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18.1. Christianity and the Bible

18.1.1. Introduction

The Holy Trinity ,

The Holy Trinity, the center of Biblical life, is very close to us in our daily concerns. She stands ready—even if we ask for nothing at all yet—to intervene in solving our problems. That is the conviction inherent in the following pages. In the Bible, we repeatedly find the expression: “consulting God.” Life can indeed be defined as a collection of problems that demand a solution. Yet we lack, sometimes in a striking way, the necessary and sufficient information. God the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, however, do know it. Thus, we are never alone. Even if we were abandoned by everyone, we can still contact Him directly. Therein lies the power of prayer.

The Bible .

One can study the Bible from a historical perspective. Modern and postmodern scholarship does so constantly. However, one can also delve into it by attempting to immerse oneself in it and seeking its underlying ideas. The following excerpts expose such fundamental ideas. Through reading them, one will notice that they form a logically coherent whole. Indeed, starting from a limited number of intuitions, such as the 'flesh/spirit' pairing, one better understands many Biblical texts.

An example. The last excerpt cited here will deal with the subtle body. From there, one understands more easily the Church Fathers, who defined its basic concepts in the first centuries of Christianity when they attempted to explain the virginity of Mary as the Mother of God.

Virginity.

It means that Mary's womb is exclusively and solely destined to bear the Son. Criticisms concerning virginity all lie outside the Biblical presuppositions. Thus, for example, one can reject the existence of a subtle body, and this without sufficient reason, indeed sometimes without knowing anything at all about subtle matter . Thus the Son, the second person of the Holy Trinity, incarnated in Mary's womb, in the form of a subtle body, a body that lies at the basis of the biological body. At birth, however, the biological body of Jesus becomes subtle and passes through the hymen without difficulty, to subsequently become a biological, and thus gross, body again. That is also why one sings in the Byzantine liturgy: “Just as You, Jesus, as the risen one , pass through walls, so You already respected the virginity of Your mother as a child.”

The faith .

The goal of the biblical life is to enter into a new covenant: uninterrupted and intimate contact with God through prayer. Something that is sometimes

conspicuously lacking in our day. In *Luke 18 : In 1ff.* we read how Jesus illustrates the necessity of prayer, indeed persistent prayer, with a parable: There was in a city a judge who did not know God and did not care about people. In this city there was also a widow. She sought him out and said: Grant me justice against my adversaries. The judge refused for a long time. Then he said to himself: “Although I do not know God and do not care about my fellow man, this widow continues to trouble me. I will grant her justice so that she will no longer bother me.”

Thus says the Lord: If even this cynical judge grants justice to the widow, how much more will God do justice to those who call upon Him all day long? I tell you that He will grant them justice immediately. But will the Son of Man, when He returns, find faith on earth? Jesus uses an a fortiori reasoning: in order not to be constantly harassed by the widow, the cynical judge grants her justice. How much more, then, will God, out of love for His creatures, grant justice?

It is the last sentence of Jesus—will He, the Son of Man, still find faith on earth—that arouses astonishment: Christ, in accordance with an entire Biblical tradition, foresees a great Second Coming. Thus, it is a tenacious faith, like that of the widow, that is needed to pray and persevere in prayer. And this every day, but especially toward the end times.

18.1.2. Introduction to Christianity.

Biblical origin.

The fundamental ideas of Christianity are of Biblical origin. Now, from as early as *Genesis 6:3*, the basic pair of 'flesh/spirit' dominates the Bible. In the days of Noah, when God saw that evil was growing in people (due to the bad influence of the 'sons of God' (divine beings)), He said: “Let my spirit not be endlessly responsible for man, for he is flesh.” In other words: I, God, no longer invest my spirit in humanity, for it is merely 'flesh'. Here, 'spirit' stands for 'divine energy', and 'flesh' means divine energy in an earlier and therefore less powerful stage. Given the sinfulness of man, 'flesh' here therefore signifies an inferior and weakened form of energy.

Since the ancient Greeks, 'spirit' has meant 'intellectual possibilities', which is only one aspect of 'spirit' in the Biblical sense.

Meat

'Flesh', opposed to 'spirit', signifies first and foremost a primitive stage of 'spirit', but also 'spirit' in decay, as a result of immoral behavior (or a combination of both). The sexual element, if concealed, is never far away here.

