

# PARABLES

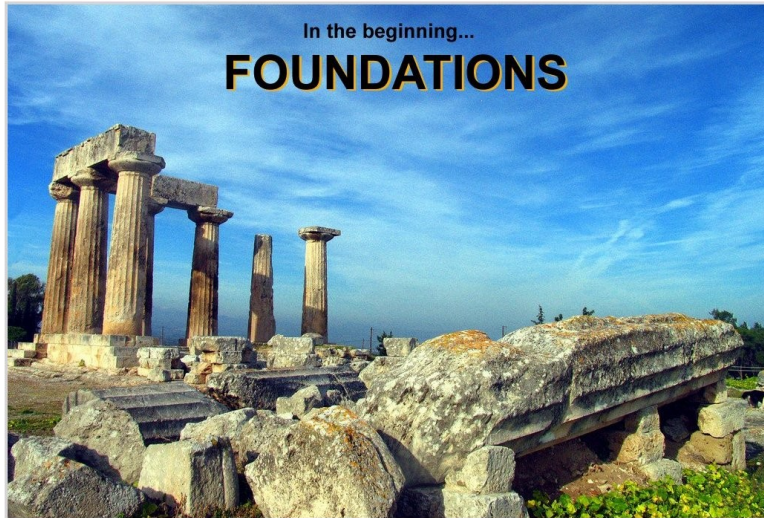
Bringing Hidden Things to Light



Psalms 78:2-4

I will open my mouth in a parable, I will utter dark sayings of old... We will not conceal them.

## Parables Bookshelf - Series 1.16.2



Psalms 11:3

If the foundations are destroyed, what can the righteous do?

Laying a firm foundation for understanding  
the beginnings of creation.

**Joseph Herrin**

This edition of Parables Bookshelf continues the book *Foundations*. Chapter 3 considers what is needed for a Christian to arrive at truth. Chapter four looks at the various “Beginnings” that are spoken of in the Bible and the need to correctly identify them.

### Scripture Memory

Proverbs 4:7

Wisdom is the principal thing; Therefore get wisdom. And in all your getting, get understanding.

#### Parables Newsletter

- Series 1.16.2
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# Foundations

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## The Apprehension of Truth



In posting the previous chapter of this book I have anticipated some objections that may be raised to what has been set forth. In trying to keep each post to a reasonable length it becomes untenable to attempt to address in one writing every concern, question, or objection to a doctrine as profound and far reaching as the relationship between Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. I believe a good beginning was made in the previous chapter. I will now proceed to build upon that foundation.

I encourage those to whom this teaching is new to search the Scriptures as did the noble Bereans, to see whether the things being declared are true. Truth does not fear scrutiny. It is error that must ever hide in the shadows, and it is falsehood that does not assent to being questioned. In your searching you must not fail in diligence. Do not be content to grasp only that which is on the surface. You must dig deep to discover what lies beneath.

One of the most irresponsible things we could do is to reject a teaching out of hand, saying, "That is not what I have been taught. What you are sharing offends me." It is common to view with fear that which contradicts what we have received as the orthodox view of the church, especially if it was com-

municated to us by someone we admire. I have experienced this emotion myself, but I have listened to that still, small voice that told me to hear before I judge, and to test all things before rejecting them.

Perhaps you were taught that God the Father created the heavens and the earth and it troubles you to hear it taught that all things (other than the Son Himself) were formed by the Son of God. In the preceding chapter there were numerous Scriptures cited in support of this teaching. The skeptical reader should examine each verse to see if it truly says what this Bible teacher is declaring. They should also look for other Scriptures that may affirm, or refute, the conclusions shared. If they had done so, they may have come across the following passage.

### Hebrews 1:1-2

God, after He spoke long ago to the fathers in the prophets in many portions and in many ways, in these last days has spoken to us in His Son, whom He appointed heir of all things, *through whom also He made the world.*

These words of one of Christ's apostles very succinctly summarize the role of the members of the godhead in the creation. The translation above does contain an inaccuracy. The word "world" is translated from the Greek "aion" which means "an age." A more literal translation would say "*through whom also He made the ages.*" This is in fact the meaning that Young's Literal Translation, The Amplified Bible, and a number of other Bibles bring forth. Rendering aion as age does no harm to the point being made, for we see the Son being the agent through which the Father is creating all things. I would further suggest that "the ages" encompass all that is contained within them, including the heavens and the earth and all their inhabitants.

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The Father can be said to have formed the creation, but He did so through the agency of the Son. As John testified, nothing came into being apart from the Son. The great truths of Scripture do not stand alone on one verse, or one statement. A truth may be declared in one passage, but additional insight is obtained in other Scriptures. We must take the entire counsel of the word of God and form a comprehensive view of truth where all the various passages complement one another to form a harmonious whole. If we find a passage that contradicts, then we have either understood verses incorrectly, or there may be a translation error. Translation errors are abundant in Scripture, for men translate according to their understanding, an understanding that is often faulty.



