operates and combine these into a guideline to describe His present-day interaction with believers are

destined for an impossible task. For, the Vantage Point that All-The-Bible-Teaches-The-Same-Thing inevitably leads to assign a less than literal interpretation to some passages or to ignore puzzling contexts altogether. Consequently, this outlook forces a person to side-step portions of the divine record and backs them into an untenable corner.

Yes, all sixty-six Books of the Bible are inspired. And, I acknowledge many truths are universal which can be applied to all of God's interactions with mankind. Counted among these are the Father's Nature, the Deity of Christ, the sinful state of man, Christ's payment for sin, mankind's need for salvation, Jesus' eventual return, glory for the saved, and judgement for the lost. When all's said and done, *our Father has one ultimate purpose which is to glorify Himself*. But He accomplishes this goal by fluctuating in how He relates with men, and these differing agendas are laid out in His Word. The two most prominent are His dealings with the Nation of Israel, both past and yet future, and His present purpose with the Body of Christ. In reference to the topic at hand, contexts delineating these two programs *illustrate the Spirit works in markedly different ways*.

Comprehending the nuts and bolts of how Body members connect with the Spirit requires a detailed examination of numerous contexts. Over the years, I've sought to understand the various theological positions on this subject, but most of my time has been occupied navigating the Greek text. Through this exercise, my own theories have been put to the test and I've been compelled to make lots of adjustments. This need for repetitive modification has become a brutal reminder that Spirit-indwelled believers don't naturally grasp divine truth. On the contrary, our sin-corrupted minds must undergo endless change if we wish to arrive at God's way of thinking.

In summary, I'm confident most Christians want to have a firm grasp on how the Holy Spirit guides our lives. For, if we claim to be Spirit-led but in reality, at times we're not, these acts will be directed by the world, the flesh, or the Devil (Eph. 2:2-3; 1 Pet. 5:8-9; 1 John 2:16; 4:4). Personally, I don't want to be entangled in this kind of debacle and I don't know anybody else who wants this either. So, my prayer is that you'll take time to investigate this commentary, some of which may be new to you. Bear in mind, if even a few concepts help you engage with the Spirit more creatively, your testimony will be strengthened by His fruit.

Section 1: Activating the Spirit's Power

This section considers passages which describe *the mechanics of the Spirit-believer relationship*. To define this interaction, I frequently cite grammatical

forms, word meanings, and sentence structure from the original texts which contribute the info needed to develop a command of this topic. Also, my wish is to communicate with all believers, so I've done my best to write in a clear manner. If I could adequately explain how the Spirit functions without taking this approach, I would. But I can't. So, these explanations are composed in the simplest way I know how, and I encourage you to allocate the time you need to comprehend them. This may involve rereading parts, checking footnotes, or studying an appendix. I'm confident your effort will be rewarded with a better grasp of *Our Spirit Connection* and, in turn, impact your service to the Lord.

Before moving forward, you should be aware **Appendix I** contains definitions of basic meanings of *Greek Tenses, Voices, and Modes*. It also provides verbiage for how these points of grammar are translated in Scripture quotes throughout this article. However, for brevity's sake and less confusion, these expanded translations are only used when they help elucidate a topic or principle.

Ephesians 5:18

“And you are not to continuously choose to be made drunk in relation to wine, in which is debauchery, but you are to continuously choose to be filled in the Spirit.”

Those familiar with this verse probably wonder why I translated it this way. This rendering emphasizes the *sense of both middle and passive voices* which are contained in the form of each verb in this verse. In Greek grammar, the middle voice indicates *a subject acts upon itself* which means it becomes the functional object of its own action. This is why I rendered it with the English word “choose” because this term expresses the idea of what one who acts upon himself actually does – *he causes himself to make a choice*. When this meaning is applied to the first verb with the negative, it indicates “you are not to continuously choose” (μη μεθυσκεσθε), *cause yourselves or be irresponsible* to get “drunk” with “wine”.

Since the form of “μεθυσκεσθε” is also passive, this meaning should be equally applied. The passive voice indicates *the subject is acted upon by a force outside of itself* which in effect makes the subject the direct object of the verb action. Applying this concept, the subject “you” (plural – referring to believers) becomes the direct object and, thus, will “be made drunk” *by the outside influence of alcohol*. When the relevance of both voices is included, this verb portrays a very graphic picture of what happens in the process of intoxication. For, it stresses *believers need to make a responsible choice* (middle voice) “not” to drink in excess so alcohol won't *make them drunk* (passive voice). Therefore, to obtain the full impact portrayed by this verb, both voice concepts ought to be applied.

Like the first verb, this verse's second, "you are to continuously choose to be filled" (πληροῦσθε), also contains the middle/passive voice form so it should be defined in the same way. Assigning the relevance of this dual form indicates when we "*choose*" to *put ourselves under* (middle voice) the influence of "the Spirit", we'll experience *His supernatural filling* (passive voice – Rom. 15:13; Eph. 3:16-19; Col. 1:9). The immediate context elaborates on the benefits we receive from this co-op. For, the Spirit's power enables us to use time prudently (Eph. 5:16); understand what the will of the Lord is (v. 17); and walk in a wise manner while conversing with one another, singing in our hearts to the Lord, giving thanks to God and practicing mutual subordination (vv. 15, 19-21; also see Col. 3:16-17). Added to this dual voice's impact, the present imperative form of both verbs specifies we are "*continuously*" *commanded* to avoid drunkenness as well as be Spirit-filled.²

When this passage is understood in light of both voices, it accentuates **The Responsibility Believers Have to Make Godly Choices** in combination with *how we acquire power from the Spirit to put these choices into action*. Also, when an imperative mode is combined with the middle voice, they indicate we're *commanded to choose* what is right. And, **We're Truly Capable of Responding to God's Demands** since at the point of salvation we were made alive, received the Spirit, and thereafter have access to His power so we can *make positive moral choices to live holy lives* (Rom. 5:5; 6:2-4; 8:11-14; Eph. 1:13-14; 2:1-10). Lastly, at least five other Translations recognize this middle/passive combo by including the sense of both voices when they render these two verbs.³

The reason for belaboring this point is **the Meaning Conveyed by This Dual Middle/Passive Form is a Key Point of Grammar** *which validates the concept Christians are obligated to make godly choices plus it explains how we're able to carry them out*. In this verse, emphasis on responsibility is intensified since this Dual Form occurs with an Imperative Command. Still, by itself, this Voice Combo provides an indispensable component in the formula defining how we access power in the Spirit/believer relationship. For, it indicates, **We Need to Exercise The Catalyst-of-Choice** (middle voice) **so Spirit-Caused-Enablement** (passive voice) **Can Happen**.⁶ This practical, powerful, win-win outcome is what allows each Body member to understand the Word and produce good works.

Ephesians 5:18 is just the first of many passages covered in this article which contain verbs, participles or infinitives which occur in a middle/passive voice form. But, before proceeding to others, I'd like to share an experience which solidified my own appreciation for this facet of Greek grammar.

Getting Hold of the Dual-Voice-Sense

Half a dozen years ago I was in a Book study of First Peter when a brother named Clint taught chapter 5 verse 9. He began by saying he'd checked about 20 different Translations, half which rendered this verse in one way and half in another. Based on these findings, he presented both readings without favoring one over the other. At that moment, I was thoroughly confused. So, the following week I went back and discovered the infinitive “ἐπιτελεισθαι” in this verse occurs in the middle/passive voice form. Then I realized why Clint found differing Versions, for some translate it with the middle voice sense while others emphasize the passive. He didn't specify which Versions he'd seen, but I easily found some which stressed either the middle or passive voice of this infinitive.⁴ Also, I found four Versions rendering the relevance of both.⁵

In my study, I learned the subject of this infinitive is the neuter personal pronoun “the same things” (τα αὐτα – 1 Pet. 5:9). So, a translation including the sense of both voices would be, “In reference to whom (the Devil) **you actively stand against as solid ones in the faith having known the same things associated with the sufferings are causing themselves to be made complete** (ἐπιτελεισθαι) **in reference to your brotherhood in the world**” (emphasis mine).

In this context, believers are directed to humble ourselves “**under**” the Lord's *mighty hand* so we can vigilantly stand “**solid**” in “**the faith**” and, thus, against our “**adversary**”, the Devil (1 Pet. 5:6-9). While doing this, we should *know* this stance will precipitate “the same . . . sufferings” *to be completed* upon us just as *persecution is happening* to our comrades in the Body elsewhere. So, our obedience is what begins the effect of *things associated with suffering causing themselves* (middle voice) “**to be made complete**” (passive voice) by the outside agent of persecution spurred on by the Devil.⁶

Applying these principles, believers should stand for the Lord while *knowing suffering is inevitable*, but also with the realization if we humble ourselves under God's mighty hand, “**He will perfect, establish, strengthen, and foundation**” us (1 Pet. 5:6-7, 10). Conversely, those who compromise their faith will mostly avoid persecution but also miss out on the spiritual benefits which go together with taking a godly stand.

While learning Greek, I was taught it was possible to decipher which voice in a middle/passive form should be applied in any given passage based on its context. And many reference books take this same approach. However, this methodology lacks support from Greek grammar and syntax since neither provide any Contextual Indicator to justify such a choice.²³ Yet, for many years I

continued to incorporate this model when sharing the Word as well as teaching Greek. Then, over time, I progressively realized when emphasizing one voice over the other, often my choice was prejudiced by my own theological bias. So, more and more, I began to include both options for words in this middle/passive form. But my real **Aha-Moment** came when I heard this brother teach First Peter 5:9. That occasion marked a turning point for me. So, going forward, I was convinced when passages include this dual form, I should apply both possibilities in order to *glean what God intended*.

For, *He chose to reveal His Truth with word-forms conveying dual ideas* in this verse and many other portions of Scripture. So why shouldn't we include both concepts? And how can these grammatical forms be unintended? Because, I agree with those who hold the Greek text is inspired down to its individual letters. Consequently, why shouldn't we apply the sense conveyed by both voices as a foundational principle to arrive at what God meant to express? Since that Aha-Moment, I've tested this concept an innumerable amount of times. And, as a result, this point of grammar has become a significant contributing factor for how I view **The Spirit's Cooperative Partnership with Believers**.

Ironically, it took a brother who knew very little about Greek to teach me this lesson. My initial take-away was I discovered this principle by accident. After re-evaluating, I realized I'd been stimulated by a Body member who used available resources to do his God-given job.

Galatians 5:16-18

“Also, I say, you are to actively continuously walk in relation to the Spirit and you will not complete the desire of the flesh. For, the flesh continuously desires against the Spirit, also the Spirit continuously desires against the flesh, for these things are continuously causing themselves to be made opposed to one another in order that whatever things you may continuously want, these things you may not continuously do. Also, if you continuously choose to be led in relation to the Spirit, you are not existing under law.”

These three verses provide a concise explanation of how believers can utilize the Spirit's power. To begin with, the verb “you are to actively continuously walk” (περιπατεῖτε) is in the active voice and present tense which indicate we're to *vigorously* and “*continuously*” live life “in relation to the Spirit” (Gal. 5:16). This *command* (imperative mode)² occurring with the conditional statement, “if you continuously choose to be led” in verse 18, describes the process by which this Person of the Godhead empowers our “walk”.

The verb, “you continuously choose to be led” (αγεσθε – Gal. 5:18) is in the same middle/passive voice form just seen in Ephesians 5:18. Combining this dual form with the verb’s meaning directs believers to *make a choice to place ourselves* (middle voice) in a position where we can *be guided* (passive voice) by the Spirit.⁶ “If” and as we *habitually* (present tense) draw upon this supernatural assistance, we can be enabled to obtain the life-style changes delineated in the following context (Gal. 5:22 – 6:10). In addition, other Translations render both the middle and passive voice sense of this verb.⁷

The primary point of this passage is those who “actively” *and* “continuously walk” by the “Spirit . . . will not complete the desire of the flesh” (Gal. 5:16). On the other hand, those who disobey this command enter the war between “flesh” and “Spirit” with futility. For, during this Christian-Walk-Battle, each time we fail to depend on our indwelling Spirit, predictably, these encounters are won by the flesh (v. 17). To avoid this outcome, the “if” in verse 18 indicates we can have victory over the flesh *when we initiate a conditional choice* to be led by the Spirit. But, “if” instead one *places themselves under the Law*, he/she won’t be able to overcome “the desire of the flesh” but will succumb to generating “the works of the flesh” (vv. 16, 19-21).

This passage presents a specific outline for how Christians can conduct a holy lifestyle. And, in the greater context of this Book, Spirit-guidance is stated to function in accord with principles contained in the gospel message proclaimed by Paul (Gal. 1:11-12; 3:1; 4:11, 16-20). In contrast, verse 18 specifies *the Holy Spirit doesn’t work in conjunction with the Law of Moses* which was instituted by God for Israel. For that matter, He doesn’t work in concert with any other mortally-generated philosophy either (Rom. 5:20-21; 6:1-16; 16:25-26; Eph. 3:2-9; Col. 1:24 – 2:3, 8; 1 Tim. 6:20-21).

Romans 8:14

“For as many as continuously choose to be led in relation to the Spirit, these exist as sons of God.”

The verb, “continuously choose to be led” (αγονται), is the same present tense, middle/passive form found in Galatians 5:16 so it carries the same meaning. The prior context focuses on whether a person actually possesses the Spirit and those who do are labeled as believers (Rom. 8:9-10). Then, verses 11-13 contain several action words used to describe how Christians will be seen conducting themselves. Since the conjunction “for” (γαρ) begins verse 14, this connector shows Paul *is providing pertinent background information* we need to help put these behavioral actions into effect.

When the dual voice form of “αγονται” is applied, it indicates we must *choose* (middle voice) *to be guided* (passive voice) by the Spirit “if” *He is to lead* us toward “**putting to death the (fleshly) practices of the body**”, a procedure which accompanies divine life rising in our “**mortal bodies**” (Rom. 8:11, 13).⁶ I couldn’t find any other Translations which include the middle voice sense in their rendition of this verb. I only found Versions which exclusively apply the passive sense, even the ones which include its middle voice relevance in their translation of Galatians 5:18.⁷

Now, a common method used to define meaning portrayed by any grammatical form is to observe how similar forms are used in other contexts. Forms of this same root verb “αγω” (to lead) which contain a Middle/Passive Voice Combo occur in two other settings unrelated to Christian growth and help throw light on the thought this action word conveys.

Second Timothy 3:6

“For, out of these exist men who are entering into houses and taking captive little women who have chosen to begin and continue to be heaped with sins, continuously choosing to be led by various desires.”

This context alerts Timothy to avoid secular men who take advantage of women. Who are these women? I translated the noun “little women” (γυναικάρια) since it’s the *diminutive form* of the word “woman” (γυνή).⁸ Bible Versions render this noun in many ways such as ‘weak-willed’, ‘immature’, ‘gullible’, ‘foolish’ and ‘vulnerable’. These designations added to the action words describing these women indicate they’re morally loose, similar to present day prostitutes.

The first action word is a middle/passive participle “who have chosen to begin and continue to be heaped” (σεσωρευμενα). This term occurs in the perfect tense which indicates *the action was completed and accomplished effects continue* so it’s rendered “begin and continue”. In addition, the dual voice combo indicates they *chose to be under the control* of something – the encumbrance of being “heaped with sins”.⁶ These women are presented as having put themselves under a sin-laden pile which includes the negative moral pressure of “continuously choosing to be led (αγομενα) by various desires.” This second participle is also a dual voice form which is why both *personal choice* (middle voice) and the *outside controlling factor* (passive voice) of “various desires” are included.⁶

Adult Christians should be able to relate to this portrayal of sexual desire since everyone knows once a person puts themselves in a position to be controlled by

passion, he/she will get caught up in its grasp (2 Cor. 10:4-6; Gal. 6:1). This is an excellent example specifying what this middle/passive combo conveys and why the relevance of both voices should be included when it's taught. Several Translations exist which include personal choice (middle voice) when rendering the participial form of "αγω" (to lead) in Second Timothy 3:6.⁹ Although, most of these same Versions exclude the middle voice sense when translating similar verb forms in Galatians 5:18 and Romans 8:14. Why is this? In general, when earlier Versions translate a word form in a certain way, most subsequent Translations follow suit. And we've observed this trend in the contexts touched on so far, though a few Versions do offer more all-inclusive renditions.

First Corinthians 12:2

"You know that when you were gentiles, you were continuously choosing to be led away toward dumb idols as you were continuously choosing to be led."

This verse reminds the Corinthians about their pre-conversion condition. It includes two action words which contain the same root verb "αγω" being examined. The verb, "you were continuously choosing to be led" (ηγεσθε), appears in the imperfect tense which denotes *continuous action in past time*, the period before their salvation. Since this verb is middle/passive in form, at that time they *were choosing to put themselves* (middle voice) in a position to *be controlled* (passive voice) by "dumb idols".⁶

While in idolatry, they were "continuously choosing to be lead away" (απαγομενοι). This participle is built from the verb "αγω" prefixed by the preposition "apo", which means *from*. And, since it occurs in the middle/passive form it describes *their volitional participation* (middle voice) in *being led away from* (passive voice) the true God.⁶ So, both action words in this verse illustrate how an unbeliever chooses to be under the control of false gods, whether they venerate themselves or worship someone and/or something else. Numerous Translations exist which render both terms with personal choice (middle voice).¹⁰ Yet, most of these same Versions don't represent the middle voice when rendering similar verb forms in Galatians 5:18 and Romans 8:14.

By now, you've probably noticed I'm routinely citing comparative Translations in reference to passages under consideration. This is for three reasons. First, it's to demonstrate the benefit of checking out other Versions. For, examining alternate readings will meaningfully augment anyone's conception of many passages. Second, referencing other Versions helps substantiate that my renderings are within the reason of others who are proficient in Greek and came to similar conclusions. Finally, I want to encourage Christians to dig deeper in their study of

the Word. Those who still desire more than they can glean from available reference materials should consider learning New Testament Greek.

Philippians 2:12-13

“So that, my beloved, according as you always completed obeying, not as in my presence only but now much more in my absence, with fear and trembling you are to continuously choose to be made to produce your own salvation, for God exists who continuously energizes in you with the outcome to continuously desire and to continuously energize on behalf of the good pleasure.”

In verse 12, virtually all Translations render the middle/passive verb *solely with the relevance of the middle voice* and leave out the passive voice aspect altogether. This is entirely opposite to how all passages covered so far are translated by these same Versions. So, again, I’ve rendered this verb in a way which highlights both voices “you are to continuously choose to be made to produce” (κατεργάζεσθε). This means believers are to “*continuously*” (present tense) *make conscious choices* (middle voice) to be filled or led by the Spirit so He can *cause the production* (passive voice) of their “own salvation” (see Phil. 1:28-29; Eph. 5:18; Gal. 5:18).⁶

Often, this verse is rendered with the phrase ‘work out your own salvation’. This is appropriate as long as it’s understood to mean *putting salvation into effect*. For, “κατεργάζεσθε” shouldn’t be construed to mean *working for salvation* since it doesn’t convey that thought (Rom. 5:3; 7:8; 2 Cor. 4:17; 7:10-11; 9:11; 1 Pet. 4:3). Instead, this verb’s imperative mode combined with the middle/passive voice emphasizes believers are *obliged to make the obedient choice of tapping available power* from the Spirit in order to yield fruits of salvation, some of which are specified earlier in this Book (Phil. 1:9-11; 2:1-11, 14-16).²

So, how can Christians accomplish this imperative? Verse 13 begins with the conjunction “for” (γὰρ) which means it contains *background information* needed to fulfill the command in verse 12. Therefore, after considering the meaning of verse 13, I’ll discuss how its content connects with our ability to obey the order to produce fruits related to salvation in verse 12.

The phrase “God exists” uses a present tense form of the verb of being to target *His constant presence* “in” believers. A few passages in the Church Epistles indicate God or Christ is “in” us, but usually the Spirit is the Member of the Godhead stated to be “in” us. For that reason, I believe He is the Person intended here. This verse goes on to say He’s the one “who continuously energizes” (ενεργων) in us. This participle is composed of the preposition “εν”,

which means *in* or *inside*, affixed to the verb “εργεω”, meaning *to work* or *do labor*. This same root word is used to depict the work of God or the Spirit in numerous passages (1 Cor. 12:6, 11; Gal. 2:8; 3:5; Eph. 1:11, 20; 3:20; Col. 1:29). It’s also used regarding the Word’s activity and fruits produced by the Spirit (2 Cor. 1:6; Gal. 5:6; 1 Thess. 2:13). Combining these thoughts, *God-the-Holy-Spirit produces fruit in believers in conjunction with the Word*.

Next, we find an infinitive “with the outcome to continuously desire” (θελειν). Since this part of speech points to *an end action performed by its subject*, it’s rendered “with the outcome”. The first *continuous* (present tense) end action of the indwelling Spirit is a “desire” or *want* to carry out God’s “good pleasure”. A second resultant action is expressed by the infinitive “to continuously energize” (ενεργειν – present tense), which contains the same root word as the participle “ενεργων” earlier in the verse. These infinitives and the participle are all active voice and present tense, so they indicate the Spirit *vigorously* and “*continuously*” works in and enables us to “desire” and “energize” what God wants us to do (Rom. 8:9, 11; 1 Cor. 3:6; 6:19).

Having deliberated verse 13, let’s return to the significance the conjunction “for” (γαρ), translated *for*, holds since it directly links this verse’s truth with the command verb in verse 12. Therefore, “gar” *pinpoints Spirit-initiated desire and ability to do God’s will as the outside force* specified by the passive voice of “κατεργαζεσθε”. And, we’ve already seen this verb’s *middle voice* and *imperative mode* specify **A Believer’s Obedient Choice is the Factor which Unleashes this Divine Power** (Rom. 5:5; 6:15-16). Consequently, when all aspects of this passage are considered, it defines the Spirit/believer partnership in the same way seen in lifestyle contexts already covered (Rom. 8:14; Gal. 5:18; Eph. 5:18). Lastly, I didn’t find any English Bible Versions which render this middle/passive verb in a manner which includes its passive voice sense.

Principles of Philippians 2:12-13 in Action

Second Corinthians chapters 8 & 9 provide a real-life example of Christian choice. A year before receiving this Letter, these believers had “**not only previously begun to do but also to continuously desire**” to aid the poor saints in Jerusalem (8:10). Addressing this matter, Paul states their *continuous desire* (θελειν – same word as in Phil. 2:13) had faded which caused their giving to fall short of past pledges. This context *delivers one of the strongest appeals* seen in any Epistle as they’re pressed to be re-involved in this work which “**profits**” or *benefits* all who participate (2 Cor. 8:10). This plea contains godly models of obedience which contrast with the Corinthians’ negligence. These include the all-in Macedonian believers, Paul and his comrades, and Titus with two unnamed

brothers. Like the zeal of these faithful brethren, they are now to re-energize their *desire* by drawing inspiration from the indwelling Spirit (2 Cor. 3:17-18; 4:16).

Romans 7 also provides an example of how Spirit enablement works, but in reverse. For, while struggling against sin, Paul states his “*desire*” (θελω) to do “*good*” as defined by the Law of Moses. In total, he uses the term *desire* seven times to represent the Spirit’s *energizing* in his “*inner man*” (vv. 15-21; εσω ανθρωπον – 2 Cor. 4:16; Eph. 3:16). But, since he was trying to keep the Law and today the Spirit doesn’t work in conjunction with it, Paul couldn’t *produce* “good” to *put his own salvation into effect* (κατεργαζεσθε – Phil. 2:12). Instead, this same action word is used five times to describe how he was *producing* the sin he didn’t “desire” (κατεργαζ + ομαι, εσθαι, or ομενη – vv. 13-20). The lesson: Even though divine “desire” exists in us, *we need to follow the model laid out in Scripture* which directs us to choose to draw power from the Spirit, for this is the way we are enabled to produce life-altering fruit (Phil. 2:12-13).

Again, it’s noteworthy that most commonly used Translations render the Passive Voice Sense of the middle/passive verbs in Ephesians 5:18, Galatians 5:18, and Romans 8:14, then translate this same dual form with just the Middle Voice Sense in Philippians 2:12. Although this is inconsistent, all of these Bible Versions followed precedents set by past Versions, which evidently subsequent Translators were hesitant to revise.

Colossians 3:5-12

Several other contexts demonstrate the role Body members have in the course of spiritual growth. However, I chose this section as a final sample for two reasons. First, it is complex, yet this complexity provides a clear, concise, and coherent description of how the Spirit/believer connection works. Also, for many years I’ve seen the need to share information from the Greek text about verse 9 because many Translations render it in a way which can give the reader a misconception of what this passage teaches. This matter is addressed when the exposition reaches that point.