This stage of divine energy, even though it has lost much of its power due to the intervention of god-hostile beings, is not insignificant. It creates pre-biblical life and is even capable of astonishing miracles such as *Exodus 7/8 (Egyptian miracles)*, *Acts of the Apostles 8:9ff . (Simon the Magician)* and *2 Thessalonians 2:9 (miracles of the antichrist)* show us.

Weakness.

The more God's spirit within us is weakened and degraded, the more He too is subject to all kinds of adversities (diseases, accidents). This was also the case with Noah 's contemporaries , who were merely 'flesh' and could thus expect all kinds of miscalculations. In their case: a natural catastrophe; a flood. Noah and his people, however, escaped this through their conscientious conduct.

Evolution.

Creation as described Biblically is essentially a story of the relationship between 'flesh' and 'spirit', and of a struggle between the two. What is more, creation undergoes an evolution, which is expressed in *Daniel 12:4* : “Evil will increase.” Surviving the end times in a God-friendly manner therefore requires a more powerful Divine energy.

The voice of God.

One day Moses cries out: “If only every man could be a prophet, so that they all might share in God’s Spirit.” (*Numbers 11:29*). Well, it is characteristic of a prophet that he hears God’s voice.

Note:

The voice of God is first and foremost what is called 'the voice of conscience'; according to *Rom 2:14* , it is inherent to all people. However, it can make itself heard as an 'inner voice'—clearer and more distinct than a voice of conscience, but with essentially the same message.

Morality.

The Decalogue, the Ten Commandments, as a popular summary of an ethical code of conduct, is the masterpiece of the entire Bible and is ultimately decisive: a conscienceless person hears the voice of God but neglects it (*Numbers 14:22*). As a result, he lowers himself from 'spirit' to 'flesh' and,

weakened as he is, it becomes more difficult to resist many dangerous temptations of this world.

The role of Christ .

John says of Christ that he became a partaker of the 'flesh' as a lower form of God's 'spirit'. He bears the weakness of 'the flesh'.

Easter. Peter (*1 Peter 3:18; 2 Peter 2:4*) summarizes: Jesus was put to death according to the flesh, but once dead He rose again according to the spirit; after which He brought the good news to the souls and spirits in the underworld who refused to believe. *John (5:25)* expresses it in his own way: the 'dead' (those who did hear the divine voice but neglected it) now hear the voice of Jesus. That explains His descent into hell, where 'life' is more a kind of deathly existence than a true life. One understands Christ only fully precisely from that 'flesh' / 'spirit' contrast.

Christ is a prophet .

“I tell the world what I have heard from Him who sent me.” (*John 8:26; 8:28*). Jesus says of himself that he is a prophet. “The Father gives Him His spirit.” He hears and listens to the voice of the Father. “You (the contemporaries who reject him) have never heard the voice of my Father. You have never seen His face” (*John 5:37*). Note that 'seeing the face' means 'being intimate with'. Throughout the Bible, intimate fellowship with God is precisely what all people are called to. In contrast to those who have never heard the voice of the Father, *John 6:45* says , “And all shall be taught by God. Whoever hears his voice comes to Me.” Those who live in God’s intimacy also live in the intimacy of Jesus and come to faith. Whoever possesses God’s spirit also perceives it in others. Through this, one arrives at the essence of Christianity.

18.1.3. The God of the Bible.

The Bible

(*Genesis 1:1*) The Bible is formal: “In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth,” that is, the entire ordered reality. Consequence: whatever presents itself as 'god' or is worshipped as such reveals itself, in comparison to the God of the Bible, as no more than yet another creature. The word 'god' (without a capital letter) means “to be endowed with a higher form of energy.” The word 'lord' means 'deified man' (*2 Macc . 11:23*). In *1 Cor. 8:4ff* . we read that an idol is as good as nothing and there is no God outside the one God. For although there are so-called gods in the heavens or on earth—there indeed exist a number of gods and a number of lords—for us there is in any case only one God, the Father, from whom everything proceeds and for

whom we are all destined, and one Lord Jesus Christ, through whom everything exists and through whom we live. (*cf. Rom. 3:29*).

1. Paul, in his enumeration of the number of higher beings worshipped by the peoples around the Mediterranean, emphasizes the immeasurable distance between such beings and the God of the Bible.

2. He also emphasizes that Jesus, as the second person of the Holy Trinity, is a co-creator together with the Father and the Holy Spirit: one divine nature in three persons.

Deification. –

Already in *Psalm 8:5ff.*, it says of God regarding mortal man: “But behold, You have made him hardly less than a deity!”