### Fitting All the Pieces Together

In the previous chapter we looked at a number of Scriptures that reveal that the Son's being and existence is subordinate to the Father. The Son of God did not always co-exist with the Father. The Bible reveals that at some point the Son was generated from the Father. He is the "monogenes" of the Father, the only direct generation of God. In contrast, the Bible reveals that God the Father has always been. He is the self-existent One.

The Son is not self-existent. He came forth from

the Father. As one considers what the terms Father and Son mean, and what is entailed in being "born," they will see that it would be inconsistent to speak of Yahshua as the Son and firstborn of God while holding to the view that His existence and beginning is identical to that of the Father. How can Christ be the "firstborn" of the Father and always have existed with Him?

Being born implies that one had a beginning and arose out of another. You are the offspring of your father and mother. You had a definite beginning. We can debate whether your beginning was at the moment of birth, the moment of conception, or whether you existed further back as the seed of your father and ancestors. We could even suggest that your beginning lay as far back as the thought of God before the earth was formed, for the Bible says "Before I formed you in the womb I knew you..." (Jeremiah 1:5), and "And all who dwell on the earth will worship him, *everyone whose name has not been written from the foundation of the world* in the book of life of the Lamb who has been slain" ("Revelation 13:8). What is indisputable is that, in your bodily form as a descendant of Adam, you had a definite beginning.

The same is true of the Son of God. Perhaps He always existed in the mind of the Father. Yet even as a thought does not take on substance until a man exhales his breath and forms a word that others can hear, so too there was a definite point in time when Yahweh breathed out His Spirit and formed "the Living Word." That Yahshua is a part of the creation of God is plainly stated in the Bible.

Revelation 3:14

The Amen, the faithful and true Witness, *the Beginning of the creation of God*, says this...

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Colossians 1:15

And He is the image of the invisible God, *the first-born of all creation.*

Hebrews 1:5

For to which of the angels did He ever say, "*You are My Son, today I have begotten Thee*"?



Of God the Father no similar statement can be made. There was not a day in which the Father was begotten. He was not generated by another. He always has been. He is the great I AM.

Isaiah 43:10

Before Me there was no God formed, and there will be none after Me.

Part of the confusion that exists in the church today regarding the Son of God's origin and beginning comes from a lack of patient and careful consideration of the Scriptures. There are a number of passages of the Bible that declare the Son to be one with the Father.

John 10:30

"I and the Father are one."

Some have assumed that this statement means that there is no difference between them. Such a conclusion does not stand up to scrutiny. Most assuredly there are differences between them. One is the Father. The other is the Son. One is called Yahweh. The other is called Yahshua. One is Spirit whom no man has ever seen at any time, the other was incarnated in the form of man, and the disciples saw Him, handled Him, and spent several years of their lives walking with Him. Furthermore, we have Christ's own confession that the Father is greater than Himself.

John 14:28

"You heard that I said to you, 'I go away, and I will come to you.' If you loved Me, you would have rejoiced, because I go to the Father; for *the Father is greater than I.*"

None of these truths diminish the honor and glory of the Son of God. Christians need not be afraid that acknowledging the Son as subordinate to the Father, and the first creation of the Father, in any way is a denial of His preeminence, or of His identity as God.

On the other hand, I have had conversation with numerous individuals over the course of my ministry who deny that Yahshua is God. It was men and women who profess to be Christians. The views on this are many. Some claim that the Son of God is the same being as the archangel Michael. Others who are non-trinitarian in their beliefs, deny that Yahshua could be God, for the Bible says there is only "one God."

Deuteronomy 6:4-5

"Hear, O Israel! Yahweh is our God, *Yahweh is one!*"

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I Timothy 2:5

**For there is one God**, and one mediator also between God and men, the man Christ Yahshua...

Some who oppose the trinitarian view would point to the verse above from Timothy and confidently assert that only the Father is God, and Christ is a man, albeit a glorified man. This reveals the error of focusing too narrowly on a single passage of Scripture. For a doctrine to be true it must accord with the entire testimony of the Bible. There are numerous passages that attest to the truth that Christ is God.

John 1:18

No man has seen God at any time; **the only begotten God**, who is in the bosom of the Father, He has explained Him.

John 20:28

Thomas answered and said to Him (Yahshua), "**My Lord and my God!**"

Philippians 2:5-7

Have this attitude in yourselves which was also in Christ Jesus, who, although **He existed in the form of God**, did not regard equality with God a thing to be grasped, but emptied Himself, taking the form of a bond-servant, and being made in the likeness of men.

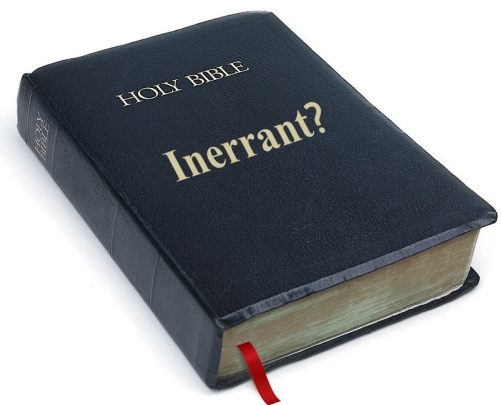
Titus 2:13

Looking for the blessed hope and the appearing of the glory of **our great God and Savior, Christ Yahshua**.