“Therefore, you are to actively complete putting to death the members upon the earth, fornication, uncleanness, passion, evil desire, and covetousness which exists as idolatry; on account of which things the wrath of God comes upon the sons of disobedience, among whom you once walked when you were continuously living in these things.” (Col. 3:5-7)

The conjunction “therefore” (ουν) introduces *the next step* believers are to take based on earlier truths presented in this Book. To this point, Paul recorded how

Christians at salvation were filled with Christ's fullness, separated from sin by His circumcision, baptized into His death, and raised with Him as well as how we presently await glorification upon His return (Col. 2:9 – 3:4). Since we now occupy a righteous position before God and are promised future conformity with His Son, "therefore", *God wants His elect to "actively complete putting to death the members upon the earth"*. For, only to the extent we rid ourselves of ungodly character can we effectively serve Him during the remainder of our time on earth.

In this passage, most of the commentary will focus on action words since they describe the functional path toward a holy life. So, the verb "you actively complete putting to death" (νεκρῶσατε) occurs in the imperative mode, which means it is a *command*, and in the aorist tense form it infers this *action is to be completed* (Col. 3:5). Before discussing this verb's relevance, it's crucial to understand what the Greek Aorist Tense signifies. Frequently its meaning is equated with *our English past tense*. If this were always true, *it would regularly designate completed action*. However, often this isn't the case. For, the Aorist Tense conveys a Past-Tense-Sense *only when united with the indicative mode*. Otherwise, when paired with imperative, subjunctive, or optative mode verbs as well as participles or infinitives, *the completion of its action depends on other factors*.¹¹

Applying this principle to the aorist imperative verb "νεκρῶσατε", we're *ordered to complete the act* of putting to death sinful character. When believers are addressed with this verb form, it stipulates **God Holds Us Accountable to Have Completely Overcome our Flesh**. Now, this expectation isn't unreasonable since He's already supplied us with everything we need to avoid sin: resurrection life along with the indwelling Spirit who provides moral discernment, the ability to comprehend His Word, and power to obey under any circumstance. But, as I see it, no one ever achieves this goal; or else, we could reach sinless perfection. Not even Paul, our example of Christian living, ever claims to have completed his pursuit of perfection (Phil. 3:11-16; 1 Cor. 11:1; 1 Tim. 1:15-16).¹² Therefore, since God wants us *to mortify evil behavior*, yet none of us totally can, realistically *this endeavor turns into a perpetual pursuit* (Rom. 6:12-16).

Summarizing verses 5-7, God commands believers to be fully accountable to "put to death" or *eradicate* the deviant sex-based activities listed in verse 5. For, they entrap participants in "idolatry" and are the primary contributing factor for why the "wrath of God" will condemn the lost.

"And now, also, you choose to complete putting aside all things, wrath, anger, evil, blasphemy, shameful speech out of your mouth." (Col. 3:8)

The verb “you choose to complete putting aside” (αποθεσθε) combines the preposition “απο”, which means *from*, with the verb “τιθημι”, meaning *to place or put*. This term occurs in the aorist imperative form just like “νεκρωσατε”, so it’s also a *command to complete the act* of setting aside the wicked attributes listed. But, unlike the first command, this verb is in the middle voice which emphasizes the same need to perform as the active voice does but also specifies *the subject is to target itself* to accomplish that feat. Therefore, believers are *charged* (imperative mode) *to complete the elimination* (aorist tense) of ungodly qualities by *choosing* (middle voice) to make it happen. And, the next few verses provide a formula for how we can fulfill this directive, along with the one in verse 5, by outlining a *procedure for putting off* the trait of lying. Forms of the verb “αποτιθημι” occur several more times in reference to *setting aside evil character* in the process of Christian growth (Rom. 13:12; Eph. 4:22, 25; Heb. 12:1; 1 Pet. 2:1).

“You are not to continuously choose to be made to lie unto one another after having chosen to complete putting off the old man with his practices and after having chosen to complete putting on the new *man*, which causes itself to continuously be made new again toward full knowledge according to the image of the one having completely created it; where there is not Greek and Jew, circumcision and uncircumcision, Barbarian, Scythian, slave, free; but, Christ exists as all things and in all things.” (Col. 3:9-11)

The only action verb and command (imperative mode)² in these three verses is “You are not to continuously choose to be made to lie” (μη ψευδεσθε).¹³ This Greek root transliterates into our term ‘pseudo’ and conveys the idea of “not” (μη) *speaking falsely or deceitfully*. Also, its middle/passive form indicates the subject “You” is to *act upon itself* (middle voice) so we won’t be influenced by *an external energy causing us* (passive voice) to lie.⁶ To identify this outside force, Paul cites “the old man” (παλαιον ανθρωπον) which is the venue through which Christians are tempted. So, it needs to be put off. If not, driven by secular philosophy and/or the Devil’s lure, this “old man” will *team up with our flesh and cause us to lie* (Eph. 2:1-3; 4:17-19, 27; 6:10-16).

The word “man” (ανθρωπον) is a generic term referring to any person; man, woman or child. So, in effect, all believers are ordered to “*continuously*” (present tense) cease lying. Finally, the reciprocal pronoun “one another” (αλληλους) indicates we’re to renounce telling fibs or half-truths, for all deception *harms oneself and other Body members*, not to mention our joint testimony to the lost.

The flow of action showing how we can achieve truthful behavior can be traced through the three participles which follow. The first, “after having chosen to

complete putting off” (απεκδυσαμενοι), is built from the prepositions “απο”, meaning *from*, and “εκ”, meaning *out*, affixed to the verb “δυω”, which means *to bind* (Col. 3:9). This triple word blend occurs only twice in the N. T. (Col. 2:15), however, forms of “εκδυω” occur five other times and convey the idea of *stripping, unclothing, or taking off* (Matt. 27:28, 31; Mark 15:20; Luke 10:30; 2 Cor. 5:4). When this meaning is applied, believers are *to divest ourselves away from* the lying ways of the “old man”. And, since this is a nominative plural participle, the “You” in the verb “ψευδεσθε” (to lie) serves as its subject. Also, when the sense conveyed by the middle voice is added, it specifies Christians are *to act upon ourselves* or *choose* to put off the old man.⁶

Lastly, this participle occurs in the aorist tense which stipulates its character undressing action *is to be completed*.¹¹ In addition, since aorist participial action (or being) *always precedes the action (or being) of other words it modifies*, the translation of “απεκδυσαμενοι” begins with the phrase “after having”.¹⁴ Together, these two concepts indicate believers must *first complete putting off* impulses of the “old man” before we can successfully stop fabricating lies.

Opening this section, I suggested some Translations can give a misconception about what verse 9 teaches. This is because they indicate *Christians have already put off the old man*. The KJV and ESV render this Aorist Participle with its Direct Object, ‘seeing that ye/you have put off the old man/self.’ Also, the NASV translates this phrase ‘since you have laid aside the old self’, and the NIV renders it ‘since you have taken off your old self’. These renderings change the meaning of this passage considerably.

Many other Versions, including *Young’s Literal Translation*, *The Godbey New Testament*, and *The Darby Translation* contain renderings similar to mine, ‘having put off (or *laid aside*) the old man’. And, this rendition doesn’t imply the act of “putting off the old man” has already been completed, but *it appropriately designates that believers still need to get rid of this negative influence*. Again, since I believe no Christian ever completes this process, we need to habitually undertake “putting off” sin each time we’re tempted.¹² More Versions validating how this verse should be translated are listed in **Appendix II**.

Furthermore, the KJV, ESV, NASV, and NIV render this same construction – a Middle Aorist Participle paired with an Imperative Verb – differently in all other contexts I’ve been able to identify than they do in Colossians 3:9 (Eph. 4:25, 6:13, 6:14-15; James 1:21; 1 Pet. 1:13; 2:1-2). In these six additional contexts, **All Four Versions Render the Aorist Participle(s) as Unfinished Action**. This point plus additional evidence which demonstrates how these and similar constructions should be translated are also detailed in **Appendix II**.

This matter is important because some Bible teachers use these English renderings of Colossians 3:9 to prove Christians no longer have the “old man”, or its influence has been effectively cancelled. Moreover, this context is sometimes used to support the belief: In conjunction with the annulment of our “old man” at salvation, believers are constantly and automatically led by the Spirit to produce good works. These positions will be examined later in this article.

Therefore, to accentuate the meaning portrayed by the aorist middle participle “ἀπεκδυσαμενοι” (to put off), Christians need to *complete the act* (aorist tense) of *choosing* (middle voice) to reject lying’s lure as *the first step* (aorist participle) in developing a morally-driven-conscience to tell the truth. And, since we still sin, *this activity needs to become our routine*. **The Context Supports This Continuous-Action-Concept** since *this participle is paired with the present tense verb* “ψευδεσθε” (to lie). In conclusion, the tenses of both action words teach two meaningful principles. First, the participle’s aorist tense *requires us to have the action of “putting off” completed*, which underscores our accountability to God. Then, the present tense verb speaks to the reality of Christian growth: *Our character has constant need for renewal* as long as we occupy these mortal bodies (Rom. 8:11-13).

Having meticulously dissected the first aorist participle, let’s look at the second to see how it aids in telling the truth (Col. 3:10). This word, “after having chosen to complete putting on” (ενδυσσαμενοι) unites the preposition “εν”, meaning *in*, and the verb “δύω”, which means *to bind*. This term’s connotation is exactly opposite to the meaning of the first participle, so it denotes *being bound in* or *clothed with* the “new man” (νέον). The word “man” (ανθρωπον) doesn’t occur in the Greek text, but the intent is for it to be distributed to the word “new” from the prior phrase, “the old man”. Linguistic support for this practice is found in the conjunction “and” (και) which connects these two phrases.

Since “ενδυσσαμενοι” is also an aorist participle, it emphasizes *this action must be completed before* one can stop lying, which is why it’s translated “after having”.¹⁴ And, just like the first, this second participle occurs in the middle voice which specifies *believers are to cause themselves* or *choose* (middle voice) to put on the “new man”.⁶ Therefore, this term adds the practice of “putting on the new man” to “putting off the old man” as a second element needed for implementing honesty. The following references apply the same verb “ενδύω” (to put on) to acts of spiritual growth (Rom. 13:12, 14; Eph. 4:24; 6:11, 14; Col. 3:12; 1 Thess. 5:8).

The third participle involved in this pursuit-of-truthfulness is, “which causes itself to continuously be made new again” (τον ανακαινουμενον). Since this participle is in the same form as “the new man” (τον νεον), it designates “the new man” as

its subject “which causes itself” (middle voice) “to continuously be made” (passive voice) new again”.⁶ Before evaluating how this present middle/passive participle relates to this context, we must first identify its meaning.

The word “ανακαινουμενον” consists of the preposition “ana”, indicating *repetition*, joined to the verb “καινωω”, which means *to make new or innovate*.¹⁵ It portrays the thought a believer’s character needs *to be renovated* back to its original created state which existed prior to the introduction of corrupting sin. This term appears only one other time and occurs in a similar present middle/passive form, so the renewal happening in our “inner” (εσω) *man* is described in the same way it occurs in our “new *man*” (2 Cor. 4:16; Col. 3:10). Also, this concept of renewal is seen in two passages which contain a noun form of this same root and one time in a synonym (Rom. 12:2; Titus 3:5; “ανα νεουσθαι” in Eph. 4:23).

So, how does the meaning of “ανακαινουμενον” relate to the action words which occur before it? And, what initiates the “new” man’s continual renewing effect within us? Grammatically, “the new *man*” (τον νεον) is in the accusative case which makes it the *direct object* of “ενδυσαμενοι” (to put on). Since this aorist participle appears in the middle voice, it indicates *Christians need to first act upon ourselves or choose to put on “the new man” before we can experience its renovating properties*.¹⁴

In conclusion, how does this quartet of action words interrelate? The verb “ψευδεσθε” which commands us to stop lying occurs first in order but is actually the operative end-goal of the aorist participles “απεκδυσαμενοι” and “endusamenoi” since their action must happen first.¹⁴ Therefore, this entire-honesty-makeover is facilitated by these aorist middle participles which identify *Believers’ Choice as the principal factor initiating the acts of “putting off” and “putting on”*. So, **As Subjects of these Participles, Our Decisions Launch this Spirit-Enabled New-Man-Renewal** (ανακαινουμενον). Last of all, this present tense participle and verb “ψευδεσθε” both suggest we can expect our transformation to be *ongoing* and, thus, *progressive*. So, we are truly ‘A Work in Progress’ (Phil. 3:10-16).¹²

Next, let’s consider the “full knowledge” (επιγνωσιν) to which we’re being renewed (Col. 3:10). This word is used to represent *mystery truth* which details how we become members in the Body and how we’re to successively behave (Col. 1:9-10; 2:2; 1 Tim. 2:4; 2 Tim. 2:25; 3:7; Tit. 1:1; see also Heb. 10:26; 2 Pet. 1:8). Incorporating this thought, the noun “επιγνωσιν” represents *the body of truth* which describes both Christian character and the restoration process by which it can be obtained. Then, this “full knowledge” is said to be “according to” (κατ’) or *in line with* the “image” (εικονα) of the one who created the “new *man*” (Rom.

8:29; 1 Cor. 15:49; 2 Cor. 3:18; Col. 1:15). Thus, this *mystery truth* is **The Standard which Contains Detailed Procedures Used to Aid Our Conformity with the Savior** (Rom. 6:16, 19, 22).

As already discussed, when Christians attempt to pursue sanctification by means of the Law of Moses or any humanly generated philosophy, we'll fail miserably. For, the Law makes us feel condemned and men's theories offer no spiritual benefit, so both reap the same consequence – a corrupting default delivered by our “old man” (Rom. 6:14; 7:14-25; Gal. 5:16-18, 23; Eph. 4:14, 17-24; Col. 2:8; 1 Tim. 6:20-21). Though God initially gave the Law for Israel to follow, it no longer directly applies to Body members other than specific principles which the Spirit repeats from it recorded in the Church Epistles. For, today the essence of the Law isn't facilitated by the Spirit but is now defined as “**the commandments and teaching of men**” (Gal. 2:17-21; Col. 2:22).

Next, Paul divulges how “the new *man*” originated. The participle “the one having completely created” (κτισαντος) is active in voice indicating God was the *vigor* or *energy* behind the new man's emergence (Col. 3:10). When He is involved in an *act of creation*, it always consists of *something coming into existence out of nothing*, just like the original creation recorded in Genesis. (Col. 1:16-17; Heb. 11:3). Nevertheless, Paul isn't speaking about that creation here. For, he exclusively uses terms with regard to a “new creation” in reference to the Body of Christ. This is a separate spiritual entity which wasn't part of the revelation describing God's original creation of or intent for the universe (2 Cor. 5:17; Gal. 6:15; Eph. 2:10, 15; 3:9; 4:24).

But, God revealed this purpose of *the newly created man* when He “made known” the formerly un-prophesied “mystery” truth (1 Cor. 2:6-8; Eph. 1:9-10; 3:1-12; Col. 1:24 – 2:3). And, since His creative act is expressed here by another aorist participle “κτισαντος”, this action was *fully completed* because, unlike us, what God does *He can do perfectly* (Col. 3:10). Furthermore, this word-form indicates His creation of the “new *man*” *was accomplished before* its renewing ability existed for believers to draw upon.¹⁴

The phrases “new man” and ‘Body of Christ’ are inseparable since both describe the “new creation” in which all believers have access to the Father (Eph. 2:14-18). And, Colossians 3:11 provides additional information explaining *the diversified makeup of this Body*. So, in the Church, there are no ethnic or religious differences between “Greek and Jew”; the Law required practice of “circumcision” no longer has meaning; a “Barbarian” or “Scythian” are equally welcome; and social status such as being a “slave” or “free” has nothing to do

with our identity. **“But, Christ exists as all things and in all things”** (emphasis mine).

When Christians engage to put on the new man, we implement God’s prescribed solution for getting rid of “old man” scourges and becoming clothed with the qualities of Christ (Rom. 13:14). *This endeavor should be central to the focus of all believers.* For, when we conform to our Savior’s image, who is the “fullness” of God, we can experience the “all things” He represents – everything holy, righteous and good (Col. 1:19; 2:9-10; 3:11). And becoming Christ-like is the way we fulfill our purpose to represent Him to the world.

In conclusion, the teaching of Colossians 3:5-11 completely harmonizes with the procedures for spiritual growth observed in other contexts (Rom. 8:11-14; Gal. 5:16-18; Eph. 5:18; Phil. 2:12-13). For, all these portions designate that Christians first need to make a choice to “be filled in” and “walk” by the Spirit, then He will provide heavenly capacity to understand and obey all biblical instruction intended for us.

In this context, verses 9-11 are sandwiched between verses 5-8, which *target eradicating sin*, and verses 12 and following, which *list godly behaviors we should adopt*. For, these three verses contain a bridge-of-divine-methodology which provides access to achieve both goals. And, the fact Paul showcases the sin of lying as an example of discarding evil works should catch our attention since truth-telling is also identified as the first trait we’re told to put on in a parallel passage (Eph. 4:25). Whether between husbands and wives, Body members, us and God, or with unbelievers, **Real Friendships are Always Founded on Honesty**. Contrariwise, when our activities are two-faced, we’ll cultivate phony relationships. But, with God’s approach we’re able to develop qualities pleasing to Him, aid in the cessation of our own sin, help unify Body members, and demonstrate “the truth in love” to all (Eph. 4:3-15; 5:23-33; 6:23-24; Gal. 5:22-23; Col. 3:14).

A Grammatical Exhibition

Having considered Colossians 3:5-11 in regard to the Spirit/believer interface, now let’s contemplate an expanded translation of the following section since it helps cement many of the points of grammar we’ve covered. A targeted spotlight will be placed on the abundance of *active, middle, or middle/passive voices; aorist and present tenses; and imperative commands*. For, these forms are the Greek language’s way of stressing a *Christian’s responsibility to yield to the Spirit* so we can be renewed by gaining the qualities of Christ.

Col. 3:12-15: “Therefore, as the elect of God, saints, and ones having been loved, you choose to complete putting on (ενδυσασθε – **middle, aorist-command**) compassions of mercy, kindness, humility of mind, gentleness, long suffering, continuously choosing to be caused to hold up (ανεχομενοι – **middle/passive**) one another and continuously choosing to be caused to forgive (χαριζομενοι – **middle/passive**) yourselves if anyone might have a fault against anyone; and according as the Lord completely forgave you, likewise you *completely forgive*. Also, on top of all these things *put on* (implied from v. 12) love which exists as the bond of perfection; and continuously let the peace of Christ actively rule (**active, command**) in your hearts unto which you were called in one body, and you are to continuously choose to be made (γινεσθε – **middle/passive, command**) thankful ones.”

Col. 3:18-21: “Wives, you continuously choose to be made subordinate (υποτασσεσθε – **middle/passive, command**) to the husbands as it is proper in the Lord. Husbands, you actively continuously love (αγαπατε – **active, command**) *your* wives and you continuously choose not to be made bitter (μη πικραινεσθε – **middle/passive, command**) against them. Children, you actively continuously obey (**active, command**) the parents according to all things, for this exists as well pleasing in the Lord. Fathers, you aren’t to actively continuously aggravate (**active, command**) your children in order that they may not lose heart.”

Col. 3:22-25: “Slaves, you’re to actively continuously obey (**active, command**) the fleshly masters according to all things, not in eye service as men pleasers, but in singleness of heart, while continuously choosing to be made to fear (φοβουμενοι – **middle/passive**) the Lord. Whatever you might do, from the soul, continuously choose to be caused to work (εργαζεσθε – **middle/passive, command**) as to the Lord and not to men, while knowing that you will cause yourselves to receive (απολημψεσθε – **middle**) the repayment associated with the inheritance from the Lord. You actively continuously serve (**active, command**) the Lord Christ! For, the one continuously doing injustice will cause himself to receive back (κομισεται – **middle**) the unjust thing he completed doing, and no partiality exists.”

Col. 4:1-4: “Lords (κυριοι), you continuously choose to be caused to present (παρεχεσθε – **middle/passive, command**) the right and equal treatment to the slaves while knowing that you continuously have a Lord (κυριον) in heaven. You (believers) actively continuously persevere (**active, command**) in relation to prayer while watching in it in thanksgiving and, at the same time, continuously choosing to be caused to pray (προσευχομενοι – **middle/passive**) concerning us in order that God might open a door associated with the message for us to speak

the mystery of Christ, because of which I (Paul) have chosen to begin and continue to be made bound (or *imprisoned*; δεδεμαι – **middle/passive**), in order that I might manifest it as it's necessary for me to speak.”

Col. 4:5-6: “You actively continuously walk (**active, command**) in wisdom toward those outside while continuously choosing to be made to buy up (or *purchase*; εξαγοραζομενοι – **middle/passive**) the time. Your message is always to be in grace, as those having chosen to begin and continue to be made seasoned (ηρτυμενος – **middle/passive**) in relation to salt, with the outcome for you to know how it's necessary to continuously choose to be made to answer (αποκρινεσθαι – **middle/passive**) each one.”

Believers should take note of this barrage of *Directions-Calling-For-a-Response* packed into such a short context as we strive to implement godly traits. For, in particular, **The Middle and Middle/Passive Voice Forms Underscore Our Need to Make Volitional Choices** in the process of accessing the Spirit so we'll be able to put these behaviors into practice (Gal. 5:16-18; Eph. 2:10; 5:18). Expanded and highlighted Translations of ten other contexts relating to sanctification are chronicled in **Appendix III**.

Section 2: Does the Spirit Cause Our Good Works?

Many Christians hold the view: We have no part in the production of good works; instead, the Holy Spirit causes us to do them. And, though it seems like we decide between right and wrong, in reality the Spirit fully controls all of our thoughts and choices. However, I'm certain the contexts covered so far provide ample support specifying *Body Members play a definite part in the process of spiritual growth*.

On the other hand, **This Causation View has Wide-Ranging Support from Many Passages** in the Old Testament, earthly teachings of Jesus, and Acts period. These portions explain how the Spirit will function when all of God's New Covenant promises made to His Chosen People come to fruition. Numerous contexts from these parts of Scripture will be addressed later, but first I want to focus on more passages from Paul's Letters which are sometimes used to support the belief: *Christians don't have a decision-making-role in our spiritual journey . . .*

. . . 'Because Our Old Man Has Been Crucified'

This concept is derived from Romans 6:6. But, if this truth means the “old man” no longer has an influence on believers, why are we still *instructed to put it off*

(Eph. 4:22; Col. 3:9)? In similar manner, Galatians 5:24 says “**the ones associated with Christ completed crucifying the flesh**”, so what should we make of exhortations not to walk in the flesh (Gal. 5:16; Rom. 8:12-13)?

Along this same line, Ephesians 2:15 says believing Jews and gentiles were created “**into one new man**”, so why are we still taught to “put on” the new man (Eph. 4:24; Col. 2:10)? Finally, if Galatians 3:27 means everyone who was baptized into Christ has “**put on Christ**” in every way, why are we still encouraged to “put on” His traits (Rom. 13:14; Eph. 4:24; Col. 3:10)? Join my examination of these four passages to determine how these seemingly incompatible concepts can co-exist.

Romans 6:6

“While knowing this, that our old man was completely crucified with *Christ* in order that the body of sin may be completely deactivated with the outcome for us to no longer continuously serve sin.”

This verse states our “old man was completely crucified with (συνεσταυρωθη) *Christ*”. This verb is composed of the preposition “συν”, meaning *with*, and the verb “σταυρωω”, which means *to crucify*. The word “*Christ*” is inserted because the “old man” part of us was crucified “with” (συν) someone, who is Jesus when we “**died**”, “**were baptized**”, and “**buried with**” Him (Rom. 6:2-4). Together, this verb’s indicative mode and aorist tense *state its action has been completed*. This combination of grammar conveys a thought equal to our *English past tense*, so it emphasizes our “old man” was crucified *by God* (passive voice) *at the point of salvation*.¹¹ The full ramifications of this **Aorist Indicative Form** with regard to how the crucifixion of our “old man” relates to spiritual growth will be elaborated in a few paragraphs after analyzing the entire meaning of this verse.

Paul goes on to say our old man was crucified “in order that” (ινα) or *for the purpose that* “the body of sin may be completely deactivated” (καταργηθη). The subjunctive mode of this verb indicates its activity is *conditioned upon* something triggering it. The divine act which caused our “old man” to be crucified fulfills this conditional requirement for “the body of sin” to have been “completely” (aorist tense) *rendered inoperative*. The sole reason this aorist tense action was able to be *completed* is because *God accomplished it*, for it bypassed sinful man who lacks the capacity to fully complete any spiritual act.

This finished action is followed by the phrase, “with the outcome for us to no longer continuously serve (δουλευειν) sin.” This infinitive contains the same root found in the noun “slave” (δουλος) and, as such, means *to render service as a*

slave. Infinitives specify “outcome”, so this form combined with its present tense designates we’re in a *resultant* and *continuous state* of not having to serve sin. Note, this phrase doesn’t say we won’t sin or can’t sin; it simply means *we’re now in a position we don’t have to sin*, unlike our former state when we were bound by evil as unbelievers (Rom. 8:7-8; 2 Cor. 4:3-4; Eph. 2:2; 2 Tim. 2:26).