Peter (*2 Peter 1:4*) says that we, through the glorified Christ, were delivered from the corruption of the flesh and that we have become partakers of his divine nature.

This deification (transformation of 'flesh' into 'spirit') is the very essence of Christianity.

Warning. –

Gal. 4:3ff. says that the Jews were 'subject to the elements of the world' and that the Gentiles were 'subject to gods'. The word 'world' means 'whole' (neutral), 'whole, controlled by God' (meliorative), or 'whole, enslaved by evil' (pejorative).

The term 'element' means: 'that which governs' (and thus makes understandable). The elements of the world govern this world, and if one knows these elements, one also understands the world. The law of Israel is the element par excellence of the Jews: if one knows their law, one also understands their religion. If one prioritizes the gods of the Galatians, then one also understands their culture.

Colossians 1:16 lists the elements of this world: thrones, lords, dominions, powers. The angels, powers, and forces that Peter speaks of (*1 Peter 3:22*) are elements of the world.

Incidentally: powers (legal) and forces refer to the executors of civil power.

Colossus . 2:8

Colossians warns against the vain allure of a philosophy “according to a certain human tradition” that relies on the elements of the world, not on Christ. For it holds the thinking of many people in its grip.

'Elements of geometry' meant to the Ancient Greeks “That which one must set first to understand geometry”.

Peter, Paul, and John do not hide their rejection of the elements of the world. Satan is 'the prince of this world' (*John* 12:31, 14:30, 16:11). Paul calls him 'the god of this world who blinds the mind' (*2 Cor.* 4:4). Subjugation, slavery, is the sin par excellence of the elements of the world.

Result:

Jesus Christ has disarmed the principalities and the powers (*2 Colossians* 2:15). All this makes it understandable that *Job* 1:6; 2:1 speaks of the divine council of the Sons of God (higher beings, including Satan) who control the world with God (in their own way, incidentally).

The judges.

Psalm 82 (81), You, Holy Trinity, stand up in the midst of the divine court , in the midst of those who are called as judges, gods: “How long will you pronounce unjust judgments? Will you kneel before the ungodly ? Judgment for the benefit of the powerless and the orphaned. (...) Without any awareness, without any understanding you walk lost in darkness. At once the whole land falls apart. We, the Holy Trinity, said in the beginning: “You are gods, sons of the Most High, all of you.” But no, even as man you shall die. As one man, rulers, you shall fall.”

Consider the cynical judge who refused to grant the widow justice, described in *Luke* 18:1. Such judges are 'elements of the world' that—for the time being—belong to the Divine court . They enslave their neighbor instead of being of service to God and to their neighbor. That is why God judges them: “You shall die”—in the Biblical sense, this means: deprived of divine life force so that only the underworld remains for them.

Psalm 56 (57)

Psalm 56 (57) is sharp: “Is it true,—so say you, Holy Trinity, to the judges called 'gods'—that you have acted justly? (...) The ungodly are apostates from the womb. Those who concoct errors have already strayed during gestation.

Christ, taken up into heaven, sits at the right hand of God the Father, after He subjected the angels, the powers, and the forces to Himself (*1 Peter* 3:22): He took hold of the elements of this world and judged them.

18.1.4. Biblical dynamism

Dynamism –

In the studies of religion, 'dynamism' means “the proposition that a religion is essentially a matter of energy (vital force).” *Dunamis* (ancient Greek), in Latin ' *virtus* ', stands for 'energy'. *Luke 8:46* speaks of 'a power' that went forth from Jesus when he healed the woman suffering from a flow of blood. Since *Genesis 6:3* , the Bible posits two levels of energy, according to the 'flesh/spirit' pair. The destiny of man and his habitat essentially depend on this pair, as will become apparent later. Prayer confirms this: in *Matt. 26:40-41* ; at Gethsemani, Jesus says to Peter and the apostles: “Can you not then stay awake with me for one hour?” Watch and pray lest you fall into temptation: the spirit is fiery, but the flesh is weak.” Strength and prayer go together, just as the absence of prayer leads precisely to weakness. Through this basic 'flesh/spirit' pairing, Jesus clarifies himself.

Vital force and destiny. Let us read two Bible texts that demonstrate this connection between 'force' and the resulting 'fate'.