If we would walk in truth we must not neglect those Scriptures that serve to refute some doctrinal

belief we have adopted. There are men and women who are zealous in their contention that the Father and the Son are in every way identical to one another. To the other extreme there are those who declare that Christ is not God at all. Both positions are proven false as we apply ourselves to "rightly divide the word of truth."

I am in no way intending to criticize those who have sincere objections that hinder them from being able to accept specific truths. The world is a very confusing place. There are a myriad of voices declaring a plethora of contrasting and often incompatible beliefs. The church itself is fractured into thousands of denominations that are largely divided along doctrinal lines. As I demonstrated in the writing *Yahweh's Book*, even our Bibles are leavened throughout with error. Yahweh has not preserved the Bible without error anymore than He has preserved the body of Christ without error. This may seem to some to be a bad thing, but it is in an environment of error, deception, and lies that Yahweh is best able to prove those who are lovers of truth, and to cause His people to exercise themselves in the pursuit of the same.



I have observed a similarity in the zeal of some who are offended at the teaching that reveals that the Son of God is a creation of the Father, and the zealousness of those who are offended when they hear it declared that there are contradictions in the

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Bible. I understand the reaction. Some believe that teaching that Christ was created by the Father is an attack on the Son of God's divinity. Similarly, some believe to describe the Bible as anything other than perfect and inerrant is an attack on God or Christianity. When strong emotions are aroused people tend to lose their ability to reason. Fear and anger are hindrances to the apprehension of truth.

An example of the errors in the Bible is readily observed in books of the Bible that parallel one another, but differ in their accounts. The books of Kings and Chronicles give accounts of similar things, but contain differences. The same is true

some believe to describe the Bible as anything other than perfect and inerrant is an attack on God...

of the Gospels, particularly the synoptic Gospels of Matthew, Mark, and Luke. I will cite a couple of examples.

Describing the Bronze Laver, also called the Molten Sea, that Solomon had constructed to hold water for the ceremonial washing of the Levitical priests, the book of I Kings and the book of II Chronicles differ by a third in its capacity.

I Kings 7:26

And it was an hand breadth thick, and the brim thereof was wrought like the brim of a cup, with flowers of lilies: **it contained two thousand baths.**

KJV

II Chronicles 4:5

And the thickness of it was an handbreadth, and the brim of it like the work of the brim of a cup, with flowers of lilies; **and it received and held three thousand baths.**

KJV

Similarly, we see a discrepancy in the number of days that passed from the time Christ was said to have taken Peter, James, and John up to the mount of transfiguration.

Mark 9:1-2

And He was saying to them, "Truly I say to you, there are some of those who are standing here who shall not taste death until they see the kingdom of God after it has come with power." **And six days later**, Jesus took with Him Peter and James and John, and brought them up to a high mountain by themselves.

NAS

Luke 9:27-28

"But I say to you truthfully, there are some of those standing here who shall not taste death until they see the kingdom of God." **And some eight days after these sayings**, it came about that He took along Peter and John and James, and went up to the mountain to pray.

NAS

These types of errors are not uncommon in the Bible. What are we to attribute them to? Did the Holy Spirit inspire the original writers of these books to present contradictory information? Have these writings been altered over the millennia as scribes copied and re-copied the Scriptures? Are there errors in translation that can account for these differences? Certainly the role man has played in copying and translating the Scriptures has led to the introduction of a great many errors. In the case of the above two examples, it would be very easy for a scribe, or a translator, to change one number to another by accident.

There is another type of Bible error of which those who seek truth must be aware. It is an error of un-

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derstanding. When the Bible is translated from one language to another those laboring to produce a copy of the Scriptures must not only have an understanding of the original languages of the Bible, and the language to which it is being translated, they must also understand the truths contained in the Bible. It is common for a single Hebrew or Greek word to bear a diversity of meanings. If a translator does not have an accurate understanding of what is being declared in a Bible passage, he/she will find it difficult to identify correctly which meaning a Hebrew or Greek word was intended to convey. This is a very problematic issue. A man could be the foremost Hebrew or Greek scholar of his day and, not understanding the truths of the Bible, he would frequently err in bringing forth a translation.

As an example of the wide divergence of meaning that men can derive from a single verse, let us look at the following Scripture.

I Timothy 1:17

Now unto the King eternal, immortal, invisible, the only wise God, be honour and glory for ever and ever. Amen.

KJV

I Timothy 1:17

And to the King of the ages, the incorruptible, invisible, only wise God, [is] honour and glory - to the ages of the ages! Amen.

YLT

Comparing this verse in the King James Bible with the same verse in Young's Literal Translation, we find that very different information is conveyed. Is the King "eternal" or is He the "King of the ages"? The KJV translation places the emphasis on the King Himself. The word "eternal" becomes an adjective to describe the King. Young's Literal Trans-

lation places the focus upon the duration of the King's reign. The words "eternal" and "ages" are widely divergent in meaning. Eternal means without beginning or end, yet the word "ages" speaks of that which has a definite beginning and a recognized end point.