A lot of Scripture either says or implies Christians can “**sin**” which is why we’re repeatedly told not to (Rom. 6:12-16; 14:23; 1 Cor. 8:12). So, what God simply accomplished by crucifying and deactivating our old man is: **Sin No Longer has a Strangle-Hold on Us**. But now, *We’re Able to Choose to Do Right* in our new Spirit-Livened-State where we possess the ability to “desire” and “energize” His “good-pleasure” (Rom. 6:16; 8:9-16; Gal. 2:18-21; Eph. 2:1-5; Phil. 2:12-13). In addition, comparable to our responsibility to put off the “old man”, Christians are to choose not to live under the Law for it too has been *crucified* and *deactivated* in relation to us. Verses supporting this scenario are detailed in **Appendix IV**.

Now let’s return to the significance the **Aorist Indicative Verb** “συνεσταυρωθη” (was crucified with) has in this verse. Since This Grammatical Combination portrays the same meaning as our English Past Tense, it ‘indicates’ (indicative mode) *this act of crucifixion was completed* (aorist tense) *at a past point of time* by God. This concept of finality with regard to what God accomplished at salvation stands in stark contrast to the lack of finality in a Christian’s ongoing need for spiritual growth. So, this is the reason **We Haven’t Seen Aorist Indicative Verbs in Portions Describing Our Part in The Sanctification Process**.

Furthermore, while writing this article, I came to realize *Aorist Indicative Verbs are absent in all instructions which direct believers about how we acquire holiness*. This Blanket Statement would be incredible if it weren’t true. However, I’m confident it is both observable and establishes the principle: **Life-Style Portions in the Church Epistles Never Teach a Christian Ever Completely Puts Off the Old Man or Puts On the New Man**. Therefore, this *Single Grammatical Structure Separates Scripture Portions* which define God’s accomplished acts in our salvation from ones describing the endless practices believers need to implement for spiritual growth. This *Same Principle of Grammar* will be confirmed in several more upcoming expositions.

In addition, the surrounding context of Romans 6:6 also indicates Christians need to make choices so we won’t “serve sin”. First, those who are saved are told, “**You continuously choose to be made to consider**” (λογιζεσθε) yourselves as “**living to God**” (v. 11). This verb indicates we’re *commanded* (imperative mode) to be in *an ongoing process* (present tense) of *exercising choice* (middle voice) to

be caused (passive voice – from the Spirit’s power) “to consider” we’re dead “in relation to sin” and living “in relation to God”.⁶ Then, the following context contains *numerous imperative mode commands to entreat believers* to master the sin-tendency in our “members” as we present our bodies as “instruments of righteousness to God”. By responding to these directives, we can achieve the end results of “righteousness” and “holiness” in character (Rom. 6:11-16, 19, 22; see also 6:4).

In summary, Romans 6:6 is the first passage where we observe an **Aorist Indicative Verb** describing what God accomplished when He, as the catalyst, initiated our saved condition of not being slaves to sin. And other Aorist Indicative Verbs in the immediate context which validate this same principle are “απεθανομεν” (we died), “εβαπτισθημεν” (were baptized), and “συνεταφημεν” (were buried with – vv. 2-4). Then, directly following these, no less than **Five Imperative Mode Verbs** occur to emphasize how He holds us accountable to make obedient choices so we can advance in holiness (Rom. 6:11-13, 16, 19, 22; Gal. 6:8; 1 Tim. 6:12, 19). Two of these Commands occur in the Aorist Tense which requires the action to be completed. However, just like other contexts where Aorist Imperative Verbs express God’s desire for us to be fully transformed, practically speaking we find ourselves in a constant pursuit of perfection (Eph. 6:11, 13-14; Col. 3:5; 2 Tim. 2:3).¹²

Galatians 5:24

“Also, the ones associated with Christ completed crucifying the flesh with the passions and desires.”

The word translated “completed crucifying” (εσταυρωσαν) is also an **Aorist Indicative Verb** which refers to *the completed action which happened at the past time of our salvation*.¹¹ Just like the concept “our old man” was crucified but we still possess the need to put it off; in the same way, our “flesh” was crucified when we died with Christ yet we need to decide not to conduct our “walk” in concert with it. This idea is corroborated just a few verses earlier in a portion already covered which explicitly describes how our post salvation lifestyle works. It states we won’t “fulfill the desires of the flesh” when we “continuously walk” in the Spirit, but this reality can only happen “if” we first choose to be led by the Spirit (Gal. 5:16-18). When we follow this formula, our conscious choices will lead us to produce the “fruit of the Spirit” (vv. 22-23). When we don’t, we’ll be dominated by the flesh and produce “works of the flesh” (vv. 19-21).

In addition, verse one of this chapter contains an **Aorist Indicative Verb** expressing another fully accomplished act which took place at salvation, “Christ completely freed (ηλευθερωσεν) us in relation to freedom” (Gal. 5:1). Then,

immediately Paul says, “Therefore, you are to actively continuously stand (στηκετε) and you are not to continuously choose to be restrained (ενεχεσθε) again by the yoke of bondage”. These two commands in the Imperative Mode necessitate an obedient response before their verb action can occur. And, their present tense forms indicate we need to “continuously” stand and restrain ourselves from the lingering “bondage” of sin (Rom. 6:16).

Observe how the noun “bondage” (δουλειας) or *slavery* in Galatians 5:1 is built on the same root as the infinitive “to serve” (δουλευειν) in Romans 6:6. Then, notice how both contexts connect this slavery with being under the Law of Moses. When believers interact with the Law, “sin” takes advantage and does its dirty work (Rom. 6:6 – 7:25; Gal. 5:1-26). Two conclusions are apparent from these passages. First, when we put ourselves under the methodology of the Law, sin will follow since, in this dispensation, the Law always works in conjunction with and promotes the “flesh” (Rom. 13:14). Second, we should recognize today the Holy Spirit doesn’t function in combination with the precepts of the Law. Consequently, if we want to obtain Christian character, we need to employ *methods outlined in the Church Epistles* which explain how our Spirit-connection actually works (Rom. 6:14; Gal. 5:18, 23).

Galatians 3:27

“For, as many as were completely baptized into Christ, you chose to completely put on Christ.”

Again, the word “were completely baptized” (εβαπτισθητε) is an **Aorist Indicative Verb**, another *past tense concept* describing what took place at the point of salvation.¹¹ Additionally, its passive voice indicates *an outside source* (the Spirit) *caused our baptismal port of entry* into the Body of Christ (1 Cor. 12:12-13; Gal. 3:28). This concept is followed by the verb, “you chose to completely put on” (ενεδυσασθε) which is in the **Aorist Indicative Middle Form**. So, it specifies a *statement of fact* (indicative mode) *which indicates believers participate* (middle voice) *in this completed act* (aorist tense).

This observation may incite the reaction, ‘But, believers don’t play any part in salvation since God does all of that work!’ In response, I would say, ‘Yes’ and ‘No’. ‘Yes’, believers do have a part in salvation, that is, we *believe* or *exercise faith* to initiate the process, which is what the middle voice suggests. This idea is supported by at least 20 prior appearances of the noun and verb forms of the word “faith” or “believing” (Gal. 2:16 – 3:27). Also, I would answer ‘No’ since I’m convinced God’s elect willingly and gladly *exercise Saving Faith initiated by the Holy Spirit* at our Spiritual Baptism (Eph. 2:8-9; Phil. 1:28-29; 1 Tim. 1:14).

In summary, at salvation we “put on” (ἐνεδυσασθε) Christ. This verb’s **Aorist Indicative Form** denotes *we completely received* His righteousness but only in a *positional sense*, for we still need to “**put on the Lord Jesus Christ**” (Rom. 13:14; see also Rom. 13:12; Eph. 4:24; 6:11, 14; Col. 3:10, 12; 1 Thess. 5:8). None of the eight passages just cited, which all contain forms of the verb “ἐνδύω”, convey the idea *putting on* the “new man” has been completed since none of them include **Aorist Indicative Verbs** to refer to the process of Christian growth. Instead, all the aorist tense action words are paired with **Imperative** or **Subjunctive Verbs** or within **Participles** and **Infinitives**. None of these combinations in themselves designate completed action.¹¹ Also, since all eight contexts contain **Middle Voice** action words, again *Christian choice is stressed as central* to the practice of sanctification (Rom. 13:14; Col. 3:10).

Ephesians 2:15

“. . . after having deactivated the law of commandments in ordinances in order that in Himself He might completely create the two into one new man while making peace.”

This verse is nestled in a passage describing how Jesus’s work on the cross “deactivated” the “Law” – the “wall” which separated Jews and gentiles (Eph. 2:14-15). Here, the “new man” (καὶνον ἄνθρωπον) is identified as a *completed creation* and equated with “one body” (ἐνὶ σωματί) – the Body of Christ (vv. 16-22; Eph. 1:23; Col. 3:10-11). The existence of this finished-organism hinges on the **Aorist Subjunctive Verb**, “He might completely create” (κτίσῃ). Though this verb is in the subjunctive mode which specifies *conditional action*, unlike men, *God can complete* (aorist tense) any act needed to fulfill this mode’s *requirement*.

So, after stating the construction of the “new man” was finalized by God, the ensuing context details *the resultant condition Body members have* such as “**peace**” with and “**access to**” the Father as well as being the “**dwelling of God in the Spirit**” (Eph. 2:18-22). Although this passage focuses on *the new man’s standing before God* and not on our lifestyle, other portions instruct us to “put on” traits consistent with our newly created “new man” (Eph. 4:24; Col. 3:10).

Summarizing: Rom. 6:6; Gal. 3:27; 5:24; Eph. 2:15

In these four contexts, our “old man” and “flesh” were crucified when the “new man” was created and we “put on” Christ. These divine acts are primarily expressed by **Aorist Indicative Verbs** which like our English Past Tense describe *Completed Action*. And, since we are spiritually alive as a result of these

divine acts, God wants us to respond by tapping into power from His Spirit who we've received to bring about character change.

At this point, I believe it's profitable to consider an opposing theological view which circulates in Christendom. For, it arises from applying teaching from the above four passages as well as other contexts to *support the idea we are presently in a perfect righteous state before God* instead of simply occupying a positional, righteous standing.

The claim: 'God doesn't See Us as Sinners'

Some Christians hold the conviction we shouldn't view ourselves as sinners since God accepts us as holy and blameless in Christ. Regarding this idea, years ago a brother approached me since he knew I had some knowledge of Greek grammar. He had previously seen the verb of being "**I am**" (εἰμι) in First Timothy 1:15 occurs in the *present tense form* which would indicate Paul identified himself as the "**chief**" of "**sinners**" when he penned the Letter. And, if this is the intention, it would mean we too are "sinners" since the context teaches Paul is the pattern for all those saved (v. 16). When I confirmed this element of grammar does refer to *his present saved state*, this brother was troubled and verbalized he didn't think this could be correct. Then, he stated he believed this *label of sinner* defined Paul's pre-conversion condition.

After hearing his reply, I redirected our chat to the latter part of Romans 7 where Paul describes himself as a sinner multiple times. He again responded he didn't think this section refers to Paul's saved state either. The reason for sharing this exchange is to make the point: If we come to see textual evidence which challenges a conviction we currently hold, after studying and if pertinent Scripture warrants, we should be willing to change our stance. Unfortunately, all too often, believers tend to discount new data in favor of defending existing beliefs. Having said this, let's take a close look at Romans chapter 7 to see what it teaches concerning Paul's spiritual condition.

Romans 7:7-25

Beginning in verse 7, Paul explains when he lived in Judaism he knew what "**sin**" was because the Law of Moses defined it. The particular sin he cites as an example is "**lust**" (ἐπιθυμίαν – Gal. 5:16) or *covetousness*, which is the tenth commandment. Then, he says when he saw the Law's true meaning, "**it produced all lust in me for apart from the law sin is dead**" (Rom. 7:8).

Continuing this spiritual autobiography, he states, “**at one time I was continuously living apart from the law.**” The verb “I was continuously living” (εζων) is in the imperfect tense which denotes *continuous action in past time*. So, even though the Law existed some 1400 years prior to Paul’s birth, he’s saying until God opened his mind to its real definition of “lust”, *he was living apart from grasping the Law’s message of condemnation*. However, *his eyes were opened at conversion*, so “**after the commandment had come, sin completely livened up**” (ανεζησεν – **Aorist Indicative** – Rom. 7:9; Acts 9:1-19). Before that time, he was deceived and essentially living “apart from the law” since he viewed himself as “righteous” and thought he kept it blamelessly (Rom. 7:8; Phil. 3:6).

Then, he says, “**I died**” (απεθανον – Rom. 7:10). Just like the verb expressing sin “completely livened up”, this second **Aorist Indicative Verb** also refers to a *completed statement of fact*.¹¹ And, both verbs describe what happened to Paul when he was saved since they refer to the moment he realized “**the commandment**” didn’t award him “**life**” but, instead, condemned him to “**death**” (Rom. 7:10; Phil. 3:6; Deut. 30:1-10, 15, 19). At that point, he no longer had prideful ego leading him to think he was perfect, “**for sin having taken opportunity through the commandment completely deceived** (εξηπατησεν) **me and, through it, completely killed** (απεκτεινεν) **me**” (Rom. 7:11). This third and fourth **Aorist Indicative Verb** augment the first two to conclude Paul’s description of *actions completed at his conversion*.

The primary goal of this context is to help Christians appreciate the true essence of the Law of Moses and how it affects us today. So, the next statement encapsulates its core-principle, “**So that indeed, the law is holy, and the commandment is holy and righteous and good**” (Rom. 7:12). Then, the rest of this chapter illustrates how the Law represents God’s perfect righteousness and how sinful man can’t measure up. In this presentation, Paul’s sinfulness is displayed as exhibit-number-one to prove this fact. Though some view verses 14-25 differently, I see three reasons this section exemplifies *Paul’s saved condition*.

First, prior to conversion, Paul didn’t think he sinned which contrasts with his present view of seeing fault in himself. For, in the past, he thought he was good enough to satisfy the Law’s requirement for earning eternal life (Rom. 7:9; Matt. 10:22; 19:16-22; Phil. 3:6; Deut. 30:15). Second, the use of *thirty present tense* verbs, participles and infinitives in this context confirm his *constant awareness* of his own sinfulness, which is opposite to how he formerly viewed himself as persistently self-righteousness (Rom. 8:7-8). Finally, Paul says he delights in the Law in his “**inner man**” (εσω ανθρωπον – v. 22). The adverb “inner” (εσω) occurs three other times which all represent the “new creation” of the Body and its “new

man”, the place where *spiritual renewal takes place in believers* (1 Cor. 5:12; 2 Cor. 4:16; 5:17; Eph. 2:15; 3:16).

Having established this passage speaks of Paul’s restored state, he says “**I continuously exist as fleshly, having been sold under sin**” (Rom. 7:14). The present tense verb of being “I continuously exist” (εἰμι) is the same term found in First Timothy 1:15, so it refers to his *present condition* which is also described as “fleshly” (σαρκινος). Therefore, this section begins by underscoring Paul’s “flesh” (σαρξ) and “sin” (αμαρτια) to **Define Who He Is** (vv. 17, 18, 20, 23, 25).

Next, he says, “**For I know that good doesn’t continuously dwell in me, that is continuously in my flesh**” (Rom. 7:18). The present tense verb of being “is continuously” (εστιν) again emphasizes *Paul’s present state of being* – he *persistently has no “good”* in his “flesh”, just sinful tendencies. Finally, verse 24 says, “**I am a wretched man.**” Even though a verb is absent in the Greek text, in cases such as these, a *present tense form of the verb of being is always understood*.¹⁶ Therefore, *this verse also brands Paul as* **A Vile Sinner Saved by Grace** (v. 25). It’s no accident the famous hymn *Amazing Grace* endures, for it captures this Bible based thought in its first stanza.

Consequently, First Timothy 1:15 and Romans 7:14-25 give credence to the doctrine believers should still identify ourselves as “sinners”. And, along with confirming our *prevailing sinful condition*, Romans 7 also teaches the remedy to obtain righteous character has nothing to do with keeping the Law. Therefore, we need to look elsewhere for a solution. And, we have seen the remedy is found in the Church Epistles which explain our judicial righteousness before the Father, and they provide Spirit-revitalizing-techniques for how we can flex our moral muscle against sin to successfully put off our old man and put on the new (Rom. 3:21-26; 5:1-2; 6:14-16; 7:4-6; 8:1-4; Gal. 2:15-21).

Summary: How the Spirit’s Power is Activated Today

As “sinners”, our “old man” was crucified when we became a living part of the “new creation”. Since then, we possess the “new man” or “inner man” where the indwelling Holy Spirit challenges us to live pleasing to the Father. In Christ, we are fully righteous before and acceptable to God yet, since we’re still defined by the desire to sin, we need to focus on “putting off the old man” and “putting on the new”. To accomplish this, *the revealed mystery truth* records traits we’re to put on and specifies the formulas and procedures by which we can activate divine power to implement them.

Moreover, as a Final Significant Literary Refrain, **More Than Two Hundred Middle and Middle/Passive Voice Action Words** exist in the Church Epistles which serve as *an Avalanche of Evidence illustrating how Christians play an integral part in the Sanctification Process*. Although much more could be said, the Scriptures covered are adequate to show **Our Volition is a Mandatory Factor Required to Take Each Step** down the sacred trail God wants us to “walk” (Rom. 6:4; Gal. 5:16; Eph. 2:10).

Section 3: New Covenant – Spirit-Caused Works

Now let’s shift to parts of the Bible which teach works are caused by the Holy Spirit. I’ll show these Scriptures were intended to govern the Nation of Israel and define God’s past and future work among them. Why is this important? Because if Christians are to develop spiritually and conduct effective ministry, our lifeline to the Spirit needs to align with how He actually functions today. So, the practice of applying revelation to Body members which was intended to describe His future work with Israel won’t result in divine-based actions but will negatively affect our ability to perform the mission we were sent to do. Therefore, this section contemplates prophecies delivered to God’s New Covenant People which define both the Kingdom He promised and events which will surround the advent of its associated Spirit.

Jeremiah 31:31-34

This is one of the most frequently cited passages describing God’s promises to Abraham’s descendants, most likely because it’s quoted in Hebrews 8:8-12. That context will be touched on later, but first let’s concentrate on what Jeremiah says. God will institute a “**new covenant** (διαθηκην καινην) **with the house of Israel**” which replaces the *old covenant*, the Law recorded in Books of Exodus through Deuteronomy (Jer. 31:31-32 – LXX [Jer. 38:31]).¹⁷ To conceptualize what this New Covenant entails, we can observe what Jeremiah’s thirty-first chapter reveals about the time Christ returns to reign over His people. After finishing this overview, we’ll focus on other O. T. passages which center on the Spirit’s relationship with these “new covenant” believers.

God’s overall purpose for the Nation of Israel is stated in Jeremiah 31:1, “**At that time’, declares the Lord, ‘I will be the God of all the families of Israel, and they shall be my people.’**” Later in the chapter, He reiterates this same truth, “**after those days . . . I will be their God, and they shall be my people**” (31:33). To accomplish this, He will exercise “**mercy**” on this “**faithless** (KJV – *backsliding*) **daughter**” and says, “**I will forgive their iniquity and their sin I will remember no**

more" (vv. 20, 22, 34). Historically, God established the basis for this "mercy" when He sent Messiah to secure redemption for their sin (Rom 3:25; Heb. 9:15).

After satisfying His own demand for perfection through the cross of Christ, God will look past the faults of those who He had **"scattered"** and regather a **"remnant of Israel"** (Jer. 31:7, 10). At this assemblage in **"Zion"** (Jerusalem), He will **"restore their fortunes"** (or *captivity*) then call **"the land of Judah"** an **"abode of righteousness"** and a **"holy hill"** (vv. 12, 23-24). At this point, Israel's **"hope"** will be realized: **"Again I will build you"** and **"I will turn their mourning into joy, and will comfort them, and give them joy for their sorrow . . . My people shall be satisfied with My goodness', declares the Lord"** (vv. 4, 13-14).

When this regathering occurs, God says, **"I will put my law within them, and on their heart I will write it; and I will be their God, and they shall be My people"** (Jer. 31:33 – emphasis mine). Note how His ultimate purpose of being Israel's "God" and them being His "people" is connected with the Law of Moses being written "on their heart" (Lev. 26:12; Rev. 21:3). With these promises in mind, let's examine other O. T. contexts which disclose additional events that will happen during this national renewal of Israel.

Ezekiel – 36 & 37

These chapters give a unique perspective on Israel's return to the Promise Land (Gen. 15:18-21; 26:3-5; Exod. 23:31). Ezekiel 36:26-27 states, **"I will give you a new heart and put a new spirit within you . . . And I will put My Spirit within you and cause you to walk in My statutes, and you will be careful to observe My ordinances."** In conjunction with the "new heart" promised in Jeremiah, this passage teaches the Jewish Remnant will also receive a "new spirit" and God's "Spirit". Then, the Holy "Spirit" will "cause" their "new" human "spirit" to keep the "statutes" and "ordinances" of the Law which is in their "new heart".

Next, the end product of this spirit/Spirit and heart renewal is stated, **"On the day that I cleanse you from all your iniquities, I will cause the cities to be inhabited, and the waste places will be rebuilt"** (Ezek. 36:33). In addition, those observing this miraculous occasion will say, **"This desolate land has become like the garden of Eden"** (v. 35). The primary idea portrayed by the phrase "garden of Eden" is *The Perfection of Creation* prior to when it was corrupted by sin. Therefore, this restoration won't only include a makeover of the Land, but *its occupants will be cleansed from "iniquities"* and, hence, *able to keep the Law of Moses* (36:27-32).

Directly following this section, similar truths related to this historic occasion are illustrated by a vision Ezekiel received of Dry Bones Being Made Alive, **"these**

bones are the whole house of Israel . . . Behold, I will open your graves . . . And I will put My Spirit within you, and you will come to life, and I will place you on your own land” (Ezek. 37:11, 12, 14). Then, God declares, “And they will no longer defile themselves with their idols, or with their detestable things, or with any of their transgressions; but I will deliver them from all their dwelling places in which they have sinned and will cleanse them. And they will be My people, and I will be their God” (v. 23).

Then, verse 24 adds, “And My servant David will be king over them, and they will all have one shepherd; and they will walk in My ordinances, and keep My statutes, and observe them.” And, “the nations will know that I am the Lord who sanctifies Israel, when My sanctuary is in their midst forever” (Ezek. 37:28).

Summarizing, **Israel Will Conduct a Spirit-Empowered Life Apart From Sin When Christ Returns to Rule Over Them “forever”** (v. 25; 2 Sam. 7:12-16; Isaiah 32:15; 44:3; 59:21; Jer. 33:14-16; Joel 2:28-29 – emphasis mine).

When these O. T. lessons are united, they sketch a fundamentally different picture of the relationship future Kingdom converts will have with the Spirit than the connection Body members have with the Holy Spirit today. For, these contexts plainly state when Israel receives the Spirit, He’ll “cause” them to keep the Law without sinning (Ezek. 11:17-21). And there’s no indication these disciples will exercise any choice in this course of events. As a consequence, when Christians try to apply passages like these, it results in massive confusion since the Spirit doesn’t work this way today. So, when these contexts and the Church Epistles are both taken at face value, *it’s clear the believer/Spirit bond under The New Covenant is significantly different than the Christian/Spirit relationship in the Church.*

‘But, Isn’t the New Covenant Already Fulfilled?’

This question is multi-faceted, so the answer is both ‘Yes’ and ‘No’. ‘Yes’, since two aspects of the New Covenant have been fulfilled, the Messiah’s death on the cross enabling God to forgive sin and the coming of the Holy Spirit (1 Cor. 11:25; 2 Cor. 3:6).¹⁸ Otherwise, ‘No’. For, *most New Covenant promises have yet to be fulfilled.* These include Christ’s physical return to earth, His eternal reign as King from Jerusalem, the God-caused return of Israel to the Promise Land, this Land’s transformation from desolation to fruitfulness, the sinless condition of God’s people, believer’s ability to keep the Law, universal recognition of Israel’s prominence, and subordination of all earthly authority under Christ’s feet.

Also, the two parts of the New Covenant which have come to pass only apply to the Church in a limited sense. First, **Today Christians Only Have Judicial**

Righteousness before God, for He “considers” us righteous even though sin still dwells in our members (Rom. 4:2-24; 6:12-13; 7:18). In contrast to our condition, the saved in the Kingdom will be sinless and *won't have an “old man” (old nature)* to put off. For, they'll instantly return to man's original created state of perfection by way of their “new” heart and “new” dual spirit/Spirit.