1. In the days of *Noah* . *Gen. 6* describes: “When men and their daughters began to multiply over the face of the earth, the sons of God —members of God’s council ; (as *Job 1:6; 2:1* calls them)—found that these pleased them. They took them as wives as they pleased. Yahweh says: “That my spirit shall not be indeterminately responsible for man since he is 'flesh'”.

One sees the threefold nature: angels/ women/ impermissible sexuality. Biblically speaking, the union of these three is 'flesh' in the strict sense. The sacred writer notes the cultural role of this triad: “The Nephilim were on the earth in those days and also afterwards, namely when the sons of God had sexual intercourse with the daughters of men and the latter bore their children: they are the heroes of old, those notorious men”.

Sexual intercourse with such fallen angels results in more highly gifted children who—like heroes—nevertheless degrade their culture from 'spirit' to 'flesh' to such an extent that Yahweh, precisely because of their fall, withdraws his spirit over them.

The absence of divine energy makes them weak, even to a flood that destroys such people 'by chance'. 'Chance' for the victims. Inevitable, however, for those who understand the deeper role of that energy.

In this connection, let us also note that the Gospel (*Luke 17:26*) states: “As it was in the days of Noah , so will it be in the days of the Son of Man.” It offers a rather unhopeful perspective for those who live solely according to 'the flesh'.

2. In the days of Lot (*Luke 17:28*). *Genesis 19* describes. Three 'men' who reveal themselves as a manifestation of God, together with two of his angels, arrive at Abraham. The two angels depart for Sodom because “the cry for vengeance against Sodom and Gomorrah is great,” due to their transgressive sinfulness (*Gen. 18:20*). Homosexuality—also called sodomy after the city of Sodom —was for Israel a sin 'against nature' and deserved the death penalty (*Lev. 18:22*). Let us note: it is sin that cries out for vengeance and is rectified by God in an accelerated manner: if man is merely 'flesh', this leads to a loss of energy.

Transgressive homosexuality .

The two angels are enjoying Lot's hospitality, as was customary in those days, but he is confronted with the public morals of his time in Sodom : no sooner had they gone to bed than their house was besieged by the inhabitants of Sodom , from young to old. They woke Lot and cried out: “Where are the men they have come to visit? Bring them to us so that we may abuse them.” (*Gen. 19:4*). Lot tried to calm them down somewhat: “I have two virgin girls. Do with them what you will. But leave my guests alone, for they are enjoying the hospitality of my house.”

Remark:

In that cultural context, the well-being of the people to whom hospitality was extended was sacred, and therefore more important than the sexual integrity of Lot's two daughters. Moreover, the value of the woman was less than that of the man, as *Genesis 12:10ff.* demonstrates.

Angels that destroy .

The Sodomites , from the smallest to the largest, pushed Lot aside and wanted to use violence, but the angels came to Lot's aid and warned him and his people that a natural catastrophe was about to befall the city. One sees the hasty judgment of God. Sulfur and fire destroyed Sodom (and Gomorrah) and the entire plain. Let us note that 'judgment by God' means 'intervention of God' (either directly or through a natural event). Here it takes the form of a sifting of judgment: the ones—the inhabitants of Sodom —are taken by surprise, for due to their lack of dynamism, of energy, they—being 'flesh'—

interpret the event as a coincidence. Lot and his people, however, with an abundance of dynamism, of God's spirit, sense the danger and take flight in time.

Here we also encounter 'the flesh', but in the form of Sodomy: specifically as a threefold nature: angels/ men/ illicit sexuality. Finally, let us note that the sacred text does not condemn every form of homosexuality as a sin that calls for vengeance, but only the depraved and brutal form of the Sodomites .

18.1.5. The ethics of the Bible.

In his *letter to the Galatians*, 6:8, Paul writes : “Whoever sows in the flesh will reap destruction, but whoever sows in the spirit will reap eternal life.” In *Mark 10:17ff* , Jesus meets a rich young man who asks him: “Good teacher, what must I do to attain eternal life?” Jesus answers him: “Keep the commandments, do not murder anyone, do not commit adultery, do not steal from anyone, do not wrong anyone, and honor your parents.” This response from Christ clearly shows that the ethics of the Old Testament (*Ex. 20:1ff.*, *34:10ff* .), the Decalogue or the Ten Commandments, remains the basis for a spiritual life. Keeping these commandments, faith in the one God, Yahweh, supplemented by the counsel given by the Gospel, remains the hallmark par excellence of Christian dynamism.

The Decalogue.