There are other marked differences in information conveyed in these two translations. Who is right, or are either of them correct? The problem we find here did not arise as much from a misapprehension of the Greek language as it did from a difference of doctrinal views. The KJV translators were charged to not derive any interpretation of the Scriptures that would upset the orthodox teachings of the Anglican Church of which King James was the titular head. (This present series cannot address the doctrine of the ages of creation at length. Those who are interested in pursuing the subject further will find it set forth at some length in the book *God's Plan of the Ages*.)

I chose the above verse as an example of contradictions that exist between Bible translations because it bears directly on the subject of the attributes of the Son of God. Identifying the King as Yahshua, we find one Bible attributing to the Son an eternal existence while the other does not. We have already read in a number of Bible passages that the Son was "born," He is the "beginning of the creation of God." Therefore, a contradiction arises when we read in the KJV Bible, and numerous other translations, statements that ascribe to Yahshua an eternal character. We find this same contradiction among Bible translations of the following Scripture:

**we find one Bible attributing to the Son an eternal existence while the other does not...**

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Hebrews 1:8

But *unto the Son he saith, Thy throne, O God, is for ever and ever*: a sceptre of righteousness is the sceptre of thy kingdom.

KJV

Hebrews 1:8

And *unto the Son: 'Thy throne, O God, [is] to the age of the age*; a scepter of righteousness [is] the scepter of thy reign;

YLT

Is the Son's rule "for ever and ever," or is it "to the age of the age"? These are very different expressions. The KJV rendering indicates that there will be no end to the Son's rule. Once again the translators have rendered the Greek word "aion" as "for ever" while Young renders it more accurately as "age."

I have found that people are often not convinced by arguments based upon the meaning of a Greek or Hebrew word. This is understandable, for very few

**Is the Son's rule "for ever and ever," or is it "to the age of the age"?**

Christians today, myself included, can lay claim to being advanced scholars of these ancient languages. How then are we to know which translator has done the better job?

The way many Christians resolve the issue is to accept the word of their pastor or some trusted friend. Many saints adopt whatever view that they have been taught from early on to be correct.

There is a better way to resolve a matter. Contradictions such as these can be settled as we become conversant with the entire testimony of the Bible. This is one reason it is important for Christians to independently study the word of God. If you have

applied yourself to the study of the Scriptures then the Holy Spirit is able to bring to mind other passages that will lead to understanding. For example, as I consider the verses above, desiring to know what is the proper interpretation, my mind is quickened to the following passage from Paul's address to the Corinthian believers.

I Corinthians 15:24-28

Then comes the end, when He delivers up the kingdom to the God and Father, when He has abolished all rule and all authority and power. ***For He must reign until*** He has put all His enemies under His feet. The last enemy that will be abolished is death. For He has put all things in subjection under His feet. But when He says, "All things are put in subjection," it is evident that He is excepted who put all things in subjection to Him. ***And when all things are subjected to Him, then the Son Himself also will be subjected to the One who subjected all things to Him, that God may be all in all.***

The apostle Paul reveals that the reign of Christ will have an end. At some point in the distant ages the reign of the Son will have accomplished its purpose of subjecting all things to the Father. When this is accomplished, all rule and authority will be abolished. The Son's reign will also come to an end as all things are subjected to the Father and He becomes "all in all."

People of God, as we look to the entire counsel of the Scriptures to inform our judgment we are able to see that Christ had a beginning as the firstborn of the Father. We are told He is "the beginning of the creation of God." The Son is ancient of days, but He is not eternal. He has a beginning, and his rule will have an end when He has subjected all things to the Father. It is therefore inaccurate to describe the reign of the Son of God as "for ever and ever." His reign will be to the end of the ages. It is also incorrect to describe the Son as "the King eternal."



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Robert Young has translated the passage properly for us when he rendered it as “the king of the ages.”

Many more examples of this type of conflict and resolution, leading to a harmonious view of the whole of Scriptures could be cited, but I will mention only one more that a reader mentioned after the previous chapter was posted. He asked me about the testimony found in the following Scripture.

Isaiah 9:6

For a child will be born to us, a son will be given to us; And the government will rest on His shoulders; And His name will be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, *Eternal Father*, Prince of Peace.

Once again we find a verse that is conveying information about the Christ that contradicts with that which is revealed elsewhere. How can the Son of God be rightly described as “Eternal Father” if He has a beginning, and His reign will come to an end at the end of the ages? How would we test the matter? How do we arrive at truth?

My intent in this writing is to do more than supply the reader with answers to doctrinal difficulties. My desire is to demonstrate to the reader how to resolve doctrinal difficulties. There is a proverb that states, “Give a man a fish and feed him for a day. Teach a man to fish and feed him for a lifetime.” I would much prefer to teach the people of God how to arrive at truth for themselves than to tell them what truth is.



The place to begin is always to pray, for Yahweh is the possessor and guardian of all truth. There is nothing that is hidden from His sight. He has also admonished His people to seek Him if they lack wisdom, or need understanding.

James 1:5

If any of you lacks wisdom, let him ask of God, who gives to all men generously and without reproach, and it will be given to him.