Second, there's a major difference with reference to how the Spirit operates in Church members when compared with future New Covenant believers. Based on passages from the Epistles which describe our growth process, **Currently, The Spirit Doesn't Cause Our Works or Function Jointly with The Law.**

‘And, Aren't We Under the New Covenant?’

Contrary to popular belief, we aren't, and there's no evidence supporting this view. Those who believe Christians are under the New Covenant often point to Hebrews 8 where the entire text of Jeremiah 31:31-34 is quoted. However, when this section is carefully reviewed, even though the truth God will write His Law on the heart of believers is contained in the quotation, *this fact is never applied to those who received this Letter* (8:10). Instead, the author applies just one concept from this lengthy quote, The Perfect Once-For-All Sacrifice of Christ, which is also *declared to directly fulfill this prophecy* (see also Heb. 10:14-18).

Based on its content, one issue the Book of Hebrews addresses is the question some Jewish believers had about whether Jesus' redemption should be considered a fulfillment of the New Covenant. For, most of its other promises hadn't yet occurred and one of these is specifically mentioned: The subordination of all things under Christ's feet (Heb. 2:5-8; 10:13). Today, Christians should recognize *the subjection of all earthly rulers still hasn't taken place*, although Christ has triumphed over *all heavenly spiritually wicked entities* at the cross. And this victory can enable us to thwart their attempts to influence our life (Eph. 1:20-22; 3:10; 6:10-20; Col. 2:13-15; 1 Pet. 3:21-22).

Furthermore, no statements in Hebrews or other Letters exist which indicate Church members are *under the New Covenant*. Quite the opposite. Three times Scripture states we're not “**under** (υπο) **the law**” and twice it says we're “**under** (υπο) **grace**” (Rom. 6:14-15; Gal. 5:18; see also Gal. 4:5, 21). As the phrase “under grace” is used, it means we're governed by the *standard of unmerited truth* contained in the “administration of the grace of God”, which became available when the “mystery” message was revealed and recorded (1 Cor. 2:6-8; Eph. 3:2-9; Col. 1:24 – 2:3).

For, this gospel preached by Paul repeatedly teaches we're not to rely on the Law in any way since *it's replaced by this newly revealed body of truth* (Rom. 6:14; 16:25-26; Gal. 1:11-12; 1 Tim. 1:3-11). Also, though Spirit-indwelt New Covenant believers will one day systematically keep the Law, today this same Law causes only one result – bondage to condemning sin (Rom. 8:1-4; 2 Cor. 5:17; Gal. 2:15-21; 5:1; Eph. 2:15; 4:24). We've already seen Paul describe himself as one “**sold under (υπο) sin**”, and when he tried to keep the Law, he simply sinned more (Rom. 7:14-25). In contrast, we've seen how our new morally-alive-condition acquired at salvation enables us to access power from the Spirit to overcome sin in our daily lives.

‘Then, Why are We called “Ministers of the New Covenant”?’

This is a great question. For, this phrase is a direct quote from Second Corinthians 3:6, which reads, “**who (God) made us completely sufficient ministers of the new covenant,¹⁸ not of the letter but of the Spirit, for the letter actively continuously kills but the Spirit actively continuously makes alive.**” Now, since we've already observed two aspects of the New Covenant do apply to Body members, Christ's payment for sin and our reception of the Spirit, these truths should be included in our proclamation of the gospel.

In this verse, the word “letter” (γραμμα) refers to the Law of Moses which was written on stone tablets (Exod. 31:18; 2 Cor. 3:3). But the key point that unlocks the intended meaning of this context is found in the last two verbs. Both verbs, “actively continuously kills” (αποκτεννει) and “actively continuously makes alive” (ζωοποιει), are in the indicative mode and present tense which indicates they *represent statements of fact about the present reality* produced by their subjects, “the letter” and “the Spirit”.

So, the first Present Indicative Verb describes the *constant death causing effect the Law* (“letter”) *currently produces* in Christians who try to keep it. In contrast with the condemnation we experience when engaging with the Law, when God restarts His program with Israel, *His people won't be condemned by the Law but have “glory”* since they'll no longer sin (2 Cor. 3:7, 10-11). Conversely, the second Present Indicative Verb, the “Spirit actively continuously makes alive” (ζωοποιει), illustrates how *believers have a source for constant victory over sin* when we choose to utilize the Spirit's power (Rom. 8:11; 2 Cor. 3:6, 17-18). This third chapter of Second Corinthians sends two distinct messages. First, the Spirit we possess is the same one promised in New Covenant prophecy (Luke 24:49; Gal. 3:14; Eph. 1:13). Second, the Holy Spirit presently functions in Church members totally separate from the Law.

‘Also, What about the Spirit’s Advent at Pentecost?’

This is another excellent question for, in Acts 2, Peter cites the Prophet Joel to explain the miraculous events which had just occurred. On the Day of Pentecost, he prefaced this quote by saying, “**this is the thing having been spoken through the prophet, Joel**” (Acts 2:16; Joel 2:28-32). The neuter demonstrative pronoun “this” (τοῦτο) is commonly used to *represent a concept*, and in this instance, it refers to *the Spirit-caused events of that day* which were observed by all present. Also, the verb of being “is” (ἐστίν) occurs in the present, indicative form which together with its subject “τοῦτο” indicate *that day’s current events existed as a factual reality* of what Joel portrayed in his prophesy. In other words, *these Spirit-generated-events* didn’t partially represent what Joel prophesied nor were they similar to it, but they *were an exact fulfillment of it* (Isa. 29:18; 61:1-3).

Now, have you ever noticed *sin is absent from the affairs of these thousands of converts* during the early Acts period (chaps. 2 – 7)? Some may think the sin of Ananias and Sapphira disputes this point. However, I believe their defiant act of not contributing all proceeds from the sale of their “**land**” indicates they didn’t have the indwelling Spirit (see Luke 12:32-33; 18:18-30; Acts 2:44-45; 4:32-37). For, the common translation where Peter asks Ananias what caused him to ‘lie to the Holy Spirit’, I consider correctly rendered ‘to falsify the Holy Spirit’.¹⁹ So, the reason for their death sentence was faking belief in Christ (Matt. 3:10; Luke 13:6-9; John 15:6). Also, some construe the *grievance* between Hellenistic and Hebrew Jews as sin based. However, the text doesn’t support this conclusion. In fact, this incident was dealt with as a logistical problem associated with rapid growth, and it was quickly resolved to the satisfaction of all (Acts 6:1-6).

Essentially, if the Jews who recognized Jesus as the Messiah had been joined by enough of their countrymen and leaders, this section indicates Christ would’ve returned to earth and established the prophesied Kingdom just illustrated by texts from Jeremiah and Ezekiel (Acts 3:11-26; 7:51-60). Obviously, the record of Acts affirms this didn’t happen. Then, God changed course and put another program into effect, His “new creation” of the Body of Christ. Descriptions of this spiritual entity can’t be found in O. T. prophecy or Jesus’ earthly teachings. For, the revelation explaining all aspects of the Church is found in the “administration (dispensation) of the mystery” (Rom. 16:25-26; 1 Cor. 2:6-8; Eph. 3:8-9).

Furthermore, “mystery” truth contained in Romans 11 explains how Israel’s rejection of Jesus as their Messiah propelled the Nation into a “partial hardening” (vv.11-27). Consequently, **To This Day, God Has Suspended His National Dealings with Israel** until a future time when He will reinstate all New Covenant promises with a “remnant” (Mark 3:28-29; Luke 12:10; Rom. 11:5, 11-32; Eph.

3:2, 9). Then, a resurgence of the miraculous events prophesied by Joel and seen in early Acts will once again occur along with the sinless state of believers.

‘Besides, Doesn’t Jesus Teach Grace?’

Yes, but only in the sense of what the word “grace” (χάρις), in itself, means. This Greek word is used 124 of its 157 times in the Epistles of Paul, Peter and Hebrews with regard to God’s “grace” in effect at the present time. Also, twelve more occurrences refer to the Body of Christ in Acts 11 – 28. Of its twenty-one remaining uses, most refer to the general idea of ‘favor’. The only passage in all four Gospel Accounts where “χάρις” is used to reference truth which administers God’s people is John 1:16-17, “**Because out of His fullness we all received, even grace in the place of grace; because the law was given through Moses, grace and truth came into being through Jesus Christ.**” Before the nature of this “grace” can be identified, it’s necessary to define this word’s basic meaning in addition to some Greek terms and grammar surrounding it.

The word “grace” (χάρις) is commonly recognized to mean *unmerited favor* because it is a *gift no one has earned*. Since this term in and of itself doesn’t designate the nature of this unmerited favor, each context must be consulted to arrive at its intended application. So, let’s look at the grammatical and historical setting of these two verses.

John’s Gospel records events in the earthly ministry of Jesus which are significant to those who “received” (ελαβομεν) out of His fullness (John 1:16). This verb is an **Aorist Indicative Form** which emphasizes *completed past tense action*.¹¹ Then, the word “fullness” (πληρωματος) refers to Christ’s *completeness* and symbolizes everything He is – His deity, holiness, righteousness and “truth” (John 14:6; Col. 1:19; 2:9). Now, what has John and his readers already received from Christ’s “fullness”? One of the nouns “grace” (χαριν) occurs in the accusative form which makes it the *direct object*, so this is what they received. This “grace” is connected with another “grace” (χαριτος) by the preposition “in place of” (αντι). Therefore, before discussing the specific nature of the words translated “grace”, it’s important to understand what the preposition connecting them means.

The preposition “αντι” is transliterated into our English prefix ‘anti’ and indicates one thing is *against* or *opposed to* something else. It can be consistently translated *instead of* or *in place of*, so this is *its basic meaning*. For, in Matthew 2:22 it designates Achelous’ reign in Judea was “in place of” his father Herod. Also, it describes Christ giving His life a ransom “in the place” many (Matt. 20:28). In Luke 1:20, many Versions translate it ‘because’ since their usual

rendition, ‘for’, doesn’t fit. But, when its basic meaning is applied, this verse reads, “**and, behold, you shall be silent and not able to speak until which day these things may come to pass in place of (αντι) which you didn’t believe My words.**” Also, believers are exhorted not to repay evil “in place of” evil, and long hair was given to women “instead of” a covering (Rom. 12:17; 1 Cor. 11:15).

Please know, this rendering of “αντι” isn’t original with me. For, in John 1:16, some Versions translate it ‘in place of’ (NIV, ALT, JMNT); others, ‘over against’ (YLT, Rotherham); and some, ‘in exchange for’ (MLV, JMNT). The reason for focusing on this word is because its use in the phrase “grace in the place of grace” indicates one kind of “grace” *takes the place of* another type of “grace”. And, the next verse begins to clarify what the nature of these two kinds of “grace” is, for the conjunction “because” (οτι) *connects the causal meaning* of verse 17 to explain verse 16.

Therefore, when the basic meaning of “χαριτος” is plugged in, the *unmerited favor* replaced is designated to be “**the law**” which “**was given through Moses**”. Many feel uncomfortable associating the term “grace” with the Law of Moses since the “administration of grace” is regularly contrasted with it (Romans 6:14; Eph. 3:2-3; 1 Tim. 4:11). However, the Law, which epitomizes His righteousness, wasn’t given to Israel because they deserved it, but God *freely provided this Revelation-of-Favor* to Abraham’s descendants in order to achieve His purpose with that Nation (Deut. 33:23; 1 Sam. 2:26; Ezra 9:8; Psalms 30:5; 89:17; 106:4; Prov. 3:1-4, 33-35; Isa. 60:10; Rom. 3:1).

Next, the phrase, “**grace and truth came into being through Jesus Christ**” defines the other “grace” (χαριν) they had “received” which *took the place of* this Mosaic-Law-Grace (John 1:17). Note, there’s no contrasting conjunction in the Greek text like ‘but’ between this phrase and “the law was given through Moses”, although some Versions add one. So, *instead of contrasting these two mentions of “grace”*, this verse introduces a central point of this Gospel – *the two are related*. And I believe this “grace” received through Jesus Christ is the prophesied New Covenant “grace” which includes the Law being placed in the “heart” of believers.

Think of Jesus’ life and how He personified “truth” (αληθεια – John 1:17). Then, note how “truth” is directly linked with the Law of Moses in three contexts of this Gospel alone (7:18-29; 8:12-20; 15:25-26). Keep in mind, the teachings of Jesus encompass an in-depth and literal application of the Law (Matt. 5:17-48; 19:16-22). Also, He lived under the Law as an exemplary Jew who never once broke it, for He was without “sin” (Gal. 4:4-5; Heb. 4:15; 7:26). Also, since He didn’t sin, His time on earth actually complied with God’s offer to award life to anyone who perfectly kept it (Deut. 30:1-10, 15-16; Matt. 19:16-22; Rom. 8:2-4; Gal. 2:16).

Although Jesus is God and was already faultless, through the course of living His life under the Law and without sin, He qualified Himself to be a sacrifice which fully satisfied the Father's righteous requirement of perfection (Rom. 3:21-26; Gal. 2:16; 3:10-14; 4:4-5). So, even today, when people trust in His work on the cross, the **"righteous standard of the law"** is fulfilled in us (Rom. 8:1-4). When this same redemption saves New Covenant believers, their Messiah's "grace and truth" will be the basis for the Law being placed on their "heart" and receiving the "Spirit of truth" who enables them to keep it (John 14:17; 16:13).

Therefore, the "grace" mentioned in John 1:16-17 which replaces the "grace" of the Law should be understood to mean *the unmerited favor prophesied in the O.T.* For, "mystery" truth which *explains how God's grace applies today* wasn't known when Jesus lived on earth, but everything distinct to the Body of Christ was still **"hidden in God"** (Rom. 16:25-26; Eph. 3:9). To emphasize this fact, Paul says if the **"rulers of this age had known"** God's **"wisdom"** contained in the **"mystery"**, **"they wouldn't have crucified the Lord of glory"** (1 Cor. 2:6-8).

In conclusion, **The "grace" Exemplifying Jesus' Earthly Instruction is the New Covenant, Law-Natured "grace" prophesied in the O.T.:** **"And, I will pour on the house of David and on the inhabitants of Jerusalem, the Spirit of grace (πνεῦμα χάριτος - LXX)¹⁷ and of supplication, so that they will look on Me whom they have pierced"** (Zech. 12:10; John 19:37). Just like Zechariah, Peter also connects the Messiah's sacrifice for sin with Spirit empowered "grace" connected with Kingdom glory, **"the prophets, who prophesied about the grace (χάριτος) for you, diligently sought and searched concerning this salvation"** which includes **"the sufferings of Christ and the glories after these things"** (1 Pet. 1:10-11). When this "grace" appears, everyone will know God kept all of His promises to Israel so He alone will get the glory (Ezek. 36:32, 36; 37:26-28).

Jesus Teaches New Covenant 'Works'

Having confirmed John 1:16-17 links Jesus' instruction with New Covenant "grace", let's look at more passages in the Gospel of John which explain His core teaching on this subject. The following contexts will demonstrate how the Lord defines salvation, what happens to those who receive the Spirit, and how these believers produce godly works.

John 3:16-21 – Salvation & 'Works' are Tied Together

John 3:16 is one of the most familiar Bible verses, for it expresses the simple fact "eternal life" is given to everyone who believes. If this was the complete message taught in this section, there wouldn't be reason to consider it further. However,

the following verses provide extra information which help define what this faith involves.

John 3:19 says when God's "light" came into the world through the Son, "men loved the darkness rather than the light, for their works were continuously evil". In this verse, the noun "works" (τα εργα) occurs the first of three times in this context, and each occurrence contains the article "τα" which *highlights* "εργα" as a *term of central focus* (vv. 19-21).²⁰ In addition, an article is paired with the nouns "light" (το φως – occurs three times), "evil" (ο φανλα), and "truth" (την αληθειαν) as well as the participle "the one continuously doing" (ο . . . ποιων). This also brands these *substantives as expressions of central focus* (vv. 20-21).¹⁶

"For, everyone continuously practicing the evil continuously hates the light and doesn't continuously come to the light in order that his works might not be exposed." (John 3:20)

In this verse, the word "continuously" is used to represent the *present tense form* of the first three action words. Adding the fact all three words are in the active voice, Jesus stresses how an unbeliever *constantly* and *unreservedly* operates to produce "evil . . . works" (ο φανλα . . . τα εργα) which keep him from coming to "the light" so *the nature of these works won't be exposed*.

"But the one continuously practicing the truth, continuously comes to the light in order that his works might be made manifest that they continuously exist as having caused themselves to begin and continue to be made to work in God." (John 3:21)

Essentially, the words possessing articles in John 3:20-21 provide a linguistic trace which contrasts *the evil works of an unbeliever* and *the works of those who practice the truth*.²⁰ Since the participle "the one continuously practicing" (ο . . . ποιων) is in the present tense just like the participles "continuously believing" (πιστευων) in verses 16 and 18, both convey the *unceasing actions* of a true disciple. With *vigilant* (active voice) and *constant* (present tense) effort, they come to "the light" (το φως) and are seen practicing "the truth" (την αληθειαν). So, what's behind this attentive approach to "the light" and production of "works" aligning with "the truth"? The reason stated is "in order that" (ινα) or *for the purpose that* "his works might be made manifest".

In verse 21, the verb of being "continuously exist" (εστιν) describes the first manner in which these "works" become *evident*. Pairing this verb's active voice and present tense indicates its subject, "the works", *vibrantly* and *constantly have their essence* "in God" (εν θεω). The preposition "in" combined with the noun

“God” forms an *adverbial phrase*. Its function together with the present tense verb of being indicate these works *are constantly existing within an in-God-manner*, that is, *God constantly activates the existence of these works*.

Also, the participle “having caused themselves to begin and continue to be made to work” (εἰργασμενα – John 3:21) describes these “works” since it occurs in the same *neuter plural form* as the noun “τα εργα” which shows the “works” are its subject. Next, its perfect tense conveys the idea *the action is both completed and has continuing results*. Additionally, this word’s dual middle/passive voice indicates “the works” *act upon themselves* (middle voice) *to be made* (passive voice) “to work”.⁶ Finally, the adverbial phrase “in God” also modifies this participle. Therefore, the joint impact of this participle with the verb of being “εστιν” indicates *the essence of these works was initiated and continues to be enacted by God*.

Summarizing, John 3:16-21 teaches these believers’ initial and ongoing faith as well as subsequent works are categorically caused by God. Later in this Book, these “works” are defined as keeping the Law of Moses. These points indicate Jesus’ earthly lessons fully equate with **New Covenant, Law-in-Heart Theology which Includes Spirit Caused Faith and Works** (Ezek. 36:26-27).

Consequently, if this passage applies to Christians, it provides solid backing for those who hold the stance *the Spirit causes all our works*, and I know numerous brothers who adhere to this view. For, if believers in the Body are supposed to follow the teaching of John 3:16-21, it would mean we have no choice in the production of works which contradicts lots of teaching set forth in the Church Epistles. Now, let’s explore other places in this Gospel which contain further data showing what Jesus taught about *faith* and *works*.

John 6:26-71 – Faith is a ‘Work’ of God

After performing a miracle to feed multi-thousands, Jesus tells those who continue to follow Him they’re just seeking physical sustenance and not interested in the spiritual bread He offers which results in eternal life (John 6:5-15; 26-27). Some responded, “**What should we do in order that we might work the works of God?**” (v. 28). Jesus answered, “**This exists as the work of God in order that you might believe in whom** (Christ) **that one** (the Father) **has sent**” (v. 29). In this verse, the phrase “the works” (τα εργα) is exactly the same as found in John 3:21, but “the work” (το εργον) differs in that *it’s singular in form* rather than plural. This passage introduces two truths. First, *believing is a work* “of” or *associated with* “God” (θεου – genitive case). Then, the rest of this chapter constructs a *definition of how God causes this work of belief in men*.

Jesus begins His explanation by saying, “**everything which the Father gives to Me will come to Me, and I will never cast out the one coming to Me**” (John 6:37). Also, He connects those who “the Father” has given to Him and “will come” to Him with God’s “**will**” (θελημα – v. 38). Then, this “will” is further defined, “**Also, this exists as the will of the one who sent Me in order that everything which He has given to Me, I may lose none of it . . . in order that everyone beholding the Son and believing in Him may have eternal life and I will resurrect him in the last day**” (vv. 39-40). These verses encapsulate the thought, the people the “Father” gave to Jesus according to His “will” (θελημα) *are the same ones who decide to come to and believe in Him.*

In line with this thought, later in the chapter Jesus speaks to the Twelve, “**Didn’t I cause Myself to choose you?**” (John 6:69-70). The verb “I cause Myself to choose” (εξελεξαμην) transliterates into the word ‘elect’, and its middle voice form specifies Jesus *caused Himself* to select them.⁶ This is just another way *the divine cause of their belief* is defined which coincides with what God’s “will” includes – *their faith is a work produced by God* (3:21; 6:29, 37-40).

The context between, John 6:40-65, clarifies the Twelve were just a few of those who the Father had given to the Son, for it confirms *all who believe in Jesus are His elect*. This is first taught in verse 44, “**Also, no one chooses to be made able to come to Me except the Father who sent Me might drag him, and I will resurrect him in the last day.**” The verb “chooses to be made able” (δυναται) is singular in form emphasizing *this action is true of every individual*. Also, its present tense coupled with the negative “ου” indicates *every person continuously lacks ability* to come to Him. Finally, its dual voice means *no person on their own can cause themselves* (middle) *to be empowered* (passive) to come to Jesus.⁶

Therefore, only the ones the father “might drag” (ελκυση) are able to come. This subjunctive verb *requires an act to occur* before its action of dragging can happen. And, *God is able to and does perform this conditional act* each time He *prompts a person* to exercise faith in Christ. Also, this verb’s active voice emphasizes His *vigor* in conducting this task. So, the full impact of this verb signifies **The Father Totally Facilitates Each Person’s Belief in Christ.**

Then, Jesus strategically puts this assertion into historical context, “**It has been written in the prophets, ‘And, all will exist as taught ones of God’; everyone having heard and learned from the Father comes to Me**” (John 6:45). So, we see Jesus coordinates His teaching with an O. T. quote which describes what will happen when Israel is regathered for “**peace**” and “**righteousness**” in the Promise Land (Isa. 54:13-14). Note, this restoration is made possible by Messiah’s payment for sin foretold in the chapter just prior, Isaiah 53.

Furthermore, the phrase “all will exist as taught ones of God” is very similar to the wording found in the chief passage about the New Covenant. For, after God puts His “law” on their “heart” and makes them His people, “**they shall not teach again each man his neighbor and each man his brother, saying, ‘Know the Lord,’ for they shall all know Me from the least of them to the greatest of them**”. For, then all the saved will be “taught ones of God” (Jer. 31:34; John 6:45). Also, at that time all unbelievers will have been judged, so only God’s elect “remnant” will remain and have no need to evangelize (Zech. 8:6, 11-12). Again, with this citation, **Jesus Directly Ties His Teaching to New Covenant Theology**.

These intense lessons prod a reaction from His disciples, “**This message exists as hard; who can choose to be made able to hear it?**” (John 6:60). The verb “can choose to be made able” (δυναται) is the same word just seen in verse 44, and it appears a third time in verse 65. This triple use accentuates *it is absolutely impossible for men to come to Christ apart from intervention*. And the Father only intervenes if a person falls within His “will” then chooses *to draw* them. The infinitive “to hear” (ακουειν) means *to hear with understanding*. There’s also a double emphasis on this term since its participial form, “having heard” (ακουσας), occurs in verse 45. Together, these show Christ’s elect *will respond when invited*, but those who aren’t chosen will never “hear”. In John 10:27-29, this same truth is expressed in an illustration about *sheep who the Father has given to Jesus*, for they will “hear” (ακουουσιν) His voice and the rest won’t.

Closing this discourse, Jesus states, “**But certain ones exist out of you who don’t believe’, for Jesus had known from the beginning which ones exist not believing and the one existing who will betray Him. And He was saying, ‘Because of this I have told you that no one can choose to be made able (δυναται) to come to Me except it might have been given to him from the Father’**” (John 6:64-65). This chapter records a clear dialogue describing the act of faith which is the first “work” of the total amount of “works” God the Holy Spirit will cause in those who enter the Messianic Kingdom (3:21; 6:29).

The Spirit Will Generate the ‘Works’ of Converts

Before proceeding, I think the way John 6 describes faith being spawned in New Covenant believers by God is exactly how it originates in elect Body members today. However, I see a big difference between how present-day Christians produce “works” as compared with future Kingdom converts. This difference is on display in contexts where Jesus expounds the coming time when the Holy Spirit indwells His followers. So, next, we will examine sections of John’s Gospel which contain these lessons.