The first three commandments concern the divine, the Holy Trinity, to be venerated in thoughts, words, and deeds as the basis of culture. The fourth commandment expresses the basis of culture: respect between parents and children. Then follow the commandments that center on reverence for life in all its variations (5), sexuality (6, 9), property (7, 10), and truth (8). In our modern and post-modern age, one might be inclined to downplay the value of these ten commandments, yet it is good to realize that these values are the basis for mutual respect among people, even in our time, which so easily speaks with contempt of one's neighbor.

The 'flesh/spirit' couple.

Let us clarify: *Gal. 5:19ff* . gives us a list.

1. Whoever lives according to the flesh. - idolatry, unchastity, discipline, debauchery, (black) magic, hatred, discord, jealousy, anger, quarrels, strife, division, envy, gluttony, and the like.

2. The fruit of the Spirit: chastity, joy, peace, patience, service, goodness, trust, gentleness, self-control.

We provide this list to clarify that the basic biblical pair of 'flesh/spirit' is supported by a concrete reality, as the following example illustrates.

The flesh as the way to Sheol .

Numbers 16:30ff . gives us a current example of what the road to Sheol (underworld, hell) means. What Sheol can particularly mean is described in *Proverbs 7:1ff* . Bible specialists refer to this description with the Greek word ' parakuptousa ' (the woman who stares at someone , the prostitute). Let us summarize somewhat.

The stranger with the gentle words.

“I saw amidst young naives (...), a boy without insight. He goes through the alley, -- close to the corner where she is. Turns into the road to her ...house. In the twilight, at dusk, in the heart of “the night” and “the darkness”. Look: a woman approaches him, dressed as a prostitute, in her heart treachery itself. She is enterprising and shameless. Her feet cannot bear it in her own house. (...). She seizes him, embraces him, and shamelessly says: “I have covered my bed with blankets, with colorful fabrics! I have sprinkled my bed with myrrh, with aloe and cinnamon. Come on over! We will get drunk on lovemaking until morning.” By persuasion with power she seduces him. Immediately he follows her. Like an ox to the slaughterhouse. Like a reckless man to the torture of the shackles. (...). Without realizing that his 'life' is at stake.”

The sacred writer specifies what he understands by 'life': “Let your heart not deviate in the direction of her ways! Do not get lost in her paths! For numerous are those whom she strikes down mortally; her dwelling is the way to Sheol , the ramp to the portal of the dead.”

In *Proverbs 23:27/28*, the sacred writer says that a woman committing adultery is like a deep pit lying in wait. In other words, whoever engages with a prostitute surrenders to shades from the underworld. Her dwelling opens onto death. Her dwelling is Sheol itself, materially visible—and tangible on earth.

Note:

The Biblical authors sometimes portray the invisible evil beings as being primarily located on the earth, but *Ephesians 6:12* , for example, also places them in the air or even in the stars.

18.2. Towards a new covenant

18.2.1. The flesh, Biblically speaking.

To understand the biblical term 'flesh' even better, as opposed to 'spirit', we read *Tobias* 3:8. Sarra , a young woman, was the target of Asmodeus , “the worst of the demons.” She had already been married off seven times, yet “this son of God ” had killed her partners, one after another, just before they were about to enter into the act of marriage as husbands. As an invisible worshipper, the killing demon harms her nothing. But as soon as anyone tries to approach her with a view to marriage, he kills him. (6:15)

An exorcism by the archangel Raphael (12:15) makes things quite difficult for the demon, causing it to flee (8:3), and thereby Sarrah is freed. The threefold nature of “woman/demon/unlawful eroticism” shows that it concerns 'the flesh' in its strict sense.

Numbers 25 gives us another example. This time it concerns a religion. Israel settled at Shittim . There the people engaged in fornication with Moabite women who invited the people to offer sacrifices to their deities. In the Bible, the term 'prostitution' means 'loss of faith'.

Baal, the high god (the Lord), formed a couple with the goddess Astarte . The sacred rite took place in a bedroom. By engaging in lovemaking, one invoked the Baal/ Astarte couple , which, in the course of sexual intercourse, mystically entered into the two lovers .

In the Moabites' interpretation, this was not prostitution but religion. The sanctuary of Baal between Israel and Moab (*Numbers* 23:28) *was visited by both peoples, which* facilitated seduction by Moabite women. The triad 'men and women / sons, daughters of the god (Baal / Astarte / unlawful ethics)' demonstrates that the religion in question was thoroughly 'flesh' in the rawest sense. Hence the biblical term “(sacred) prostitution,” a religious act that entails apostasy: one turns away from Yahweh.