John 16:23

“And in that day you will ask Me (the Son) no question. Truly, truly, I say to you, if you shall ask the Father for anything, He will give it to you in My name.”

It would be presumptuous of any man to think that he can arrive at spiritual truth apart from the aid of God the Father. At the same time, we would be negligent if we asked Yahweh to instruct us and then neglected to apply ourselves to the study of the word of God. We should invite our heavenly Father to guide us in our study of His word.

How might we begin to test Isaiah 6:9 to see if our English translations that describe Christ as “Eternal Father” are correct? A good place to begin would be to see what Hebrew word lies behind the word “eternal.” We could look up the word in *Strong’s Concordance* where we would find this entry:

*ad*; from OT:5710; properly, a (peremptory) terminus, i.e. (by implication) duration, in the sense of advance or perpetuity...

This leads us in turn to another Hebrew word, Strong’s number 5710, from which this word is de-

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rived.

**adah**; a primitive root; to advance, i.e. pass on or continue; causatively, to remove; specifically, to bedeck (i.e. bring an ornament upon):

Perhaps these definitions are a bit cryptic. James Strong had a pretty good vocabulary. He used many English words that are relatively obscure today. What after all is a “peremptory terminus”? The word *peremptory* signifies that which is definite, unable to be challenged, and unchangeable. The word *terminus* refers to an end point. Together they describe something that has a definite end point, either a beginning, or an end, or both, that is fixed. This describes very well an age, or any period of a fixed length. It does NOT accord well, however, with the word “eternal.”

The Study Light Forum has an entry for this Hebrew word. On it they list a Greek equivalent word. These equivalent words are at times obtained by looking for quotations of Old Testament passages that are cited in the Greek New Testament, for these quotations are in abundance. An equivalent Greek word may also be found by looking at ancient versions of the Old Testament that exist in the Greek language. The Septuagint is an example of one such Greek translation. Although these word equivalents cannot be considered conclusive, they do show how ancient Greek speaking people understood Hebrew words. (Bear in mind that they too translated according to their understanding and were prone to err.)

The Greek word equivalent for “ad” that is listed on the Study Light Forum is “aion.” This is the same word we have looked at in a number of New Testament passages. We saw that the KJV Bible was rendering aion as “eternal” or “for ever” while Young’s Literal Translation was consistently inter-

preting it as “an age.” The definition of aion as “an age” accords very well with the “proper” meaning of the Hebrew word “ad” as defined by James Strong. It is a duration of time with a “peremptory terminus.” In other words, it indicates a span of time that has definite end points.

As we look at other passages where this Hebrew word is used, we find that the KJV translators ascribed to it a range of meaning. Following are a couple examples.

Job 20:4-5

Knowest thou not this of **old** (Hebrew “ad”), since man was placed upon earth, that the triumphing of the wicked is short, and the joy of the hypocrite but for a moment?

KJV

“Eternal” would not be a suitable English word to use to translate this Hebrew word in the verse above. We would not say “*Knowest thou not this of eternity...*”

Another instance of this word is in the following verse:

Psalms 104:23

Man goeth forth unto his work and to his labour **until** (Hebrew “ad”) the evening.

KJV

Keep in mind that *Strong’s Concordance* tells us that the proper meaning of this word refers to a “peremptory terminus” or a definite end. We can see then how this word was employed in the original Hebrew of this verse. Men work “until” a certain end, which in this verse is identified as “the

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evening.” Men do not work perpetually, or eternally.

The King James translators most often rendered this Hebrew word as “for ever.” Yet, we must question whether they have done well in doing so in all instances. Following is one example.

Numbers 24:20

And when he looked on Amalek, he took up his parable, and said, Amalek was the first of the nations; but his latter end shall be that he perish *for ever* (Hebrew “ad”).

KJV

Following is how the New KJV translates this same verse.

Numbers 24:20

Then he looked on Amalek, and he took up his oracle and said: "Amalek was first among the nations, but shall be last *until* (Hebrew “ad”) he perishes."

NKJV

Again, the word *until* carries with it an understanding of something coming to a peremptory terminus. Amalek was prophesied to exist “until he perishes” (comes to a peremptory end). It would appear that the NKJV has done a better job of expressing the proper meaning of the Hebrew word.

We have seen that there is a range of meaning that can be ascribed to this word. We have seen it properly employed to mean “old,” or “until” some indicated end. Could Isaiah 9:6 be translated differently, in a manner that accords well with the proper meaning of the Hebrew word “ad,” and at the same time find a harmony with the testimony of the rest

of Scripture? It certainly can. Following is one possible translation.

Isaiah 9:6

For a child will be born to us, a son will be given to us; And the government will rest on His shoulders; And His name will be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, *Ancient Father*, Prince of Peace.

The Bible does describe the Son of God as ancient. We have already read that the Son of God existed before the heavens and earth were formed. He is described elsewhere as “ancient” of days.

Micah 5:2

But you, O Bethlehem Ephrathah, who are too little to be among the clans of Judah, from you shall come forth for me one who is to be ruler in Israel, *whose coming forth is from of old, from ancient days*.