Connecting these latter sections with passages already covered in regard to “works” produced in believers (John 3:21; 6:28-29), note how Jesus repeatedly indicates His “works” (τὰ ἐργα) have their source in the Father, are consistent with the truth, are miraculous in nature, and demonstrate who He is (7:3, 21; 9:3-4; 10:25, 32-33, 37-38; 14:10-12; 15:24; 17:4). At the same time, these divine deeds are contrasted with “the works” (τὰ ἐργα) of unbelievers to whom Jesus says, “**you cannot choose to be made able** (οὐ δύνασθε) **to hear** (ἀκούειν) **My word**”. Instead, they will continue to do the bidding of their father, the Devil, (8:43-44 + 7:7; 8:39, 41).

Excerpts from John 14

Let’s begin where Jesus asks Phillip, “**Don’t you believe that I am in the Father and the Father exists in Me? The words which I continuously speak to you I don’t speak from Myself, but the Father who continuously abides in Me continuously does His works**” (John 14:10). In short, this verse equates Jesus’ “words” with the “works” the Father is “continuously” causing in Him. Then, verse 11 says, “**Believe Me that I am in the Father and the Father is in Me; but, if not, believe because of the works themselves.**” Here, Jesus defines the acts He does as “the works” (τὰ ἐργα) God *constantly* (present tense) produces in His life.

Then, our Lord zeros in on His intent, “**Truly truly I say to you, also that one who believes in Me will do the works which I am doing, and he will do greater than these because I go to the Father**” (John 14:12). Combining what verses 11-12 teach: *Just as the Father causes miraculous “works” in Jesus, these believers will produce similar and greater works.* How can this be? Jesus continues to explain they’ll acquire an ability equal to Him which will enable them to speak God’s message, do miracles, and receive whatever they ask **When the Spirit Indwells Them** (vv. 13-17). This teaching fully aligns with prophecies related to the New Covenant which indicate capabilities like this would be possible after believers receive their “new heart”, “new spirit”, and Holy “Spirit” (Isa. 29:18; 44:3; 61:1; Ezek. 36:26-27; 39:29). Furthermore, we observe these same manifestations when the Spirit historically came on the Day of Pentecost.

Next, Jesus addresses those who “keep” His “commandments”, “**I will ask the Father and He will give another Councilor to you in order that It might be with you forever, the Spirit of truth . . . you know It because It continuously abides beside you and will be in you**” (John 14:15-17). At times, I will use the term “It” (αὐτο) with reference to the “Spirit” (πνεῦμα) since both this noun and pronoun are *neuter in gender*. This rendering shouldn’t be taken to mean the Spirit isn’t a

Person, but in certain contexts this representation helps differentiate His actions from those of the Father and Son.

The Spirit they'll receive is called "another Councilor." The word "another" is used since the Spirit's future presence in them will replace Jesus' current presence with them (v. 12). The title "Councilor" (παράκλητον) comes from the preposition "παρά", meaning *beside*, affixed to the noun "κλητος" which means *a called one*. Some Translations render it 'Advocate' which emphasizes the Spirit's support role – *called along one's side*. So, similar to how a lawyer advocates in human law, this "Councilor" will provide divine judgement to believers in regard to "the truth" (1 John 2:1).

Then, Jesus says the Spirit "**continuously abides beside you**" (John 14:17). The verb "continuously abides" (μένει) or *remains* is in the present tense which describes the Spirit's *constant bond* with them. Then, this connection is further defined as being "beside" (παρά) them, which is the same phraseology used for their proximity with Jesus, "abiding beside (παρά) you" (v. 25). This relationship is comparable to how the Holy Spirit came "upon" believers throughout O. T. times but, in those days, He could also be taken away (1 Sam. 11:6; 16:14; Eccl. 8:8; Psalm 51:11). To alleviate that dreadful possibility, Jesus assures them when the Spirit comes this time, "It" will be "in (ἐν) you" and they'll have "It . . . forever" (εἰς τὸν αἰῶνα – John 14:16-17). This indwelling is expressed by the same Greek preposition "ἐν" as for believers in the Body (Rom. 8:9; 1 Cor. 3:16; 12:13).

Moving on, Jesus promises He won't leave them as "**orphans**" (ὀρφανούς), but "**in that day you will know that I am in My Father and you are in Me and I am in you**" (John 14:18-20). The phrase "in that day" identifies the timeframe when this "in" relationship happens and is *known* by them; it's the day the Spirit comes, which turned out to be Pentecost. Then, verse 21 characterizes their condition after receiving the Spirit, "**the one continuously having (ἐχὼν) My commandments and continuously keeping (τηρῶν) them, that one exists as continuously loving (ἀγαπῶν) Me; also, the one continuously loving (ἀγαπῶν) Me will be loved by My Father and I will love him and manifest Myself to him.**"

To grasp Jesus' point, notice the order of events. The action of the three participles; "*having*" the "commandments", "*keeping*" them, and "*loving*" Jesus; "will" result in being "loved" by Him and the "Father". So, these continuous (present tense) deeds *are preconditions to gain the Father and Son's love* (see John 14:15). The only way this verse can be interpreted not to teach that humans earn God's acceptance by generating works is to recognize *the Spirit will "continuously" cause these actions in them*. Remember, the Spirit "will be in" them and Jesus will be "in" them just like He and the Father are "in" one another

(vv. 10-11, 20). This description of New Covenant intimacy shows **God's People will Display Spirit-Caused, Perfect Behavior in the Messianic Kingdom** (1 John 3:9).

Some may question whether the “commandments” (εντολας – John 14:21) Jesus mentions here are the same ones contained in the Law of Moses, for He had just expressed, “**I give a new commandment to you in order that you might love one another; and just as I loved you in order that you might love one another**” (John 13:34-35; see also 1 John 2:7-8; 3:11, 23). Actually, God has always been characterized by the trait of “love”, and “keeping” the Law is likened to a perfect act of love. For, when asked what the most important commandment is, Jesus replied, “**the first commandment (εντολη - from v. 28) is, Hear, O Israel . . . you shall love the Lord your God from your whole heart and from your whole soul and from your whole mind and from your whole strength; this is a second, you shall love your neighbor as yourself. There isn't another commandment greater than these**” (Mark 12:29-31).

Therefore, when these believers have the Law written on their “new heart” and receive the “Spirit”, they'll be able to perfectly love in fulfillment of what the Law teaches. This aligns with what Jesus expressed when He spoke of a “new commandment” characterized by “love”. Even Paul affirms the “fullness” of the Law is “love”, although his statements appear in contexts which stress Church members can't achieve love by keeping it (Rom. 13:8-10; Gal. 5:13-15). In contrast to us, *after the New Covenant is inaugurated, the Law won't condemn believers* since they won't be capable of sinning (Ezek. 11:17-21; 36:25-31).

Jesus continues, “**the Councilor, the Holy Spirit which the Father will send in My name, that one will complete teaching you and complete reminding you of all things which I spoke to you**” (John 14:26). In verse 16, in addition to identifying their future Councilor as “the Spirit of truth”, Jesus says It will “complete teaching”, or *finish instructing*, and “complete reminding”, or *finish making you remember*, “all things” He taught during His earthly ministry. The word “complete” is used to render these future tenses since *they specify consummated action at this future point of time*.

Also, the phrase “Spirit of truth” occurs a third time in John 16:13, “**whenever that one might come, the Spirit of truth, It will complete leading you in [some texts read “into” (εις)] all truth; for It won't speak from Itself, but as much as It continuously hears It will speak and announce coming things to you.**” Then, the following verses clarify this “truth” consists of what the Spirit receives from Jesus and the Father (16:14-15). So, in this future setting, **These Disciples Will be Spirit-Led to both Grasp and Obey “all truth”** (αληθεια παση – see Isa. 29:24;

1 John 2:20-21, 26-27).²¹ Now, if this type of Spirit-enlightenment is literally applied to Body members today, it would absolutely eliminate our need for teachers or any other sources of edification.

So, what does Jesus mean when He speaks of “truth”? In John 1:17, we saw “truth” (αληθεια) describes His essence and the same is portrayed in 14:6, “**I am the way, the truth, and the life.**” Also, we just observed “truth” three more times is what the Holy Spirit *is associated with* (αληθειας – genitive case, 14:17; 15:26; 16:13). Then, this word is used to refer to Jesus’ speech and the Word of God (16:7; 17:17). Finally, other noun, adjectival and adverbial forms of “truth” are used to represent content from the Law of Moses (1:17; 7:18-29; 8:12-20; 15:25-26). *This is the “truth” the Spirit will teach, remind them of, and lead them into* when they’re empowered with paranormal ability. Likewise, in this Gospel, the term “word” (λογος) or *message* of God and Christ is directly associated with the Law (10:34-35; 14:21-24; 15:3, 20, 25; 17:14-17).

Excerpts from John 15

This chapter begins by Jesus sharing an analogy, “**I am the vine, you are the branches, the one who continuously abides in Me and I in him, this one continuously bears much fruit because apart from Me you can’t continuously choose to be made able to do anything**” (John 15:5). What enables them to “continuously” abide or *remain* in Him, bear fruit, and do what they should? The present tense verb “you can’t continuously choose to be made able” (ου δυνασθε) is in the middle/passive form and, with the negative “ου”, means *they can’t cause themselves* (middle voice) *to be made able* (passive voice) to do anything apart from Jesus; then, after He leaves, apart from the Spirit.⁶ Consequently, *these believers won’t be able to produce any works apart from divine causation* just like they weren’t able to generate saving faith (6:44).

In this lesson, Jesus warns, “**If anyone might not continuously abide in Me, he is cast outside as a branch and burned**”, which is the fate of unbelievers (John 15:6). Again, if this conditional declaration could be accomplished by the effort of continuous abiding, it would teach *human-generated “works” are involved to gain salvation* as well as *give credence to the belief salvation can be lost* (John 8:31, 51; 12:26; 13:17; 14:23; 15:14). However, when this statement is taken in context, it’s clear the Spirit will initially cause these “works” in them and His work will “abide”.

Then, Jesus states another conditional, “**If you might continuously abide in Me and My words might continuously abide in you, whatever you might desire, ask and it will completely come to pass for you**” (v. 7). Keep in mind, in the Kingdom,

prayers from the faithful will emerge from an unblemished, Spirit-controlled “heart”, so everything they ask **“will . . . completely come to pass”** (γενησεται – John 14:13-14; 15:16; 16:23-24; Matt. 7:7; 21:22; James 5:14-16; 1 John 3:21-22; 5:14-15). There’s no indication these answers *might materialize* or *just some will*, but *everything they ask* will receive a favorable answer. In contrast to this promise, the Epistles of Paul, Peter and Hebrews *contain no guarantees of receiving positive answers to prayer*. For, Body members can’t appeal to God from a wholly pure heart since we still sin.

Next, the context discloses how these divine abilities originate, **“You didn’t cause yourselves to choose Me, but I caused Myself to choose you and I positioned you in order that you might go and continuously bear fruit and your fruit might continuously abide in order that whatever you may ask the Father in My name I may** [some texts have the future tense – “will” (δωσει)] **give to you”** (John 15:16).

Here, Jesus says, “I caused Myself (middle voice) to choose (ἐξελεξαμην) you.”⁶ This **Aorist Indicative Verb** indicates His choice *became an accomplished fact* when He called them to salvation (see John 6:70).¹¹ Also, “I positioned” (εθηκα) or *appointed* “you” is another **Aorist Indicative Verb**, so it too *represents what happened* at their regeneration. The text goes on to say Jesus’ acts of *choosing* and *appointing* *fulfill the conditions* required by the following three Present Subjunctive Verbs which is *why they can* “*continuously go*”, “*bear fruit*” and *have remaining fruit*. Once more, since the Spirit “continuously” causes these virtuous post-salvation-works in them, “whatever” they may ask they’ll receive.

John 17:22-23

Chapter 16 contains more instructions reaffirming many of the principles we’ve already seen about how the Spirit will cause His “works” in Kingdom believers. So, instead of rehashing these points, let’s focus on one final text in chapter 17 which helps give insight into Jesus’ teaching. While praying for His disciples, He says, **“And I have begun and continue to give them the glory which You (the Father) began and continued to give Me in order that they might continuously exist as one just as we are one; I in them and You in Me, in order that they might continuously exist as ones having chosen to begin and continue to be made perfect resulting in being one”** (John 17:22-23).

In verse 22, Jesus prays His disciples will be “one” just as He and the Father are “one”. Initially, by use of two perfect tense verbs, He expresses how *He had begun and continued “to give”* (“δεδωκας” and “δεδωκα”) them the Father’s “glory” which is the basic component enabling them to *occupy this state of divine oneness*. Then, in verse 23, His prayer further defines this unified state by

combining a present tense verb of being with a perfect middle/passive participle (ᾠσιν τετελειωμενοι), the exact construction seen in John 3:21 regarding “the works” God causes in believers.

Here, the subjunctive verb of being “they might continuously exist” (ᾠσιν) describes the *essence* of these believers’ *state of unity* (John 17:23). Also, the *conditional aspect* of this subjunctive is already satisfied since the text states *Jesus acted to “give them . . . glory”* so they could enter this state. And He did this “in order that (ἵνα) they might . . . exist . . . perfect”.

Then, as subjects of the participle, these believers are the “ones having chosen to begin and continue to be made perfect” (τετελειωμενοι). This term’s perfect tense specifies *a completed action with ongoing results*, and its middle voice designates this action is being done by the disciples. However, since the associated verb of being already indicates Jesus placed them in their present state, this is the sole reason they’re now capable of *acting upon themselves* (middle voice) *to choose to believe and carry on* toward this perfected state (see John 6:29, 37, 70; 15:16). Furthermore, the passive voice aspect of this participle alludes to *the outside influence* of both Jesus’ present petition and future power provided by the Spirit for them to “be made perfect”.⁶

Consequently, the grammar in this climactic summation points to divine factors “resulting in” (εἰς) Jesus’ sheep being “one” (εἷν). Ultimately, this context defines “oneness” as *perfect unity between the Father, the Son, and these New Covenant converts* which is one final way of illustrating how the Spirit’s immaculate “works” will affect them when He comes. Therefore, since “τετελειωμενοι” in John 17:23 describes **The Spirit-Perfected Condition Kingdom Believers will Possess** just like O. T. prophecy predicts, Christians shouldn’t use this passage to define our current relationship with God.

And though similar forms of “τελειωω” are used in the Book of Hebrews, these describe our *positional, perfect standing* in the presence of God because of Christ’s once-for-all sacrifice (2:10; 5:9; 7:28; 10:14). This truth plus the fact Hebrews specifies *the saved can still sin* are two primary points which demonstrate it’s written about the current condition of Christians (4:11, 14-16; 10:19-25; 12:1-2; 13:1-6, 17). Also, this same term is used by Paul to assert *he hadn’t yet reached perfection* in his Christian walk (Phil. 3:12).¹² So again, in contrast with us, the way Christ’s sacrifice and the indwelling Spirit will apply to Kingdom believers is very different since *these two heavenly effects will instigate immediate and complete sinless perfection in them*.

Acts 1 – 7: Inauguration of the New Covenant

By probing the early chapters of Acts, we can observe how the Spirit affected those who first believed Jesus is the Lamb of God. It states He spent “**forty days**” with them after His resurrection “**speaking about the things concerning the kingdom of God**” (Acts 1:3; see Luke 24:25-27, 44-49). During this period they asked, “**Lord, is it at this time you will restore the kingdom to Israel?**” He advised them to await the promised “**Holy Spirit**” who will give them “**power**” to be His “**witnesses**” (1:4-8). This is the last incident recorded before He ascended into heaven. Then, “**Pentecost**” (πεντηκοστής) came which means *fifty*, representing the number of days between Passover and the Feast of Weeks (2:1). So, when Jesus’ time in the grave is added to the 40 post-resurrection days He appeared, roughly a week remains (Lev. 23:15-21; Deut. 16:9-12).

During that week, “**they were persevering in one accord**” (Acts 1:14). The noun “one accord” (ὁμοθυμαδον) consists of the adverb “ὁμον”, meaning *together*, paired with the noun “θυμος”, which means *the soul or life*. It signifies *being of one mind* and denotes the idea of *absolute togetherness*. Based on what we learned in John, this comradery was possible because they were under the influence of Jesus’ miracles and instruction while He was “beside” (παρὰ) them (John 14:17, 25). Prior to the Spirit’s arrival, “ὁμοθυμαδον” occurs just once, then it appears three more times to describe the *togetherness* of these initial believers as well as all who joined them (Acts 2:46; 4:24; 5:12).

To see how “ὁμοθυμαδον” represents a highly unified state, note how it’s used to describe other groups including the ravenous mob who stoned Stephen (Acts 7:57; 8:6; 12:20; 15:25; 18:12; 19:29). Then, in contrast to how these Kingdom converts were “in one accord”, this adverb is used in Romans to signify *the goal of mutual concern* Body members should aspire to (15:6). But, the greater context sheds light on why these believers weren’t “in one accord”, for they had sinful shortcomings urging them to gravitate away from good natured unity (Rom. 12:14-21; 13:8; 14:1, 10-12, 22-23; 15:1). This is the reality Christians live in today, for unless we make daily choices to walk by the Spirit, we won’t progress toward being “in one accord” or any condition close to the bond these early Jewish believers enjoyed. This amiable unity seen in early Acts is the first symptomatic example of **Supernatural Activity Linked with the Onset of the New Covenant**.

Chapter one ends with the disciples choosing Matthias as the twelfth apostle to replace Judas (Acts 1:16-26). Then, when the Spirit came upon the approximate 120 gathered, “**all were filled with the Holy Spirit**” (1:15; 2:1-4 – emphasis mine). This enabled each disciple to communicate with everyone who came to celebrate this Jewish Feast by using foreign languages they hadn’t learned. So,

they “all” became miraculous witnesses and spoke “the great things of God” (1:8, 15; 2:7, 11).

Then, in his first discourse after receiving the Spirit, Peter connects this occasion with a passage in Joel which prophesies the “**Spirit**” will come “**upon all flesh**” who believe (Acts 2:14-21; Joel 2:28-32). Also, this context indicates the Spirit’s presence will be evidenced by those who “**prophecy**”, have “**visions**” and “**dreams**”, or are accompanied by “**wonders**” and “**signs**”. By citing Joel to connect Pentecost with prophecy, Peter links these events with the time God fulfills His promise to restore Israel to the Land (Joel 3:1-5, 17-21; Acts 1:6; 3:17-26). Therefore, the events of early Acts are consistent with Israel’s miraculous regathering, reception of the Spirit, and Messiah’s return taught in Jeremiah, Ezekiel, and the Gospel of John (John 1:41, 49; 4:25; 12:12-16; 19:19-21).

During this time, Peter is observed giving four bold and remarkable messages as he was filled with “power” from the Spirit (Acts 1:8; 4:8 – speeches: 2:14-36; 3:12-26; 4:8-12; 5:29-32). Stephen, also Spirit-filled, does the same (6:15; 7:55). Furthermore, Peter issues swift capital punishment upon Ananias and Sapphira for falsely claiming they were believers (5:1-6).¹⁹ Both of these men’s messages and this execution of justice *show how individuals were led by the Spirit* in this divinely energized assembly (Matt. 16:18-19).

This same miraculous behavior wasn’t limited to Peter and a select few, but “*all*” *were being led by the indwelling Spirit*. This is evidenced since “**all**” were constantly and joyously engaged in the practice of contributing the entire amount they received from sales of possessions to support the physical needs of multi-thousands of converts (Acts 2:44-46; 4:34-37).

Nevertheless, to me, the most astounding example of Spirit-leading detected in this group was *their corporate response* after Peter and John were threatened to stop speaking in the Name of Jesus (Acts 4:17). For, “**having heard, they lifted up their voice in one accord to God and said**” (4:24 – emphasis mine). Then, their response-in-unison is recorded in a seven-verse chant (4:24-30). *There’s no way thousands of people could’ve simultaneously accomplished this feat in real time without the Spirit causing it within them*. Finally, after this prayer “**the place they had been gathered was shaken and they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and were speaking the word of God with boldness**” (v. 31). **This New Covenant Manifestation of Spirit Leading** rivals what is seen in Peter, Stephen and John.

In every way, the first chapters of Acts represent the practice of wholesome Judaism while these believers awaited Christ’s return in accord with *their competent understanding of prophecy* (Luke 24:27, 44-49; Acts 1:3, 6; 3:19-26; 7:55-56). For, daily, all were observing Jewish feasts, worshipping in the

“**temple**”, and sharing all things in common (2:46; 3:1, 3; 5:20-21, 25, 42). Most were Jews, however, believing gentiles were still recognized as “**proselytes**” (converts of the Jewish faith – Exod. 20:10; Lev. 16:29 [LXX]¹⁷; Matt. 23:15; Acts 2:10; 6:5; 13:43 – the 4 occurrences in the N. T.). As God’s witnesses, all these disciples were totally engaged in evangelizing the masses with the goal they too would accept Jesus as their Messiah.

Furthermore, *these chapters are void of any distinct truth regarding mystery revelation* which defines the Body of Christ. To my knowledge, there are only two points set forth in support of the idea this period refers to early days of the Church. First, the Holy Spirit’s coming is cited. I think enough Scripture has been covered to show the events surrounding His advent align with prophecies about the inauguration of the New Covenant and Messianic Kingdom.

Second, the word “ἐκκλησία”, usually translated *church*, is found in this context (Acts 5:11 & 2:47 in the TR). However, in itself, this word simply means a *called-out group* so it can represent any *assembly* or *congregation*, the nature of which is defined by each context where it appears (Deut. 23:1-3; Jud. 20:2; Psalm 25:5; Joel 2:16 – [LXX]; Acts 7:38; 19:32, 39, 41). So, the meaning of “ἐκκλησία” in early Acts should be determined by its historical setting. And, prior to Acts, it occurs only twice in the N. T. In Matthew 16:18-19, “ἐκκλησία” is connected with the “**kingdom of heaven**”. Then, two chapters later, it is used twice for an *assembly* which treats a disobedient member like a “**gentile**”. This practice is consistent with the Jew-gentile distinction set forth in the Law and would be customary in all Jewish *synagogues* (Matt. 18:17; Gal. 2:11-21).

Furthermore, in both passages, **Heavenly Leading is Coupled With this “ἐκκλησία”**, for *the apostles will bind and loose God’s dictates on earth* (Matt. 16:18-19; 18:17-18; John 20:22-23). These predictions about *New Covenant power* are consistent with how the Spirit is seen functioning in Peter, the Twelve, and God’s Kingdom Assembly in early Acts. Unfortunately, for centuries this principle has been adopted by the Church, and it has resulted in seriously misguided doctrines such as legitimizing *Popes* and other *supposed Spirit-led individuals/leaders*.

Section 4: The New Covenant Vs. The New Creation

Just like the term “church” (ἐκκλησία) doesn’t always refer to an *assembly* of Christians and the term “grace” (χάρις) doesn’t always allude to the same way God allocates *unmerited favor*, similarly, the word “new” (καινή) doesn’t always refer to the New Covenant. Though, this term is used several times in the N. T. with reference to God’s promises to Israel (Luke 22:20; 1 Cor. 11:25; 2 Cor. 3:6;

Heb. 8:8, 13; 9:15). And we've analyzed the two parts of it which have already come to pass and apply to the Body of Christ. However, in contrast with the New Covenant's link with the Law, today **The Spirit has No Connection with the Law but Operates by Principles of the New Mystery-Revelation.**

Therefore, let's focus on how the term *new* is used in relation to the Church. First, it's noteworthy the phrases "new heart" and "new spirit" are not found in the Church Epistles which describe *the present state of a Christian's heart and our spirit/Spirit relationship*. Also, none of the four Gospels contain these phrases, yet many Body members still think they apply to us even though we're not "under" the New Covenant. So, moving forward we'll investigate how terms such as *new* and *newness* are used in regard to the Body, God's "new creation", along with how they're similar to and different from their use in Jewish prophecy (2 Cor. 5:17; Gal. 6:15; Eph. 2:15).

The phrases "**new heart**" (καρδιαν καινην) and "**new spirit**" (πνευμα καινον) are found exclusively in the Book of Ezekiel (11:19; 18:31; 36:26 – LXX).¹⁷ Additionally, the phrase "**another heart**" (καρδιαν ετεραν) is used once to describe what New Covenant believers will receive (Ezek. 11:19). Nowhere in the Church Epistles is anything ever said about us getting a *new heart* or *another heart*. Moreover, today the Spirit doesn't cause Christians to be sinless like how Israelites will be when they receive their promised "new spirit" and "new heart" along with God's "Spirit". For, these amenities will enable them to perfectly keep the Law (Jer. 31:34; Ezek. 36:27-32; 37:23-28).