ESV

Brothers and sisters, I wish to assure you that I have no interest in leading you astray. I recognize that people have very strongly held beliefs about the Son of God. It is a very sensitive issue to many to be presented with thoughts about the identity of the Son of God that are contrary to what one was raised to believe. Many have been taught that Christ is no different from the Father. Some have heard it repeated ad infinitum that He is eternal. My desire is to cause you to look to the entirety of Scripture to see what is testified about the Son of God.

**Many have been taught that Christ is no different from the Father.**

When you do so you will find clear statements that

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the Son had a beginning, and His reign will have an end. You will find that the Father is declared to be greater than the Son. These truths must be reconciled with the rest of the Scriptures. When you encounter contradictions in the Bible, as you surely will, it is requisite that you tarry until you resolve the contradiction. Exercise patience. Demonstrate that you are a skillful workman who is able to rightly divide the word of truth. Look to the Father to guide you.

If you would be established in truth, you must labor to clear away all the confusion, deception, and lies, that are characteristic of this dark and evil age in which we live. The rewards are worth the effort. Press forward brothers and sisters. The truth awaits you.

## Beginnings

The Bible speaks much of the beginning of things. In understanding beginnings we are able to properly understand both the physical and spiritual world about us. If we do not properly identify beginnings our beliefs and doctrines will invariably be distorted. During the years in which I have labored as a minister to the body of Christ as a teacher I have encountered many erroneous ideas about the beginning of things. Some of the beginnings that God has given us information about so that we might be established in truth are:

**the Son had a beginning, and His reign will have an end.**

### The beginning of the creation of God.

Revelation 3:14

The Amen, the faithful and true Witness, the Be-

ginning of the creation of God, says this...

### The beginning of the heavens and the earth.

Genesis 1:1

In the beginning Elohim created the heavens and the earth.

### The beginning of sin.

I John 3:8

The one who practices sin is of the devil; for the devil has sinned from the beginning.

### The beginning of murder and lying.

John 8:44

"You are of your father the devil, and you want to do the desires of your father. He was a murderer from the beginning, and does not stand in the truth, because there is no truth in him. Whenever he speaks a lie, he speaks from his own nature; for he is a liar, and the father of lies.

There are Bible teachers who are promoting errant doctrines and false understandings of these beginnings. They have fallen short of rightly dividing the word of God. I frequently have occasion to converse with members of the body of Christ whose minds have been misled by indiscriminately feeding upon that which is false. I am not seeking to cast stones at such ones.

Many people come to the Lord through the evangelistic efforts of Christians who are members of churches that have long ago fallen away from an understanding of truth. People tend to trust those

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who led them to the Lord. Those who are babes in Christ often lack discrimination in that which they are imbibing. They lap up whatever Biblical instruction is given to them, not suspecting that it is tainted.



Some years ago I read a tragic story of a newborn baby who died in a hospital when a nurse mistakenly grabbed a container of saline water thinking it was nursing formula. Any adult who tasted the saline water would have recognized what it was at once, and would have rejected it. The baby, however, did not have its sense of taste developed and eagerly devoured the solution. The small infant died as a result of saline poisoning, an excess of salt in the body.

What I have found to be true in my life, and that of a great many other sons and daughters of God, is that once we began to mature spiritually we started to test the things that were being fed to us by our pastor, Sunday School teacher, parents, or other individuals who acted as teachers. Having personally been brought up in church from the time I was a young child, I innocently imbibed many doctrines that I never suspected contained error. I trusted the adults in my life. I had no reason to suspect that they were teaching me things about God, the world, and Yahweh's kingdom that were not true.

Consequently, I spent many years of my later life

testing what had been delivered to me in my physical youth and spiritual immaturity. I found that a great many things, including some important foundational doctrines, had been delivered to me in a highly adulterated state. As I began to be taught of God, and to apply myself to a pursuit of truth, I was at times shocked by the great disparity between what I was taught in my youth and what God was teaching me as an adult.

Many people stumble at this point. If their hunger for truth, and a desire to stand approved before God, does not exceed their regard for the people around them, the traditions that are dear to them, and the continued fellowship of men and women in the church, they will often balk when they encounter teachings that contradict what they first received. Additionally, if a person has a pride of knowledge, they will be hindered from casting off their errant beliefs. It requires humility to be corrected. The proud do not like to receive instruction, or to admit that they once held to error.

As a Bible teacher with an Internet audience, I frequently encounter people who disagree with the things I am teaching. Quite often their beliefs are traceable back to their upbringing in a particular church, or denomination. People frequently form strong emotional bonds to doctrines. They associate their beliefs with a respected minister, or beloved saint. They may remember their experiences in a particular church with much fondness. Some view it as an attack when another Christian calls into question any of the doctrines that were imparted to them.

Many times I observe people getting quite emotional when they express their disagreement with something I am teaching. One might think I had insulted their parents, a beloved pastor, or their best friend. Christians need to recognize that even the best intentioned and sincere individuals can, and

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often do, pass along false doctrines to others. The motive of the person teaching error need not be malicious. I suspect most do so in ignorance, and often with great fervor of conviction. It is quite possible, however, to have zeal that is not in accordance with knowledge (Romans 10:2).

Because of people's strong emotional attachments to their beliefs, and the anger that arises in their soul when they encounter teaching that is contrary to what they have previously received, I frequently find myself urging those who write to me to exercise the fruit of the Holy Spirit, while ruling over their fleshly passions.



### The Fruit of The Spirit

Galatians 5:22-24

But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, humility, self-control; against such things there is no law. Now those who belong to Christ Yahshua have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires.

It really is not possible to make progress in God's kingdom apart from exercising the fruit of the Spirit. If a Christian does not manifest the *patience* to listen intelligently to what another is saying, they cannot benefit from what is shared. If a man or woman is not *humble*, they cannot be taught. Therefore, I entreat those with disagreements to clothe themselves with the Spirit of Christ. Carnal believers who are irascible, quick to speak and slow to hear, condemn themselves to remain fixed in error.

If you find that some of the things I share in this series relating to beginnings are contrary to what you were taught by others, I exhort you to manifest the patience to intelligently consider what is shared. I entreat you to pray to the Father, asking Him to disclose to you truth and error and to lead you in the path of understanding. I fully anticipate that many, indeed most, readers have been taught something different. (I was.) It will require patience on your part to search the Scriptures, laying aside all bias. You will have to rise up in spirit and rule over any emotions that are stirred up due to a personal affinity to an individual, group, church, denomination, or to a doctrine itself. If your goal is to apprehend truth and walk in the understanding and wisdom of God, you should do well.

As important as truth is, I believe it is even more important that believers demonstrate love for one another. The apostle Paul wrote:

I Corinthians 13:1-2

If I speak with the tongues of men and of angels, but do not have love, I have become a noisy gong or a clanging cymbal. And if I have the gift of prophecy, and know all mysteries and all knowledge..., but do not have love, I am nothing.

If you or I possess truth, or an understanding of the mysteries of God, but fail to communicate with others in a spirit of love, we have become nothing more than a discordant noise in God's ears. He is not pleased when men speak truth while their attitude is devoid of love. We are commanded to "speak the truth in love."

### Accurately Identifying Beginnings

Not long before Christ's crucifixion and ascension,

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He spoke to His disciples about His departure. He disclosed to them that He was going to send to them the Holy Spirit who would bear witness of Him. He then added:

John 15:27

You will bear witness also, because you have been with Me *from the beginning*.

What beginning did Christ refer to in this statement? Those familiar with the Gospel accounts will rightly infer that Yahshua was speaking of the beginning of His earthly ministry when He called forth twelve men to walk with Him. Would we not err greatly if we concluded that Christ was speaking of *His* beginning, the beginning *of the creation*, or the beginning *of the world*? This may seem a simple question. I have chosen this particular verse because I do not believe there will be too much controversy from readers as to its meaning.

If you are like me, and have concluded that Christ is in fact speaking of the beginning of His earthly ministry when He called forth twelve disciples to walk with Him, I would ask you how you can be sure of this? What if someone challenged you on this point? How would you demonstrate that your understanding is the right one?

I would suggest that there are a number of ways to do so. A good place to begin would be looking at the statement itself to see if it lends itself to other interpretations. In this instance I would allow that it does indeed do so. The wording of the sentence itself does not clearly identify the specific beginning of which Yahshua was speaking. Just by the phrasing itself we could not rule out the possibility that Yahshua was speaking of any number of possible beginnings. Following are some variant meanings.

You will bear witness also, because you have been with Me from the beginning (*of my earthly ministry*).

You will bear witness also, because you have been with Me from the beginning (*of My existence in heaven*).

You will bear witness also, because you have been with Me from the beginning (*of the creation*).

You will bear witness also, because you have been with Me from the beginning (*of the world*).

Seeing that the sentence itself does not clearly identify the beginning Christ had in mind, a next step would be to look at the word translated as “beginning.” We could see if it is only rightly used in a particular way. Having looked up the word we would have to conclude that it does not help us to resolve this matter.

A next step might be to check the context of the passage in which these words of Christ were spoken. If we see evidence that He was speaking about the beginning of His time with the disciples on earth in this passage, or we find other evidence that would point to the beginning to which He was referring, the matter might be easily settled. Following this course, we actually find some help. Here is the passage with a little more context.

John 15:26-16:5

“When the Helper comes, whom I will send to you from the Father, that is the Spirit of truth, who proceeds from the Father, He will bear witness of Me, and you will bear witness also, because you have been with Me from the beginning. These things I have spoken to you, that you may be kept from

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stumbling. They will make you outcasts from the synagogue, but an hour is coming for everyone who kills you to think that he is offering service to God. And these things they will do, because they have not known the Father, or Me. But these things I have spoken to you, that when their hour comes, you may remember that I told you of them. And these things I did not say to you at the beginning, because I was with you.”

We see in this larger portion of Scripture that Yahshua is speaking of the Holy Spirit and of His disciples bearing witness of Him to mankind. What they are bearing witness of is His identity as the Hebrew Messiah, the ministry He conducted, the life that He lived, and the words that He spoke. We can deduce this from the gospels, for this is indeed what they focus upon. Additionally, in the book of Acts we find Christ’s disciples bearing witness of what they had seen and heard while walking with Christ. There are also some very clear statements in other books such as the following.