In contrast, Christians are repeatedly told not to have any contact with the Mosaic Law since just one sin will condemn us (Rom. 4:15; Gal. 2:18-19; 3:10-13; 5:3; James 2:10). On the other hand, the Law won't condemn future Kingdom believers since they will fully keep it by means of their "new" spirit and heart being led by the Holy Spirit. Instead, it will produce "**glory**" in them (Isa. 46:10-13; Ezek. 39:21-25; 2 Cor. 3:7-11). It's important to keep in mind the Law of Moses is not wicked in any way, for "**the law is holy, and the commandment is holy and righteous and good**" since it mirrors the "**righteousness of God**" (Rom. 3:21; 7:13). Even today, those who trust in Christ are declared "**righteous**" according to the "**standard of the law**" (Rom. 3:21-26; 5:1-2; 8:1-4; Gal. 4:4-6).

New Covenant / New Creation – Salvation is Identical . . .

Both Christians in the "new creation" of the Church and future believers under the New Covenant are saved by God's "grace". This *unmerited favor* given to His "elect" generates belief/faith/trust in our heart by the Spirit. The following contexts

validate how God saves people today in the same way He will in the upcoming Kingdom, which was detailed in the exposition of John chapter 6.

First, Romans 8:15 says we recognize God as our “**Father**” because we’ve “**received the Spirit**”. Similarly, Galatians 4:6 links the *Spirit* to our *heart* saying, “**God sent forth the Spirit of His Son into our hearts crying ‘Abba, Father.’**” Also, Acts 16:14 records “**the Lord opened the heart**” of Lydia “**to receive the things spoken by Paul**”. Furthermore, in regeneration, all come to God in the same manner, “**If you might confess with your mouth the Lord Jesus and believe in your heart that God raised Him out of the dead, you will be saved**” (Rom. 10:9; see also Acts 15:9). Finally, “**the god of this age**” effectively blinds “**the minds of the unbelieving**” until *God turns on a light in the midst of our darkness*, “**who shone in our hearts toward illumination of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Christ**” (2 Cor. 4:3-4, 6; Eph. 2:2, 4-5; 2 Tim. 2:24-26).

... But, the Production of Works is Markedly Different

After being “**baptized into one body**” and “**made to drink of one Spirit**”, He becomes our “**earnest**” or *pledge* and “**first fruits**” of future glory. For, as a “**new creation**”, we aren’t instantaneously glorified (made sinless) like New Covenant believers will be (Rom. 8:23; 1 Cor. 12:13; 2 Cor. 5:17; Eph. 1:13-14). *The reality we possess the Spirit, yet still sin* is proven by the statement, “**if we live in relation to the Spirit, we should continuously walk in relation to the Spirit**” (Gal. 5:16, 25). For, He embodies the power which helps transform us into the “**glory**” of God by “**putting to death the practices of the body**” (Rom. 8:13; 2 Cor. 3:17-18). Presently, we’re only considered righteous by the Father since He sees us *in Christ*. Following justification, He wants us to take advantage of our standing by accessing the Spirit’s power to actually put on the Lord’s qualities while we await His return. For, when He comes, He’ll finish changing us into His sinless image (Rom. 6:11-23; 13:11-14; Gal. 5:5; Phil. 3:20-21).

In the meantime, the Spirit affords believers an opportunity to experience “**renewal**” (ἀνα + καινῶσει) of both mind and “**heart**” so “**we can**” (subjunctive mode) **walk in newness** (καινότητι) **of life**” by the “**newness of the Spirit**” (Rom. 6:12-16; 7:6; 12:2; Eph. 2:4-6; 4:23). This reality is now possible since we are morally alive as a result of our death, burial and resurrection with Christ (Rom. 6:1-4). But, when we sidestep our God given duty, we “**actively continuously grieve**” (active voice, present tense) the Spirit, subject our “**hearts**” to deception, and fail to “**glorify God**” in our bodies (Rom. 16:18; 1 Cor. 6:19 [see also 1 Thess. 4:8]; Eph. 4:30).

Moreover, since Church members need ongoing reform, Paul prays “in order that He (God) might give to you according to the richness of His glory by power to be strengthened through His Spirit toward the inner man for Christ to dwell in your hearts through faith” (Eph. 3:16-17). This passage centers on how God’s “power” is continually available through His “Spirit” so the qualities of Christ can “dwell” or *live in* our “hearts” (καρδιαις). This verse alone confirms **Our Heart Isn’t Fully “new”, But it Still Needs Renewal**. And, this same idea is repeated in Paul’s earlier prayer, that “the eyes of our heart” might be enlightened (Eph. 1:17-18). So, both prayers petition God to increase our focus on the “inner man” (εσω ανθρωπον), which is our “new man”, for *ongoing renewal* (2 Cor. 4:16; Eph. 3:16).

This *process of renovation* is available to all members of the Church since we are God’s “new creation” (καινη κτισις) and can access the Spirit’s transforming power within our “new man” (καινον [or νεον] ανθρωπον), which “continuously causes itself to be made new again” (ανα + καινουμενον). Therefore, each time a Christian employs this powerful formula of *putting on the new man*, he/she takes another step in the slow progression of becoming like Christ (2 Cor. 5:17; Gal. 6:15; Eph. 2:15; 3:17-18; 4:23-24; Col. 3:10).

Again, until Israel rejected their Messiah in early Acts, all prophecy pointed to the establishment of Kingdom “glory” on earth after the Christ would suffer (Dan. 9:25-28; Mark 13:26; 1 Pet. 1:11). However, God had other plans and initiated a new program which He had kept secret or a “mystery” (μυστηριον – Rom. 16:25; 1 Cor. 2:6-8; Eph. 3:2-9). Today, during this un-prophesied time in biblical history, *God has suspended relations with His Covenant People which centers on the Law being perfected in their new heart* (Rom. 11:11-25; Eph. 1:9-10). Although, now individual Jews are saved as Body members in the exact same manner as gentiles – by “the mercy” of God (Acts 15:6-11; Rom. 9:16-18; 11:30-32; Eph. 2:4-5; 1 Tim. 1:13-16).

Someday, *after this surprise plan runs its course*, God will resume dealings with Israel and fulfill all His promises to them (Rom. 11:26-29). Note how this section of Romans quotes the New Covenant passage, “and this is My covenant with them whenever I might send away their sins” (v. 27; Jer. 31:34). By having Paul cite this passage, the Spirit reiterates God will never default on His promise to send the Messiah and return Israel to the Land. For, at that time, He will establish a “new Jerusalem” (καινης Ιερουσαλημ) from which Jesus will reign forever. Then, after another 1000 years, He’ll renovate His creation by making a “new heavens and new earth” (καινους ουρανους και γην καινην) where everything will be restored to a Garden-of-Eden state (Isa. 65:17; Ezek. 36:35 [LXX]¹⁷; 2 Pet. 3:13; Rev. 3:12; 21:1-2; 22:1-5).

Furthermore, when God temporarily abandoned the Nation of Israel to begin His “new creation” of the Church, He had to get rid of the condemning effects of the Law. So, in the process of “**creating . . . one new man**” (καὶνον ἄνθρωπον) He “**deactivated the law**” since it excluded gentiles and declared the Jews to be His People (Eph. 2:11-15). Yet, He couldn’t deny Himself by forsaking *His publicized standard of righteousness*. So, He sent His Son who, by living a sinless life under the Law, qualified Himself to be an acceptable sacrifice for all sin. And this is how God’s *mystery scheme* allows “**the righteous standard of the law**” to be *judicially “fulfilled in us”* (Rom. 3:21-26; 4:22-25; 8:1-4).

Now, God desires Church members to spend the rest of our days putting on the qualities of Christ. Any advancement will earn rewards at the Judgment Seat, then God will make up for what we still lack when He conforms us into His Son’s image. And, based on how the Word portrays our Father’s holiness, I believe the gap between our present level of maturity and what we’ll ultimately become *will be far more expansive than any of us could ever imagine* (1 Cor. 3:12-17; 4:5; 6:19-20; 2 Cor. 5:9-11; Phil. 3:20-21; Col. 3:3-4; 1 Pet. 4:1-4).

Essentially, Christians have an *old man* (nature) and a *new man* which are in conflict (Rom. 7:14-25; 8:12-13; Gal. 5:17). **The Reality of Two Concurrent Natures Didn’t Exist Before God Created the Body of Christ**, for the first time this inner struggle is mentioned or explained is in the Book of Galatians. Other than the Spirit’s limited and intermittent control over a few individuals during O. T. times, the Jewish people were constrained by their old nature before receiving God’s power at Pentecost. Then, for a brief time, they experienced being *Led by the Prophesied Single New Nature* – a new heart + new spirit + Holy Spirit – until God suspended relations with them. When He reconnects, Israel will again permanently revel in New Covenant glory with *their new righteous nature*.

Section 5: The Spirit’s Work in Body Members

How is “grace” defined as it relates to Christian growth? All agree, the manner by which the Spirit works under “grace” is revealed in Scripture, however, there’s much disagreement about which contexts describe His present-day operation. And it’s evident, unless we follow the methods the Spirit currently uses to empower us, *we’ll yield a flesh-based lifestyle*. So, each of us should think long and hard about this **Fundamental Building Block** at the base of the spiritual triangle **which Constitutes How We can have Victory over Sin**.

When it comes to defining how “grace” functions, I find many Body members still think the “grace” mentioned in John 1:16-17 is *the same grace expounded by Paul*. Remember, the word “χάρις”, in itself, simply means *unmerited favor* and

its nature is determined by the surrounding context. And, in that exposition, I pointed out God's *unmerited favor* in giving the Law of Moses was replaced by *grace allied with the New Covenant*.

For, initially God had offered His People the opportunity to gain salvation by performing the works of the Law. All along, He knew this system would cause mortal men to fail, which was also a huge part of His purpose. Also, this human predicament enabled the Father to set His redemptive plan in motion by sending His Son to keep the Law and become an acceptable sacrifice to supply the righteousness needed for the arrival of the Kingdom. Accordingly, when the New Covenant is reinstated, His Remnant will believe and be capable of keeping the Law with their "new heart" and "new spirit" energized by the Holy "Spirit".

In contrast with His program with Israel, **The Definition of how God's Grace Affects Believers Today is Twofold**: Initially, in reference to salvation "**grace**" is "**a gift of God, not out of works in order that no one might boast**" (Eph. 2:4-5, 8-9; 1 Cor. 1:26-31; Tit. 3:4-7). So, our regeneration is *one hundred percent the work of God expressed through His "love", "mercy" and "grace"*.

Then, after rebirth, divine "grace" intersects with sanctification *each time a child of God chooses to activate his or her newly livened state by drawing power from the Spirit to produce "good works"* (Rom. 6:12-17; 12:1-2; Gal. 5:16-18; Eph. 4:7; Col. 3:5, 8, 12; 1 Pet. 2:1-2). "**For, we are His workmanship, after having been completely created in Christ Jesus on the basis of good works which God previously completed preparing in order that we might complete walking in them**" (Eph. 2:10). The conjunction "for" (gar) indicates *this verse gives background information* to explain more about why God saved us by His "grace" (vv. 8-9). Then, the first part of verse 10, highlighted by the aorist passive participle "after having been completely created" (κτισθεντες), expresses how *God* (passive voice) *completed creating* (aorist tense) us as His "workmanship".

Then, the preposition "on the basis of" (επι) addresses our relation to *the foundation upon which* we were created. And this basis is described as God's *previously prepared good works* which He wants to see in our lives so our present "walk" might conform to the positional reality we are in as His "workmanship" (Gal. 5:16). Although most Translations render "επι" either 'for' or 'unto', Rotherham reads 'upon a footing of good works' and JMNT says 'upon good works' which are both similar to mine. In essence, Ephesians 2:10 conveys the concept: Before the foundation of the world, God prepared an ethical and moral contingent of "good works" which He now wants us, His "new creation", to transform our walk with.

This same thought is expressed in Titus 1:1-3 where “good works” are referred to as **“the full knowledge of the truth in accord with godliness based on (επι) the hope of eternal life which God, who cannot lie, promised prior to times eternal (προ χρονων αιωνιων); also, in His own time, He manifested His Word in preaching which I (Paul) was entrusted”**. Also, Second Timothy 1:9-11 states God is **“the one who saved and called us in relation to a holy calling . . . in Christ Jesus prior to times eternal (προ χρονων αιωνιων) . . . through the gospel, unto which I (Paul) was placed as a preacher and apostle and teacher.”** Finally, we’re told **“God’s wisdom in a mystery”** was **“predestined prior to the ages (προ των αιωνιων) unto our glory”** (1 Cor. 2:7). All three passages directly link our “calling”, “godliness”, and ultimate “glory” with the good works conveyed by God’s “wisdom” contained in the “mystery” truth which He established “prior to times eternal”, then ultimately made known through the “gospel” which “was entrusted” to Paul.

Lastly, in Ephesians 2:10, the verb “we can complete walking” (περιπατησωμεν) occurs in the subjunctive mode which *requires the condition of obedience* if “good works” (εργοις αγαθοις) are to be implemented. Furthermore, its aorist tense indicates we’re responsible to perform until *our lives are completely changed* by these “good works” (Rom. 12:1-2). In summation, this verse encapsulates the role those saved by “grace” have in producing “good works” – we need to “walk” in them (Gal. 5:16). And, this conduct is revealed and defined in a variety of mystery-truth-contexts throughout the Church Epistles.

Sometimes this verse is interpreted to mean God “previously completed preparing” (προητοιμασεν) “good works” which He then causes believers to produce. For, this verb’s only other occurrence in Romans 9:23 states He **“previously completed preparing”** elect **“vessels of mercy . . . for glory”** (Rom. 8:29-30, 33; 9:11-24). That context refers to *God’s work in regard to salvation* which is the same category of truth just expounded in Ephesians 2:8-9 – we were “saved by grace”. However, verse 10 changes gears and specifies *the actual production of “good works” is conditioned on (subjunctive mode) whether or not a believer walks in them*.

The next passage detailing how *God’s grace applies to Christian good works* is Second Timothy 3:16-17, **“God-breathed”** Scripture was provided **“in order that the man of God might continuously be equipped, fully equipped toward every good work”** (see 2 Tim. 1:9 & 2:1 for prior references to “grace”). First, “God-breathed” or *inspired* revelation, labeled elsewhere as the *mystery*, defines the nature of these *previously prepared good works* which equip us for service (Rom. 16:25-26; 1 Cor. 2:6-8; Eph. 2:10). Also, the present, subjunctive verb of being “might continuously be” (η) indicates we *always have the potential* to produce

every “good work” (εργον αγαθον). So, whether or not *good works* are generated depends on the choices believers make to obey the dictates God revealed. And, as this Book discloses, these decisions can be very hard choices (1:8; 2:3, 14-18, 22-26; 3:1-5, 12-13).

A third passage helps describe how *the production of good works is linked with God’s grace*, “*the saving grace of God was manifest to all men which continuously teaches us in order that, after having chosen to complete denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we can live sound-mindedly and righteously and godly in the present age*” (Titus 2:11-12). The adjective translated “saving” (σωτηριος) *describes the nature of this “grace”* (χαρις). This aspect of “grace” has nothing to do with initial salvation, which is an operation of God, but it refers to how believers can *be saved from the power of sin* (1 Cor. 15:2; 1 Tim. 4:16). Additionally, the participle “which continuously teaches” (παιδευουσα) or *trains “us”* is in the same person, number, and gender as “χαρις”, so it also serves as an action-adjective *describing the life changing nature of this “saving grace”*.

This *ongoing training effect* (present tense) of “grace” is available “in order that” (ινα) or *for the purpose that* “after having chosen to complete denying” (αρνησαμενοι) the sinful tendencies of our old man, we can live holy lives. This middle aorist participle indicates we *first have to make a choice* to reject our flesh in order to *complete the process* of laying the moral groundwork necessary for leading sensible and godly lives.^{6,11,14} Furthermore, the verb “we can complete living” (ζησωμεν) *requires acts of Spirit-aided obedience* to fulfill its subjunctive-mode-conditional so *we can* bring about good character.

This subjunctive joins the two others just considered in Ephesians 2:10 and Second Timothy 3:17 forming a *Three-Pronged Limelight which illuminates obedience as the condition Body members need to fulfill* if we are to produce any good works. Also, the aorist tense of “ζησωμεν” implies God has provided everything we need to *complete* putting on godly attributes. Though no Christian ever accomplishes this goal, each of us will have to account for our efforts (1 Cor. 3:10-17 [εργον – “work” occurs 4 times]; 2 Cor. 5:9-11; Col. 3:10).¹²

This spiritual renewal fueled by *disciplining grace* (Tit. 2:11) is to endure while we await Christ’s return in “glory” when He’ll consummate our transformation into His image (Tit. 2:13; Phil. 3:20-21; Col. 3:1-4). Until then, we should recognize *God’s desire for our sanctification is entwined with His reason for redeeming us*, “*in order that . . . He might completely cleanse for Himself a people-possession, zealous of good works*” (Tit. 2:14). Brethren, this section teaches **The Purpose God Saved Us is for the Fervent Production of Good Works** (Eph. 2:10). He didn’t intend for us to only anticipate eternal life in heaven, although that’s our

wonderful assurance. But also, He saved us to be shining lights so, through us, mankind might perceive the reality *that Christ can transform sinners into Spirit-Led-Beings* (Phil. 2:12-16; Tit. 2:5, 8, 10). And so, we further our role in this Divine Production *each time we utilize the Spirit's power to obey His Word*.

Concluding how Ephesians 2:10, Second Timothy 3:16-17, and Titus 2:11-14 define the production of “works” under “grace”, as Bible Teachers often stress, “εργον” is repeatedly used to describe the “work” of God in salvation. However, the fact this same Greek word is used to exemplify actions needed for spiritual growth is seldom emphasized. So, to stress this point, beyond passages already covered, the terms “**work**” or “**works**” occur at least 28 more times in the Church Epistles to represent *the Christian-Work-Facet of the gospel* (1 Cor. 3:13-15; 15:58; 2 Cor. 9:8; 10:11; Gal. 6:4; Eph. 4:12; Phil. 1:22; 2:30; Col. 1:10; 3:17; 1 Thess. 1:3; 5:13; 2 Thess. 1:11; 2:17; 1 Tim. 2:10; 3:1; 5:10, 25; 6:18; 2 Tim. 2:21; 4:5; Titus 2:7; 3:1, 8, 14; Heb. 6:10; 10:24; 1 Pet. 1:17; 2:12).

Furthermore, Galatians 5:6 uses the verb form of “εργον”, “**in Christ Jesus, neither circumcision nor uncircumcision avails anything, but faith continuously working** (εν + εργεω) **through love**” (see also Gal. 6:10). Finally, the verb in Philippians 2:12 which expresses responsibility to “**produce**” (κατα + εργεω) qualities of salvation occurs three more times to represent Christian works (2 Cor. 7:11; 9:11; Eph. 6:13). Based on this vast amount of evidence, how can anyone say *works have no place in God's grace program today?*

Romans Overview – Overcoming Sin by Grace

The Book of Romans is commonly cited to explain the “grace” formula for sanctification, and rightfully so. In light of this awareness, plus the influence this portion has had on my life, in three short paragraphs I'd like to *Summarize the Impact* chapters 6 – 15 hold in relation to the course of spiritual growth.

Based on the revival occurring in believers when we died and were raised with Christ, we are repeatedly told not to let sin control us. Also, the need to “**present**” our members to God is stressed since this act results in “**righteousness**”, “**holiness**”, and putting on qualities of “**eternal life**” (Rom. 6:12-16, 19, 22-23). Have you ever noticed *the Spirit isn't mentioned once in Romans 6?* I believe this omission was purposeful for it **Underscores a Believer's Need to Exercise Choice for Renewal to Happen**. Yet, divine power needed to reach this goal is implied since the word “**newness**” in verse 4, which describes the new way we're to live, is repeated in 7:6, where it states Christians are released from bondage to the Law so we can “**serve in newness of the Spirit**”.

In keeping with this thought, after discussing what happened at Paul's salvation, the remainder of chapter 7 displays him as a spectacle of utter failure in his pursuit of holiness as long as he kept trying to follow the **"oldness of the letter"** – the Law (Rom. 7:6, 14-25). Then, chapter 8 explodes with a narrative which explains how all believers who possess the indwelling Spirit can triumph over sin through His power (vv. 1-17). This same Spirit enables us to navigate the **"sufferings"** of life and will never leave the **"elect of God"** (vv. 18-39).

Next, after three chapters showing how God's purpose has always been enacted by the extension of **"grace"** and **"mercy"** to save His **"elect"**, chapter 12 picks up with appeals and instructions for how He wants Body members to live (Rom. 9:10-18; 11:1-6, 30-32). These lifestyle guidelines continue through chapter 15. Overall, within the text of chapters 6 – 15, we're coached to exclude the Law from Christian practice. Plus, earlier in the Book, Paul had warned against trusting our ability to do the **"works of the law"** to obtain the **"righteousness"** needed for acceptance and **"justification"** in our Father's eyes. For, Christ had already satisfied this requirement when He kept the Law and qualified Himself to be a suitable sacrifice in our place (Rom. 3 – 5; 8:1-4).

Other Popular Definitions of 'Grace'

In Christendom, there are two prominent definitions of 'grace' in reference to how believers integrate power from the Spirit which significantly vary from the explanation presented in this article. So, I'm going to provide an overview of both perspectives then analyze the ramifications of each. Please know, my purpose for doing this isn't to merely be critical or nit-pick. Yes, I'm convinced these views are inaccurate, but more importantly I believe they have a detrimental effect on the spiritual wellbeing of those who embrace them.

The First View: Some Christians believe God causes our "good works". This position, for the most part, is based on attributing truths about the Spirit's work in the O. T., Gospel Accounts, and Book of Acts to the Body of Christ. With regard to revelation received prior to the cross, sufficient time has been allotted to demonstrate these lessons refer to how the Spirit will operation in the Messianic Kingdom. Also, I've commented on passages from the Epistles, including Colossians 3:9, to counter the claim the impact of our "flesh" and "old man" has been eliminated in a functional sense, which is a belief often connected with this view. Finally, many taking this stance assert Galatians 5:18 and Romans 8:14 teach the Spirit always and actively leads believers, but earlier expositions show He doesn't lead us unless we first seek His guidance.

Furthermore, those holding this position often apply the *Spirit's causative movements seen in the Book of Acts* to the Church. However, we can know *these types of actions ceased* because they are absent in all the Epistles written after that historic account ends. And this principle can be verified: **No Post-Acts Letter Supports the idea that Involuntary Spirit-Guidance Continues.** For, *that kind of leading does not exist* in Ephesians, Philippians, Colossians, Philemon, First & Second Timothy, Titus, and First & Second Peter. Also, these Epistles contain specific statements which signify *Spirit-energized gifts like healing and visions are no longer active.*²²

In line with this concept, I've already pointed out several times the *mystery truth given to the Church* expounded in Paul's Letters is that which explicitly describes the essence and function of Christ's Body. Also, several sections in the Word indicate how this revelation was progressively received, so we should expect to see the typical way the Spirit currently functions in the later Epistles (Rom. 16:25-26; 2 Cor. 12:1, 7; cf. Eph. 3:4 with Acts 20:20, 27). Moreover, we know Peter didn't contribute any truth to supplement the gospel Paul preached nor did anyone else, for he received its entire content directly from the Lord Jesus Christ (Gal. 1:11-12; 2:6; 2 Pet. 3:15-16). Therefore, when seeking to ascertain any aspect of how God works today, we should always reference Paul's writings.

In addition, it is important to recognize *the Book of Acts isn't mystery truth*; it's simply the one inspired account of the timeframe when this new mystery revelation began to be disclosed. For, it highlights events which enable the reader to comprehend God's transition away from the Nation of Israel and toward His purpose for the Body. Specifically, Acts contains an offer to inaugurate the Messianic Kingdom, the Jewish Nation's rejection of this offer by denying their Christ, Paul's conversion, then God's use of him to evangelize all men and edify believers with the revelation he received. Some truths distinct to the Body are seen in Acts, but so are *Left-Over New Covenant Realities*. And many of these lingering manifestations were **To Verify the Divine Source of and Proliferate this New Message** (Acts 15:4, 7-12; Gal. 2:7-9; Heb. 2:3-4).

Lastly, some who hold the conviction God causes our "good works" *also believe He causes our Evil Works*, usually with the stipulation this activity helps Body members develop spiritually. In fact, this thought is certified by several O. T. contexts (Judges 15:14-16; 16:23-31; Isa. 45:6-7; 63:17; Amos 3:6). However, no truth supporting this stance is found in the Church Epistles.

The Second View: Some believe "grace" means Christians just need to concentrate on the finished work of Christ and good works will automatically follow. Thus, there's no real need to focus on obedience. This position arises from amalgamating the Spirit's causative actions from New Covenant theology

with Paul's exhortation to "consider" ourselves dead to sin and alive to God (Rom. 6:11). By maintaining this mental focus, these brothers believe they'll be spontaneously guided to act rightly (John 14:12-17; 16:13).

However, my exposition of Romans 6:11 shows *its command to consider ourselves dead to sin and alive to God* directs believers to recognize the twofold effect which happened when we were identified with Christ's "death" and "resurrection" (vv. 3-4). For, when God saved us, we were freed from bondage to "sin" and made morally "alive" which is why we can now decipher right from wrong. Then, as we activate these realities, we can choose to submit to the Spirit's power which enables us to overcome sin and obey the righteous instruction designed to help us advance on our path to "holiness" (vv. 12-19).

Also, like the first view, this stance emphasizes our "old man" has been crucified. Colossians 3:9 is often cited to indicate we no longer have an active old nature, and some believe Galatians 5:18 and Romans 8:14 teach we're instinctively led by the Spirit. Moreover, the following grammatical point is sometimes endorsed: Verbs commonly translated with *the imperative mode command sense* should really be understood in *the indicative mode statement-of-fact sense* since this Greek form can be interpreted either way.

When this theory is applied, Romans 12:2 wouldn't be understood to command believers (imperative mode) to flee from being conformed to this age and seek to be transformed. Instead, it would be translated as *a statement of fact* (indicative mode), *we aren't conforming to this age and we are being transformed*. Based on interpreting verb forms in this manner makes them facts we need to simply "consider" as realities, then good automatically follows (Rom. 6:11). More examples of rendering Imperative Mode Verbs as Indicative are: Ephesians 5:18 would read *we aren't getting drunk with wine but we are being filled* with the Spirit; Galatians 5:16 would say *we are walking by the Spirit*; and Philippians 2:12 would specify *we are producing our own salvation*.

However, a closer look at Romans 12:1-2 shows the context entreats believers **"to complete presenting"** (παραστήσαι) our bodies as a sacrifice to God. This aorist infinitive specifies we're supposed *to achieve the outcome of completing the presentation* of our bodies.¹¹ So, as a **Contextual Indicator of Syntax**, this term sets a focus *indicating the action in this context is still unfinished*. Therefore, believers are *continuously encouraged* (παρακαλῶ – present tense) to *continuously follow the commands* in verse 2 (present, imperative verbs) as a *necessary practice of volition* (middle voice) in order to completely present our bodies to the Lord.²³

Also, in Philippians 2:12, just as these believers always “**completed obeying**” (υπηκουσατε), now they’re to continue. This verb’s aorist tense provides the **Contextual Indicator** which specifies just as they *sought to complete their act of obedience* when Paul was with them, at the time of this writing they’re to continue this pursuit with a view of *complete compliance* “**with fear and trembling**”. This aorist verb is then followed by a present imperative verb which *commands* them to “**continuously choose**” (middle voice) to produce qualities accompanying their rebirth. Of course, as previously discussed, even though believers *constantly endeavor*, we never truly reach *our objective of perfect obedience*.¹²

One final comment about Contextual Indicators is warranted since near the beginning of this article I stated we should translate middle/passive voice endings with the relevance of both. This assessment is based on the **Absence of Contextual Indicators**, for the Greek language doesn’t contain any signals which point toward choosing the sense of one voice over the other. On the other hand, the language structure surrounding a dual imperative/indicative verb form almost always contains other action words and/or verbal content which points to the intent. Moreover, since very few Translations deviate with regard to this grammatical issue, it’s easy to avoid pitfalls by simply sticking with commonly used Versions. For, they appropriately adhere to the way these verbs have been routinely translated for centuries.

Evaluating These Stances

Before continuing, I’d like to say everyone I’ve met who holds either view is honestly convinced their position represents how God’s ‘grace’ currently works. With that said, I’m going to share what I believe are some unintended consequences which result from taking these stands.

One **Foundational Principle** I see undergirding the above two definitions is: *Grace Represents a Total Absence of Humanly-Generated-Works*. Also, the practice of teaching Christians are required to produce good works is often given the derogatory label of ‘legalism’. However, neither of these concepts can be found in Paul’s Letters. To address the conviction ‘grace’ is an absence of works, some believe God gives us initial saving faith, which is a conviction I also embrace. But, many of these brethren are also convinced the Spirit causes a believer’s post-redemption works, possibly even the evil ones. By this point, a reader should realize I don’t agree with either of these positions.

Others who hold the Second View of ‘grace’ just outlined *don’t classify saving ‘faith’ in Christ as a ‘work’*. Similarly, the post-salvation-practice of considering oneself dead to sin and alive to God is *another exercise which frequently isn’t*

categorized as a human ‘work’ (Rom. 6:11). I don’t understand these last two definitions, for I perceive Scripture defining a ‘work’ as any thought, choice or act originating from the human heart or mind.

Those who believe “faith” isn’t a “work” commonly cite Romans 4:4-5 for support. However, in that context, Paul explains the “works of the law” have no part in gaining “righteousness” before God, instead, salvation is gained “through law-faith” (διὰ νομοῦ πιστεως – 3:27). In a nutshell, this passage indicates Christians should apply the principle of “faith”, which was initially taught in the Law, to “trust” in the work of Christ but not the ongoing works-aspect of the Law (Deut. 32:20, 37; Psalm 2:12; 33:21-22; 40:3-8; 56:3-4; Rom. 3:20-22, 30-31; Gal. 3:24). Then, in chapters 8 through 11, the source of this “faith” is divulged, that is, God’s elect are the ones who will believe based on His prompting. In these four chapters, Paul applies the same teaching in regard to saving faith which we saw Jesus develop in the Gospel of John – *the act of believing* is a “work of God” exercised by His elect (6:29, 36-37, 40, 64-65, 68-70).

Also, it’s important to realize the term ‘legalism’ was devised to connect a negative connotation with the idea Christians are required to produce “works”. However, we’ve seen dozens of contexts where Paul legitimizes this need and gives in-depth descriptions of how Body members accomplish these “works”. When discussing “works”, Paul simply separates the deeds we should do by the Spirit’s “power” which are recorded in the Church Epistles from “works” specified by the Mosaic Law. And we’re repeatedly cautioned to stay away from “the works of the law” since they appeal to and energize our “flesh”.

Another **Foundational Principle** and *Featured Attraction* accompanying the view “good works” are Spirit-caused is: *This Stance Demonstrates True Humility*. The explanation goes something like, ‘Our position not only denies we have any part in producing works, but it also gives all credit to God since He is the sole actor behind all of our deeds.’ If this reasoning was supported by truth intended for the Church, it would be spot-on. However, if this perspective is founded on New Covenant Scripture which isn’t in effect today, *this belief would actually produce a false type of humility*. For then, the flesh, not the Spirit, would govern resulting in an inclination to justify decisions and actions instead of taking ownership for them. Also, a sense of entitlement would arise with outlooks like, ‘The Lord is doing this in my life’ or ‘The Spirit is convicting (or telling) me to do this’. Basically, this mentality leads believers to think they’re always right and routinely defend their actions as Spirit-led.

In conversations with Body members, when I become aware a person holds this perspective and there’s interest in chatting about it, I try to make the most of the opportunity. To begin with, I’ll ask a question to evaluate where they’re thinking is

at like, 'Do you sin'? If this brother admits he does, my follow-up will be, 'So God is causing your sin, right?' Usually, I'll receive the quick response, 'What?' Then, I'll elaborate, 'Well, if God causes your good works and you still sin, isn't He causing you to sin each time He refrains from leading you to do good?' Most frequently, I find Christians haven't considered this dilemma. Sometimes this technique stimulates further discussion. When it doesn't, I pray this saint will continue studying the Word as well as for future potential for dialog.

Then, in conversations with those who believe God causes both our "good" and evil "works", I try another approach. Initially, I need to assess whether this brother is aware his view creates a basis for justifying decisions and actions. If I gather he truly believes the Spirit leads him in everything, then my aim is to decipher what Scripture is used to support his thinking. Most often, parts of Bible directed to Israel are cited for evidence. So, next, I attempt to bring attention to passages that apply to the Body of Christ which simultaneously introduces discussion about where Church members find God's current instruction.

As this exchange progresses, it can become very interesting since the Word contains so many types of Spirit-sourced involvement in the lives of men, and very few Christians think all of these are in effect today. Also, during our chat, I keep in mind everyone believes the Church Epistles are both inspired and intended for us. So, the only question which remains is how these portions describing the Spirit's work today correspond with other biblical teaching. Where the dialog goes from there is anyone's guess. But one thing I'm sure of, when gracious discussion around the Word is encouraged, everyone profits.

My primary concern about the notion God automatically works His will through us is on many occasions I've witnessed this viewpoint generate a *defensive posture of justifying non-Christian behavior*. Also, I've observed believers who downplay accountability end up noticeably deficient in fending off moral and ethical temptation. For, sinful responses occur when we lack proper checks and balances to gauge and/or control our own thoughts and actions (Rom. 14:22-23; 2 Cor. 10:3-6; 1 Tim. 4:6-16). So, unless we develop a *healthy level of Spirit-motivated self-critique* to evaluate choices and deeds, we'll retain the tendencies of our old man which prod us toward a staunch mindset of self-justification and keep us on a *Progress-Hampering-Course*. On a personal note, I've seen my "flesh" win out all too often before realizing I hadn't been attentive enough to avoid the enticement of sin.

Furthermore, I believe this passive view of Spirit-caused works minimizes awareness of the Devil's resolve, for he's on the prowl to derail our spiritual growth and testimony. With reference to this, Paul expresses fear for the Corinthians that, just as Eve was deceived by the serpent, they'll be misled by

false teaching (2 Cor. 11:3; Eph. 4:14). Also, we're warned not to allow the Devil to occupy a "place" in our life, for if we do, he'll gain a foothold and convince us to "sin". Instead, we're to *take preparatory action so we'll be able to battle* wicked spiritual forces and protect ourselves from their vices (Eph. 4:26-27; 6:11-16).

Likewise, Peter cautions Christians to be morally established and sober in order to have the capacity to oppose our "adversary" who "continuously walks seeking someone to devour". For, when believers are *consumed*, we become *obsessed with evil intent* (1 Pet. 5:8-9). So, fittingly, a few verses later, Peter states his Letter provides a road for spiritual victory, "this is the true grace of God, in which you are to stand" (v. 12 – emphasis mine). This reminder should alert us: **Satan Promotes Everything Counterfeit to How "Grace" Currently Works.**

Final Considerations

This thesis contains a great many thoughts, but I'll close by focusing on a few I consider essential for Christian growth. First, it's vital that believers spend individual time in the Word reading, studying, and checking out everything we're taught. During this life-directing exercise, we should ask, 'Do I believe a certain principle because I see it in the Word or because I learned it from someone else?' When we simply follow teaching or prepared lessons, we set ourselves up to both evade personal responsibility and escalate the potential of being led off course. This lackadaisical approach will reap the consequences of restricting our growth, opening us up to deception from "every wind of teaching", and **Causing Impotence to our spirit/Spirit Dynamic** (Eph. 4:14).

Therefore, to assist in formulating beliefs, we should supplement instruction from teachers by use of reference materials, alternate Translations, and the Greek text (or Interlinear).²⁴ I've found when Christians engage with the actual text God chose to deliver His Word in and interpret each section in light of its literary setting, we obtain the most accurate, balanced, and life changing convictions. Then, as this routine becomes our primary source for edification, we will experience constructive, Spirit-based stimulation which awakens our inner spirit to God's mandate for our lives (Eph. 5:8-20).

To more specifically outline this method of study, after assessing what a passage teaches, we should allow the text to mean what it says, then analyze it and determine its proper application. This approach may confirm current beliefs, or what we learn may call for alteration. Either way, this process builds a secure foundation for transformation to take place. Bear in mind, if spiritual renewal is to happen, it requires open-mindedness and a willingness to travel the road of

change. The other option is spinning our wheels in a **Theological Rut of Tradition-Based-Doctrine**.

Second, how we comprehend certain passages is central to the way we will apply biblical truth. In my experience, John 1:16-17 is one of these pivotal contexts since it contains the term “grace”. One’s conception of this “grace” forms a hinge point which swings them in a distinct direction of how to apply Scripture. If this passage is understood to speak of *God’s unmerited favor allied with the New Covenant* and not mystery “grace” for the Body, **This View Frees a Person from The Law-Oriented Outlook: All Truth in the Gospels is Intended for the Church**. At the same time, an adequate grasp of this portion helps Christians set their sight on the Church Epistles for universal guidance.

Finally, I sincerely believe all Christians want to be led by the Spirit. So, here’s a brief restatement of what this article teaches about how divine guidance works: After trusting in the blood of Christ the Father “justifies” us in a positional sense to be “acceptable” to Him, He makes us morally “alive” to be aware of right and wrong, and He gives us the “Spirit” for “power” to comprehend His Word and produce “good works”. As a result, we possess the ability to “choose” to “walk” by the Spirit. And, when we follow this course of action, we can put on “the new man” for godly living and squelch the sin dwelling in our “flesh” (Rom. 5:1-2; 8:11-13; Gal. 5:16-18; Eph. 2:4-5).

I hope **This Proposal Outlining the Believer’s Responsibility** to produce “good works” **plus Our Ability-to-Respond** by accessing the indwelling Spirit will challenge you to solidify your own alliance with this Member of the Godhead. For, Romans 6:16 says we can decide to be “**slaves of sin**” or “**slaves of obedience resulting in righteousness**”. Truly, we are free to choose, but *we can’t escape the reality each choice we make propels us into greater control by one of these two entities*. Also, Galatians 6:7-8 tells us, “**You aren’t to choose to continuously be made deceived** (πλανασθε – **present, middle/passive-command**), **God doesn’t continuously choose to be mocked**” (μυκτηριζεται – **present, middle/passive**) for, “**the one who sows in the direction of his own flesh will reap corruption out of the flesh, also the one sowing in the direction of the Spirit, will reap** (qualities associated with) **eternal life out of the Spirit**”.

So, what are we going to do, and what habits will we develop? Because, if we walk in the flesh we’ll be misled, taunt our Father, and produce sin-based works (Gal. 6:6-7). On the other hand, by walking in the Spirit we’ll yield fruitful deeds which correspond with the eternal life for which God saved us as His *zealous* “**people-possession**” (Tit. 2:14; ‘peculiar people’ – KJV). The Scripture’s clear. Each choice we make during everyday life is of utmost importance to God, for *He*

wants us to be under His Spirit's control so we can be happy, productive, and reap rewards.

Therefore, if we want to align ourselves with God's purpose, our only real choice is to walk in obedience. And, to do this, we need to learn the lesson, "My grace is sufficient for you, for power causes itself to be made perfect in weakness" ("τελειται" – **present, middle/passive** – 2 Cor. 12:9). Accordingly, we need to pay attention to deny our ego-driven desire and humbly seek the Spirit's help so we can please our Father since apart from His divine power we are helplessly weak (Rom. 7:18). It's not really that complicated. Our personal advancement, edification value to the Body of Christ, and testimony to the world all depend on how well the Spirit functions through us.

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New Testament quotes are original translations by the author from the Greek texts.
Old Testament quotes are from the New American Standard Version unless otherwise indicated.

All Bible Versions cited in this article can be found on the internet.

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- 1) In my assessment, the central portions of Scripture forming the basis for the *Church Epistles* are Paul's 13 Letters since their content expounds God's present "administration" (οικονομιαν), *household management* or *dispensation*, which defines the nature and function of Christ's Body. For, this record is state22be the revelation of formerly un-prophesied "mystery" (μυστηριον) truth which Jesus made known through Paul (Eph. 3:2-3). Also, I believe the content of Peter's two Letters and The Book of Hebrews fully aligns with Paul's writings and, as such, should be equally applied to the Church (2 Pet. 3:15-16). My perspective on how John's Letters relate will be touched on in several places throughout this article. Lastly, another article in this series is planned to deliberate the content and purpose of the Book of James.
 - 2) The Present Tense Verb(s) in this verse occurs in a form which, by itself, can be interpreted to be either the Indicative or Imperative Mode. How this form(s) should be translated based on its two potentially different functions will be discussed later in the article.
 - 3) These Versions are: **Mace** – 'do not drink to excess, for that tends to dissoluteness, but be regal'd with spiritual entertainments'; **Rotherham** – 'And be not getting drunk with wine, in which is dissoluteness, but be getting filled in Spirit'; **Twentieth Century** – 'Do not drink wine to excess, for that leads to profligacy; but seek to be filled with the Spirit of God'; **Williams** – 'Stop getting drunk on wine, for that means profligacy, but ever be filled with the Spirit'; and **WNT** – 'Do not over-indulge in wine--a thing in which excess is so easy--but

drink deeply of God's Spirit' (vv. 18-19). These Version renderings are found at <https://studybible.info/compare>.

- 4) Translations rendering the infinitive “ἐπιτελεῖσθαι” with the passive voice sense and indicate sufferings ‘are (being) accomplished in’ believers are: **KJV, Geneva, Wesley, and DBY**. Additionally, **CLV** reads sufferings are ‘being completed in’ believers. Translations rendering this infinitive with the middle voice sense emphasize sufferings ‘are being experienced by’ believers or that the brethren ‘are (is) experiencing’ them are: **ESV, Williams, and AUV**. Also, **NIV** says a believer ‘is undergoing’ sufferings and **Thompson** renders this as sufferings you (the believers) ‘are undergone’. Finally, **NASV** reads experiences of suffering ‘are being accomplished by’ believers. Renderings from less available Versions listed are found at <https://studybible.info/compare>.
- 5) Early Translations rendering the infinitive “ἐπιτελεῖσθαι” with the sense of both middle and passive voices are: **Tyndale** – ‘whom resist stedfast in the fayth remebrynge that ye do but fulfill the same affliccions which are apoynted to youre brethren that are in the worlde’; **MSTC** – ‘whom resist, steadfast in the faith, remembering that ye do but fulfill the same afflictions which are appointed to your brethren that are in the world’; **Matthew** – ‘whom resist stedfast in the fayth remembring, that ye do but fulfill the same affliccions, which are appointed to youre brethren that are in the worlde’; and **Twentieth Century** – ‘Stand firm against him, strong in your faith; knowing, as you do, that the very sufferings which you are undergoing are being endured to the full by your Brotherhood throughout the world.’ These Version renderings are found at <https://studybible.info/compare>.
- 6) In Koine Greek of the New Testament era, the **Middle Voice form** in verbs, participles and infinitives which express action (or being) basically indicates *the subject acts upon itself to perform the action (or being)*. This activity can be expressed by the concept of *causing itself to do (or be) something* thus, in reference to people, it's well translated with the idea of *making a choice*. The **Passive Voice form** indicates *the subject is acted upon by a force outside of itself*. This function *effectively turns the subject into the direct object* since the subject is *made to do (or be) something* by that outside force. Action words (or words of being) which occur in a Dual Middle or Passive form convey the meaning of both voices.
- 7) **Haweis** – ‘But if ye are under the conduct of the Spirit, ye are not under the law’; **Twentieth Century** – ‘But, if you follow the guidance of the Spirit, you are not subject to Law’; **Moffatt** – ‘If you are under the sway of the Spirit, you are not under the Law’; and **MNT** – ‘But if you are habitually led by the Spirit you are not under law.’ Additionally, the following Versions render the verb “ἀγεσθε” with the idea of being ‘guided’ by the Spirit, which represents a less directive act than *being led*: **Murdock, Goodspeed, Williams, and BBE**. These Version renderings are found at <https://studybible.info/compare>.
- 8) The meaning, ‘a weak, silly woman’, is given by: *Abridgment of Liddell and Scott's Greek-English Lexicon*, Oxford, October 1871, p. 146.
- 9) **NIV** – ‘are swayed by all kinds of evil desires’; **Mace** – ‘abetted by their own subtle passions’; **Haweis** – ‘actuated by a variety of passions’; **Anderson** – ‘influenced by various desires’; **JuliaSmith** – ‘led away with various eager desires’; **Rotherham** – ‘led on by manifold covetings’; and **Goodspeed** – ‘under the control of all sorts of impulses.’ Renderings from less available Versions listed are found at <https://studybible.info/compare>.

10) **NIV** – ‘you were influenced and led astray to mute idols’; **MSTC** – ‘went your ways unto dumb idols, even as ye were led’; **Mace** – ‘you were seduced by your leaders, to the worship of dumb idols’; **Etheridge** – ‘unto idols which have no voice you were led without discernment’; **Sawyer** – ‘you followed dumb idols as you were led’; **Rotherham** – ‘unto the dumb idols, howsoever ye were being led, ye were seduced’; **TGNT** – ‘you were following after dumb idols, as you were led’; **WNT** – ‘you went astray after dumb idols, wherever you happened to be led.’; **Goodspeed** – ‘you would stray off, as impulse directed, to idols that could not speak’; **MNT** – ‘you went astray after dumb idols, wherever he be led’; **ISV** – ‘you were enticed and led astray to worship idols that couldn't even speak’; and **VIN & BSB** – ‘you were influenced and led astray to mute idols.’ Renderings from less available Versions listed are found at <https://studybible.info/compare>.

11) Aorist Tenses always represent the concept of *completed action*. However, the timing of this action isn't equal to our English past tense unless an Aorist occurs in combination with the Indicative Mode (only verbs have mode). But, when an Aorist Tense is combined with the Imperative, Subjunctive, or Optative Mode, a responsive action is required for its completed-action-sense to take place. Also, when Participles or Infinitives occur in an Aorist form, they don't automatically indicate an action is complete, for completion of the act (or being) depends on whether or not the subject has accomplished it. So, when an Aorist Tense occurs in words of action (or being) which are in any other form than the Indicative Mode, the completion of its action is conditioned upon additional grammatical and contextual factors.

12) In Philippians 3:12, Paul uses the perfect tense verb “**I have not already chosen to begin and continue to be made complete**” (οὐχ . . . ἤδη τετελειώμαι – **perfect, middle/passive**) to indicate he hadn't reached perfection. This specifies he hadn't adequately chosen (middle voice) to utilize the Spirit's power to enable (passive voice) him not to sin.⁶ Since this was true, verse 13 includes two present, middle/passive participles to describe the course Paul took in his pursuit of perfection, “**one thing, indeed continuously choosing to be made to forget the things behind** (in the past), **also continuously choosing to be made to extend out to the things before** (potential things to come).” These middle/passive forms represent one more place demonstrating the same principle seen in other passages which contain formulas for spiritual renewal and teach that believers first need to choose (middle voice) to submit to the Spirit, then He can activate His power (passive voice) within us.

13) Bible students need to be careful not depend on any one Greek reference source to determine grammatical forms. For, one instance which demonstrates there may be theological bias is when action (or being) words occur in the dual middle/passive form. In reference to “*ψευδεσθε*”, the online Greek interlinear: <https://biblehub.com/interlinear>, which I often use, cites this verb as a ‘middle’ voice form. However, Perschbacher's *The New Analytical Greek Lexicon* cites the same form as ‘mid./pass.’ (meaning *middle or passive* – January 2006 edition, pg. 442). Then, Zondervan's *The Analytical Greek Lexicon* (1975 edition) designates this same form as ‘mid.’ (*middle voice*) on page 441, but also shows this exact verb ending is ‘Passive Voice’ in the table of a ‘Regular Verb’ on page xvii, in its introductory section.

14) In the Greek language, action (or being) conveyed by an Aorist Participle always precedes the action (or being) of verbs, participles or infinitives it modifies, even when these associated words of action (or being) are in the aorist tense. I was first taught this definition in Bible school and have since confirmed it by routinely testing its multi-hundreds of occurrences in the New Testament. The *basic meaning* conveyed by any grammatical form is determined when some

contexts require its usage to be understood in a certain way and, in addition, when this same meaning can be applied to every occurrence. A few examples where contexts necessitate aorist participial action (or being) preceding the action (or being) of associated words are John 12:36; Rom. 5:1; Gal. 4:4; Eph. 1:9, 11, 13, 20; 2:14-15; Heb. 5:9.