I John 1:1-3

What was from the beginning, what we have heard, what we have seen with our eyes, what we beheld and our hands handled, concerning the Word of Life... what we have seen and heard we proclaim to you also, that you also may have fellowship with us...

John clearly states here that he is testifying of that which he has heard, seen with his eyes, and touched with his hands regarding the Son of God. John is identifying experiences in this mortal life. With these words of John we are able to confidently assert that the beginning that Yahshua was referring to in John 15:27 was the beginning of His ministry when He called twelve disciples to walk with Him, that they might experience daily life and ministry with the Son of God.

One other thing we could do is to look for similar statements, or parallel passages, that might shed light on this matter. For example, we could look to Luke’s opening statement from the Gospel account he penned.

Luke 1:1-4

Inasmuch as many have undertaken to compile an ac-

count of the things accomplished among us, just as *those who from the beginning were eyewitnesses and servants of the Word* have handed them down to us, it seemed fitting for me as well, having investigated everything carefully from the beginning, to write it out for you in consecutive order, most excellent Theophilus; so that you might know the exact truth about the things you have been taught.

Note that Luke tells us that he is writing an account “of the things accomplished among us.” He is not writing of things that occurred before the creation of the world. Luke’s account is a terrestrial one. It is focused on the life and ministry of the Son of God on the earth as He dwelt among mankind. There are other Bible passages that affirm this same truth that the disciples of Christ were called to bear witness to what they beheld during their earthly sojourning with the Son of God.

I John 4:14

And we have *beheld* and *bear witness* that the Father has sent the Son to be the Savior of the world.

John echoes the words of Christ in the gospel that he penned. He states that the disciples “bear witness” to Yahshua. He specifically says the witness is of that which they “beheld.” John does NOT say that the disciples beheld Christ in ages prior to His coming to earth, or that they walked with Him in realms that are celestial before this present age. The disciples of Christ bore witness to what they beheld when the Son of God walked among them.



**Yahshua Calling His Disciples**



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I want to point out that it was necessary to look beyond the immediate context of John 15:27 to properly resolve this question of what beginning Christ was referring to. If we had looked too narrowly at this passage, we might have come up with some very strange interpretations. Someone might have used this verse as a proof text to declare that the disciples existed with Christ in heaven before His earthly ministry. Some might use it as evidence to suggest that the Bible teaches reincarnation, or the pre-existence of the soul. If they look at no other Scriptures they could very well build a case to suggest that this was in fact what Christ meant when He said His disciples had been with Him “from the beginning.”

You may say, “Joseph, isn’t it obvious that Christ was speaking of His disciples being with Him from the beginning of His earthly ministry? Surely no reasonable person would suggest otherwise.” A search of the Internet reveals that some are misconstruing Christ’s words here, using them to build a case for the pre-existence of the soul. Having failed to properly identify the “beginning” to which the Son of God was referring, they are falling away into error.

My purpose in sharing these things is to demonstrate that there is a danger of misinterpreting the meaning of the Scriptures if we fail to consider the entire counsel of the Bible. It requires patience, an intimate acquaintance with the Bible, and a heart that yearns after truth, to rightly divide the word of God. Any Scripture, or portion of it, can be wrested out of its context and used to assert a false understanding. These wrong understandings in turn serve as the foundation for false doctrines.

In the ensuing chapters I am going to address some of the beginnings spoken of in the Bible. I will seek to lay a solid foundation for accurately understanding the truths of God’s kingdom.

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### PARABLES PRECEPT— The Significance of Numbers

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If ten is the number which marks the perfection of Divine order, then eleven is

an addition to it, subversive of and undoing that order. If twelve is the number which marks the perfection of Divine government, then eleven falls short of it. So that whether we regard it as being 10 + 1, or 12 - 1, it is the number which marks, disorder, disorganization, imperfection, and disintegration.

**THE ELEVEN SONS OF JACOB**  
told of the disintegration and disorganization in Jacob's family, which made it possible for it to be said "one is not."

**JEHOIAKIM REIGNED ELEVEN YEARS**

when Nebuchadnezzar came up and began his disintegrating work on Jerusalem (2 Kings 23:36, 34:1; 2 Chron 36:5,6).

**ZEDEKIAH REIGNED ELEVEN YEARS**

when Nebuchadnezzar completed the work by putting an end to Israel's rule in Jerusalem (2 Chron 36:11; Jer 52:1), for "in

the eleventh year the city was broken up" (Jer 39:2).

**THE ELEVENTH YEAR**

in which Ezekiel prophesied against Tyre (Eze 26:1) and against Egypt (30:20 and 31:1) was the eleventh year of Zedekiah, in which Jerusalem was broken up. And the threefold repetition of it is to impress us with the fact that Tyre and Egypt should be broken up, as Jerusalem had been.

**THE ELEVEN APOSTLES**

witness of disintegration even amongst the Twelve (Acts 2:14, etc.)