- 15) The meaning ‘innovate’ for this word is found in: *Abridgment of Liddell and Scott’s Greek-English Lexicon*, Oxford, October 1871, p. 341.
- 16) By definition, Greek nouns refer to a person, place or thing just like in English. These designations represent real things containing *essence* or *substance*. So, when a verb is absent in the Greek text, a *verb of being* is always understood since essence (or being) already exists within the noun. This is why nouns, pronouns, adjectives, participles, articles, and infinitives with articles (all parts of speech with declension endings) are called **Substantives** because they possess inherent substance, essence, or being.
- 17) Citations are from: *The Septuagint with Apocrypha: Greek and English*, Sir Lancelot C. L. Brenton, Zondervan, October 1978. The term ‘Septuagint’ refers to any edition of Greek texts translated from O. T. Hebrew. Its most often referred to by the symbol LXX, the Roman numeral ‘seventy’, which is a rounded down designation of the seventy-two – six from each tribe of Israel – scholars involved in translating the Pentateuch from Hebrew to Greek in the third century BC. This definition is derived from: thegospelcoalition.org.
- 18) Sometimes the phrase “new covenant” (καινης διαθηκης) in Second Corinthians 3:6 is interpreted to mean a different new covenant than the One promised to Israel in the O. T. since this phrase lacks a Greek article. However, in the Greek text of Hebrews 8:8 where Jeremiah 31:31 is quoted, the phrase “new covenant” doesn’t contain an article, yet the context clearly designates that phrase as the New Covenant in Jeremiah. The Greek article never changes the essence or meaning of any term it’s coupled with, but its grammatical function is simply to highlight that term as *a primary focus*. Its use represents a similar effect to the technique of underlining or italicizing text in English and is just one of many ways the Greek Language can designate a point of emphasis. Many passages contain two or more words with articles, so equal focus should be attributed to each.
- 19) *Ananias & Sapphira and The Kingdom Community*, Mark Stearns. This point of grammar is covered on page 3 of the ‘pdf’ (accessible at the end of the main article) under the exposition of Acts 5:3. This work is found under the ‘articles’ tab in the ‘exposition’ section of edifiedliving.net.
- 20) The Greek article never changes the essence or meaning of any term it’s coupled with, but its grammatical function is simply to highlight that term as *a primary focus*. Its use represents a similar effect to the technique of underlining or italicizing text in English and is just one of many ways the Greek Language can designate a point of emphasis. Many passages contain two or more words with articles, so equal focus should be attributed to each.
- 21) First John contains some instructions consistent with New Covenant teachings in the O. T., Gospels, and Book of Acts. Three notable examples which differ from *mystery revelation* are: Believers don’t need teachers because of the Spirit’s “anointing” (1 John 2:20, 26-27; John 14:26; 16:13); they won’t be “continuously practicing sin” (1 John 3:9; 5:18 – present tense); and they’ll receive whatever is asked in prayer (3:21-22; 5:14-15). However, this Book also seems to contain

teachings which align with mystery truth: Believers, who can sin, are indwelt by the Spirit (2:1-2; 4:1-6) and are judicially acceptable to God through the Son (2:2; 5:10-12).

Two of these points appear to contradict since some verses say believers don't sin, then one verse seems to indicate they can. This same dichotomy is seen in the Gospels where it is clear believers can sin, but this tendency will change after they receive the Spirit. But, since this Letter was written after the Spirit was received, these teachings are confusing. And I believe the only way to reconcile issues like this is to realize God intended the revelation recorded by Paul to be the standard of truth for the Body of Christ. Then, in light of this standard, we can judge how all other teaching fits into His present program (1 Cor. 9:15-18; Col. 1:24 – 2:3; Eph. 3:1-9; 1 Tim. 1:4-11; 2 Tim. 1:13-14). I use this same method to determine whether truths contained in the Book of Acts and the Epistles written during that timeframe characterize teaching from the New Covenant or Mystery Revelation. Truths which were both given for the Church and still continue should be applied today.

22) *The “Perfect” Scenario, An Exposition of First Corinthians 13:8-13*, Chuck Schiedler, Appendix V, pg. 25 on the pdf (accessible at the end of the main article). This work can be found under the ‘articles’ tab in the ‘exposition’ section of edifiedliving.net.

23) **Contextual Indicators** are any structure of grammar or syntax which lends evidence to identify the meaning intended by Greek words or points of grammar which occur in the exact same form yet have verifiably different functions. Example: Contextual Indicators determine whether the Greek letter *Omicron* “o” is a *masculine singular article* or a *neuter relative pronoun*. **Grammar** constitutes the form a Greek word occurs in and defines how that form relates with other words or points of grammar within any context. **Syntax**, built from the Greek words meaning *arranged with*, constitutes how words or phrases relate to one another in any context.

24) An Online Greek Interlinear can be found at: <https://biblehub.com/interlinear>. I routinely use this source since it provides a basic translation, compares that translation with the KJV and NASV, contains a concordance to locate where words occur in the N. T., and includes a parsing guide which details the specific form of each part of speech.

Appendix I – Definition of Greek Tenses, Voices & Modes

The Six Greek Tenses:

Unlike English, *Tenses in the Greek Language* can represent time, but often they indicate time only when combined with other points of grammar or in contexts which specify time. However, **Greek Tenses always signify Kind of Action** (or being) which are: **Ongoing** and **Completed**. Four of the six tenses convey one kind of Action (or being) and two tenses convey both.

The **Present Tense** signifies: *Ongoing Action* (or being). This Tense doesn't specify when the Action (or being) begins or ends. Also, this Ongoing Action (or

being) may be staged in a past, present or future timeframe designated by its context.

Translates: “continuously”

The **Imperfect Tense** signifies: *Ongoing Action* (or being) *occurring in past time* relative to its context’s past, present or future timeframe.

Translates: “was/were continuously”

The **Aorist Tense** signifies: *Completed Action* (or being) but, in itself, doesn’t specify the point or segment of time in which this action (or being) becomes complete. When this Tense is combined with the Indicative Mode, it’s like our English past tense and specifies the Action (or being) is Complete relative to its contextual timeframe. But, when the Aorist Tense is combined with Imperative, Subjunctive, or Optative Mode Verbs as well as with Participles or Infinitives, the Completion of its Action (or being) is dependent on other factors.

Translates: “complete”, “(be) completed”, or “completely”

The **Future Tense** signifies: *Completed Action* (or being) *at a future time* relative to its context. The completed Action (or being) of this Tense will occur when that timeframe is reached and all related requirements are accomplished.

Translates: “will complete”, “will be completed”, or “will completely”

The **Perfect Tense** combines: *Completed and Ongoing Action* (or being). It specifies an Action (or being) is Complete, then this achievement has Ongoing Effects. This Dual Action (or being) may happen in a past, present, or future timeframe designated by its context.

Translates: “begin(s) and continue(s)”, “has/have begun and continue(s)”

The **Pluperfect Tense** combines: *Completed and Ongoing Action* (or being) *which occurs in past time* relative to the past, present or future timeframe designated by its context.

Translates: “had/have begun and continued”

The Three Greek Voices:

Voice designates *who or what does the action* (or being) of a verb, participle or infinitive.

Active Voice – signifies: *The Subject acts upon a Direct Object.*

Translates: “actively”

Middle Voice – signifies: *The Subject acts upon Itself, Emphasizing*

its *Purposeful Involvement* in the action (or being).
For people – “choose(s)/chose”
For a thing(s) – “causes(ed)/causing/will cause” + “itself/themselves”

Passive Voice – signifies: *An Outside Agent acts upon the Subject*
which in function *Makes the Subject the Direct Object*.
Translates: “be made” or “be caused”

The Four Greek Modes:

Mode determines how *Verb Action (or being) Relates to Reality*.

The **Indicative Mode** signifies or ‘indicates’: *Present Reality*.
Translates: as a *Statement* or *Question*.

The **Imperative Mode** signifies: *Reality which Must Be Attained*.
In function, it conveys *A Command* or ‘imperative’ which has to be obeyed in order to reach a goal.
Translates: “you are to” or “let us/them”

[Imperative Modes only occur in 2nd and 3rd person forms]
For 1st person plural Commands, the Subjunctive Mode is used.
Translates: “we should” or “let us”

The **Subjunctive Mode** signifies: *Reality which Can Be Attained*.
This reality will occur only after an *Underlying Condition* is fulfilled.
[‘Subjunctive’ literally means *The Junction Underneath*]
Translates: “might”, “may”, “can” or “should”

The **Optative Mode** signifies: *A Possible Reality which May Be Attained*.
Translates: “may/might possibly” – often used in wishes/prayers

Appendix II – Aorist Middle Participle / Imperative Verb Combo

The 75 Translations cited in this Appendix can be accessed at:
<https://studybible.info/compare>. First, type in a verse and push search.
Then, click on compare (your verse) in other Bible versions and scroll past the Interlinear Versions to English Translations.

29 of these **75 Versions** render the **Aorist Middle Participle** in Colossians 3:9 with the sense **The Old Man Still Needs to Be Put Off**, which is consistent with my rendering. Some translate the full phrase: 'that the old man with his works be put off' (Earliest Versions – **MSTC**, **Tyndale** and **Matthew**). Then, eight Versions translate it 'having put off the old man' (**Living Oracles**, **YLT**, **Julia Smith**, **DBY**, **Worrell**, **MKJV**, **LITV** and **BLB**). Three translate it 'having stripped/stript off the old man' (**Diaglott** without 'off', **Rotherham** and **ACV**). And **Godbey** renders it 'having laid aside the old man'.

Conversely, **46** of these **75 Versions** render this Aorist Participle with the idea **The Old Man Has Already Been Put Off**, like the **KJV**, **NASV**, **NIV** and **ESV**. These are: **Great**, **Geneva**, **Bishops**, **KJV Cambridge**, **KJV Strong's**, **Mace**, **Whiston**, **Westley**, **Worsley**, **Haweis**, **Webster**, **Webster Strong's**, **ABU**, **Anderson**, **Noyes**, **ERV**, **ASV**, **ASV Strong's**, **JPS ASV Byz**, **WNT**, **Moffatt**, **Goodspeed**, **Riverside**, **Williams**, **BBE**, **ECB**, **AUV**, **Common**, **WEB**, **WEB Strong's**, **NHEB**, **AKJV**, **AKJV Strong's**, **KJC**, **KJ2000**, **UKJV**, **RKJNT**, **CKJV Strong's**, **CAB**, **WPNT**, **NSB**, **ISV**, **LEB**, **BSB**, **MLV**, and **VIN**.

By sheer numbers, it may seem the second group is the most accurate. However, **in six other contexts which contain this Aorist Middle Participle – Imperative Verb Combo**, **None of These 46 Translations or the KJV, NASV, NIV or ESV Render Any of These Similar Grammatical Combinations With the Idea the Aorist Middle Participial Action is Already Completed like they do in Colossians 3:9.**

Instead, **These 6 Grammatical Couplets** (Eph. 4:25, 6:13, 6:14-15; James 1:21; 1 Pet. 1:13, 2:1-2) are translated with the idea **The Aorist Middle Participial Action Still Needs to be Completed**. Again, this conforms to the way I translated this construction in Colossians 3:9. And, expanded translations of some of these contexts can be observed in **Appendix III**. So, **These Same 79 Versions Together Provide 470 More Examples** of how this **Greek Construction** should be rendered.

Furthermore, **All 79 Versions** render **6 more Aorist Active Participle – Imperative Verb Combos** in a manner which indicates **The Aorist Participial Action Has Not Yet Been Completed** (Matt. 21:2; 26:26; 26:27; 28:19; 2 Tim. 4:11; 1 Pet. 5:6-7). This provides **An Additional 470 Examples** supporting my premise Colossians 3:9 is not translated correctly in the 50 Versions cited.

Only the Twentieth Century Version renders two of these similar grammatical combinations in a way which indicates an Aorist Middle Participial Action is already complete, otherwise, it translates 11 of the 13 examples cited above in the reverse manner (Eph. 4:25; 1 Pet. 2:1-2). Oddly enough, this Version renders

Colossians 3:9, 'Never lie to one another. Get rid of your old self and its habits', which conveys a thought consistent with my translation.

The Other 78 Translations Consistently Render the above 6 Aorist Middle Participle – Imperative Verb Combos as well as the 6 Combos containing Aorist Active Participles in three ways: First, some render it: *if the command is to be fulfilled, the subject first has to do the action of the Aorist Participle*, which is how I translated Colossians 3:9. Versions taking this approach begin their renderings with terminology like 'having', 'after having' or 'when we have'.

Second, some render these Aorist Participles with a *present tense sense* which indicates *both the participial and imperative verb actions are progressively accomplished together*. I don't agree with this method since the Greek language commonly uses present tense participles to achieve this effect, so this rendering loses the significance conveyed by an aorist participle. Third, often these Aorist Participles are rendered with *the sense of a command*, probably since they occur in combination with an imperative verb. Again, this rendering loses the sense that aorist participial action must occur first as a prerequisite for obeying the command. I encourage you to look into these contexts.

Conclusion:

There's no grammatical support for translating Colossians 3:9 with the idea the putting off the old man has been completed. For, overwhelming support of **900+ Examples** show the same Bible Versions which translate the Aorist Middle Participle in Colossians 3:9 as already completed *translate Similar Constructions Everywhere Else in an opposite manner*.

Therefore, this question should arise, 'When did this trend begin?' It's interesting none of the 5 oldest Translations found on the website <https://studybible.info/compare> translate Colossians 3:9 in a way indicating its Aorist Participle's Action is already complete (**Wycliffe, Tyndale, Coverdale, MSTC, and Matthew**). I don't know if earlier Versions exist, but the **Great** Version of AD 1536 is the first one listed on this site which renders this verse with the sense "the old man" has already been put off. As pointed out earlier, once a Bible Version sets a **Translation-Precedent**, unfortunately, *subsequent Translations often follow suit*.

The next logical question is, 'What was the reason behind some Translators' chose to render Colossians 3:9 in a different manner than they render other similar Greek constructions?' Based on the content of that verse, I can only deduce this was done because of theological bias. For, Romans 6:6 says our "old man" was "crucified" so I think many Translators *interjected this concept*

into their rendition of Colossians 3:9. Thus, they abandoned objectivity based on the known linguistic meaning of what an aorist participle conveys.

This assessment may sound harsh, but the truth often is. For, no man is perfect. In fact, all of us are far from it. The reality is subjective interpretation can affect any teaching, commentary, reference material, or Translation, including my own. That's why I hold the strong conviction all Christians should embrace their responsibility and develop a healthy level of critical thinking to minimize presupposition in their own study or teaching of the Word. And, I believe promoting and seeking to maintain dialog with other Body members is the best way to resolve issues like how Colossians 3:9 is translated.

One Final Issue:

Some reference books suggest, since some contexts contain an Aorist Participle occurring in text order before the Imperative Verb and in other contexts a Participle follows the Verb, this difference may affect their relational meaning. However, relationship in the Greek language is based on the structural form of words, not their physical positioning. Their placement can differ for at least three reasons: First, word order can be determined by accommodating additional words and/or grammatical constructions used in conjunction with any action word combo. Second, the Greek language doesn't contain punctuation marks, so word positioning is one method used to show connection or separation between words, phrases, and/or contexts. Third, an author's choice of which words or phrases to write first often accentuates them as the primary focus in a context.

Appendix III – Expanded Translations of Lifestyle Passages

Romans 6:12-16

“Therefore, do not actively continuously let sin reign (βασιλευετω – **active, present-command**) in your mortal body unto the outcome to continuously obey its lusts; also, you aren't to continuously present (μηδε παριστανετε – **present-command**) your members as instruments of unrighteousness to sin, but you're to complete presenting (παραστησατε – **aorist-command**) yourselves to God as if those living out of the dead and your members as instruments of righteousness to God. For, sin will not complete exercising lordship over you, for you aren't existing under law but under grace. What, therefore? Should we complete the act of sinning because we don't exist under law but under grace? Don't let this reality possibly come into being! Don't you know that to whom you continuously present (παριστανετε – **present-indicative**) yourselves as slaves unto obedience, you

exist as slaves to what you continuously obey, whether of sin resulting in death or of obedience resulting in righteousness?”

Note: “παριστάνετε” occurs twice in this context, once each in verses 13 and 16. Although the grammatical form is identical, **Contextual Indicators** determine the first occurrence is *imperative* in mode (command) and the second is *indicative* (statement of fact).²³ Virtually all Translations render them in this manner.

Romans 12:1-2

“Therefore, I encourage you, brethren, through the mercies of God to complete presenting your bodies as a living, holy, well-pleasing sacrifice to God, as your logical service. And you aren’t to continuously choose to be made conformed (συσχηματιζεσθε – **middle/passive, command**) to this age, but you’re to continuously choose to be made transformed (μεταμορφουσθε – **middle/passive, command**) in relation to the renewal of the mind unto the outcome for you to approve what the good and well-pleasing and perfect will of God *is*.”

Romans 13:11-14

“And this, while knowing the time, that the hour already *exists* for you to be raised out of sleep, for now our salvation *is* nearer than when we completed the act of believing. The night has advanced, also the day has drawn near. Therefore, we should choose to complete putting aside (αποθωμεθα – **middle, aorist-subjunctive**) the works of darkness, also we should choose to complete putting on (ενδυσωμεθα – **middle, aorist-subjunctive**) the implements of light. As in the day, we should complete the act of walking (περιπατησωμεν – **aorist-subjunctive**) with good outward form, not in relation to carousing and drunken events, not in relation to (immoral) bed and licentious activities, not in relation to strife and jealousy; but you are to choose to complete putting on (ενδυσασθε – **middle, aorist-command**) the Lord Jesus Christ and you are not to continuously choose to make (μη ποιεισθε – **middle, present-command**) a forethought associated with the flesh toward lusts.”

2 Corinthians 3:17-18

“The Lord exists as the Spirit; also, where the Spirit of the Lord *is*, liberty *exists*. Also, in relation to the face which has chosen for itself to begin and continue to be made uncovered (ανακεκαλυμμενω – **middle/passive**), we all while choosing to be made to mirror-reflect (κατοπτριζομενοι – **middle/passive**) the glory of the Lord are to continuously choose to be made transformed (μεταμορφουμεθα –

middle/passive, command) to the same image from (απο – meaning: *from the source of*) **glory toward glory**, just as from the Lord *who is the Spirit*.”

I translated “μεταμορφουμεθα” in the imperative mode. But this same form can be interpreted as indicative in mode which would read, “we are continuously choosing to be made transformed”.

2 Corinthians 6:14, 7:1

“You aren’t to continuously choose to be made to become (μη γινεσθε – **middle/passive, command**) actively continuously yoked to unbelievers in an *other-than-appropriate* manner; for what partnership exists in relation to righteousness and lawlessness, or what commonality exists in relation to light toward darkness?” (6:14).

“Therefore, Beloved, while having these promises, we should actively complete cleansing (καθαρισωμεν – **active, aorist-subjunctive**) ourselves from every defilement of the flesh and spirit, while fully perfecting holiness in the fear of God” (7:1).

Ephesians 4:20-27

“Also, you didn’t learn about Christ in this way if indeed you heard about Him and were taught in Him – according as truth exists in Jesus – for you to choose to complete putting aside (αποθεσθαι – **middle, aorist-infinitive**) the old man which, according to the former manner of life, is continuously choosing for itself to be made corrupt (φθειρομενον – **middle/passive**) according to the lusts associated with deception, also *for you* to continuously choose to be made new again (ανανεουσθαι – **middle/passive, present-infinitive**) in relation to the Spirit (or “spirit”; see Rom. 8:10 + 16) associated with your mind and to choose to complete putting on (ενδυσασθαι – **middle, aorist-infinitive**) the new man, which has been created according to God in righteousness and holiness associated with the truth.”

“Wherefore, after having chosen to complete putting aside (αποθεμενοι – **middle, aorist-participle**) the lie, each one of you are to actively continuously speak (λαλειτε – **active, command**) truth with his neighbor, because we exist as members of one another. You’re to continuously choose to be made wrathful (οργιζεσθε – **middle/passive, command**) and you’re not to actively continuously sin (μη αμαρτανετε – **active, command**); don’t continuously let the sun set upon your excessive wrath, also you aren’t to actively continuously give (μηδε διδοτε – **active, command**) a place to the Devil.”

Ephesians 6:10-20

“Finally, you’re to continuously choose to be made empowered (ενδυναμουσθε – **middle/passive, command**) in the Lord and in the strength of His might. You’re to choose to complete putting on (ενδυσασθε – **middle, aorist-command**) the full armor of God toward the outcome for you to continuously choose to be able (δυνασθαι – **middle, present-infinitive**) to stand against the methods of the Devil; because the warfare in relation to us doesn’t exist against blood and flesh but against rulers, against authorities, against world powers associated with this darkness, against spiritual things of wickedness in the heavens. Because of this, you’re to actively complete taking up (αναλαβετε – **active, aorist-command**) the full armor of God in order that you may be made able to stand against in the evil day, and after having chosen to complete producing (κατεργασαμενοι – **middle, aorist-participle**; same root word as in Phil. 2:12) all things, to stand.”

“Therefore, you’re to actively completely stand (στητε – **active, aorist/command**) after having chosen to complete girding around (περιζωσαμενοι – **middle, aorist-participle**) your loin in truth and after having chosen to complete putting on (ενδυσασαμενοι – **middle, aorist-participle**) the breastplate of righteousness and after having chosen to complete binding under (υποδησασαμενοι – **middle, aorist-participle**) the feet in preparation associated with the gospel of peace; in all things after having actively completed taking up (αναλαβοντες – **active, aorist-participle**) the shield of faith in which you will choose to be completely able (δυνησεσθε – **middle, future-indicative**) to extinguish all the fiery darts associated with the Devil; and you’re to choose to complete receiving (δεξασθε – **middle, aorist-command**) the helmet associated with salvation and the sword of the Spirit which exists as the word of God; while continuously choosing to be made to pray (προσευχομενοι – **middle/passive**) through every prayer and petition in every time in the Spirit . . . and in behalf of me (Paul) in order that a message might be given to me . . . to boldly make known the mystery of the gospel . . . in order that I may choose to complete being bold (παρρησιασωμαι – **middle, aorist-subjunctive**) in it as it is necessary for me to speak.”

First Thessalonians 5:5-9

“For, you all exist as sons of light and sons of day. We don’t exist in association with the night, also not the darkness. Consequently therefore, we shouldn’t sleep as the rest, but we should continuously watch and be sober. For, the ones continuously sleeping, they sleep in association with the night and the ones continuously choosing to be made drunk (μεθυσκομενοι – **middle/passive**) they

get drunk in association with the night. Also, while existing in association with the day, we should continuously be sober after having chosen to complete putting on (ενδυσασμενοι – **middle, aorist-participle**) the breastplate associated with faith and love and the hope-helmet associated with salvation, because God hasn't placed us in the direction of wrath but in the direction of the possession of salvation through our Lord Jesus Christ."

Hebrews 13:1-3, 17

"Let brotherly love continuously remain (**active, command**). You aren't to continuously choose to be made to forget (μη επιλανθανεσθε – **middle/passive, command**) hospitality for, through this, certain ones were unaware after having entertained angels. You're to continuously choose to be made to remember (μιμνησκεσθε – **middle/passive, command**) prisoners who are continuously choosing to be made to suffer (κακουχουμενων – **middle/passive**) and as yourselves existing in body have chosen to begin and continue to be made bound with (συνδεδεμενοι – **middle/passive**) *them* . . . You're to continuously choose to be caused to be persuaded (πειθεσθε – **middle/passive, command**) in relation to those associated with you who're continuously choosing to be made to lead (ηγουμενοις – **middle/passive**); and you're to actively continuously yield (υπεικετε – **active, command**), for they themselves are continuously watching in behalf of your lives as those who will give an account, in order that they might continuously do this with joy and not while groaning, for this *is* unprofitable in relation to you."

First Peter 2:1-2, 13, 18; 3:1, 7

"Therefore, after having chosen to complete setting aside (αποθεμενοι – **middle, aorist-participle**) every evil and each deceitful thing and hypocrisies and envying and all slanders, as now-born babes, you actively complete the act of earnestly desiring (επιποθησατε – **active, aorist-command**) the logical, guileless milk in order that in it you may be caused to increase toward salvation" (2:1-2).

"You're to be made completely subordinate (υποταγητε – **passive, aorist-command**) to every man-made creation because of the Lord, whether in relation to a king as being supreme" (2:13).

"Household servants, while continuously choosing to be made subordinate (υποτασσομενοι – **middle/passive**) in relation to the masters in the midst of every fearful thing, not only to the good and equitable ones, but also to the crooked ones" (2:18).

“Likewise, wives, while continuously choosing to be made subordinate (υποτασσομεναι – **middle/passive**) to their own husbands in order that even if certain ones are disobeying the message, through the lifestyle of the wives, without a word, they will be completely gained” (κερδηθησονται – **passive, future-indicative**; 3:1).

“Likewise, husbands, while actively continuously living according to knowledge with the wife as a weaker vessel, actively continuously assigning *them* value as also fellow heirs associated with the grace of life toward the outcome for your prayers not to continuously cause themselves to be made hindered” (εγκοπτεσθαι – **middle/passive**; 3:7).

Appendix IV – A Christian’s Relation to the Law

In Romans 6:6, the expressed crucifixion of our “old man” and associated “deactivation” of the “body of sin” is *the same dually-altered experience* Christians have undergone in relation to the Law of Moses. For, there are passages which state we were “crucified” (συνεσταυρωμαι) to the Law as well as “deactivated” (κατηργηθημεν) from it, yet it is clear we can still choose to be under the Law’s condemning influence (Rom. 7:6; Gal. 2:19-20; 6:14; Eph. 2:15). Similarly, when we decide not to “walk” by the Spirit’s power, we downgrade ourselves to be controlled by our “old man” and will suffer from sin-induced codependency.