The Epistle of Judas . –

Judas describes how God judges the flesh severely.

Jude 6: The angels who had intercourse with the daughters in the time of Noah did not retain their high rank but abandoned their dwelling: they debased themselves to demons of the underworld. They lowered their level of 'spirit' to that of 'flesh'. God has also chained them in the depths of the underworld until the Second Coming of Christ and the Last Judgment. They

therefore reside in the subterranean regions because their energy is insufficient to withstand those places and their inhabitants. Especially because they have created an immoral culture whereby a natural disaster becomes inevitable: a flood.

Jude 7. - Sodom , Gomorrah, and their surroundings have sinned in a similar manner. Saint Jude refers to that sodomy which no longer even shows respect for God's angels and seeks intercourse with them: “these cities sought a very different 'flesh'”, this means: not human, that of the two angels in their earthly appearance. Consequence: their energy no longer protects them against the suffering of the eternal fire. Their dwelling place is that of the subterranean regions of the demons and the damned whose energy is consumed by the fire, i.e., by the radical loss of their divine energy.

St. Jude accuses the false doctors (also *2 Peter 1:16, 3:3ff.* mentions them) who “drunk, defile the flesh (note: here in the ordinary sense) and show no respect for the angels

Whom they attempt to involve in their rites. They show no respect for the sublime nature of the angels and for that which they know by nature (through their behavior) “like irrational animals”. The flesh serves only to lose oneself in. According to Jude, they are psychic beings, that is, beings without God's inherent spirit. Thus, they are not protected against the darkness that attracts them.

Just as for Peter, the appearance of such doctors is also for St. Jude a sign of the coming end times. (*Jude 18*).

St. Jude asks the faithful to endeavor to convince those who still hesitate. But to shun others, however, “with fear and abhorrence, for even their garments are defiled by sin.” (*Jude 23*). As a counterweight, he sees the Holy Trinity: “God (the Father)/ the Lord (the Son)/ Holy Spirit”) with prayer 'in the Holy Spirit' as the source of life-giving power.

Note:

Some interpret these texts as if they concern merely a 'mythical mentality', and as if the modern mind cannot tolerate a solid truth such as is known from a life sustained by the Holy Trinity.

18.2.2. As it was, ... so it shall be.

Let us read what Jesus says regarding the moral and religious evolution of man in *Luke 17:26ff*... In summary: “Noah / Lot” and “flesh / spirit” in the form of “sow / harvest”.

1. “As it was in the days of Noah , so will it also be in the days of the Son of Man (Jesus): people ate and drank, married and were given in marriage, until the day Noah entered the ark and the flood came and destroyed them all.”

2. “Or as it was in the days of Lot: people ate and drank, bought and sold, planted and built, but on the day Lot left Sodom , God rained fire and sulfur down from heaven and destroyed them all. So it will be on the day the Son of Man appears.”

1. **Metonymic language use** : -

The Bible, like many religious texts, summarizes: instead of saying, “The flood or the sulfur and the fire, phenomena that God created and instruments of his providence, cause everyone who lacks the divine energy to disappear” (the unabridged version), one says: “God, through the flood or the rain of sulfur and fire, causes to disappear...” (the abbreviated version through metonymy)

2. **“The Son of Man”**. –

This term dates from *Daniel 7:13* and means “to be human” (just as “Son of Man” means “divine being”). In *7:13*, *Daniel* articulates the end of the 'animals', the very earthly political-religious earthly system prior to the time of the Son of Man, and in *7:13* he sees the coming of the Son of Man who is of heavenly origin. Jesus presents himself there as the Son of the divine man. One sees the pair “flesh (animals) / spirit (Jesus)”.

3. **The days of the Son of Man**

These are realized in two times: His first coming is a 'revelation' in which He shows His power and His teaching, supported by miracles, but He testifies to His weakness through His death on the cross; His second coming (discussed in *Luke 17:26ff*.) is that same revelation but “in power,” that is, glorified ('glory' is “spirit in its full splendor”).

Conclusion: Jesus harbors no illusions whatsoever regarding the cultural evolution of man: in *Luke 18:8* he says: “Will the Son of Man find faith when he returns to the earth?” See *Matthew 24:12*. Ultimately, it will always be “the

small number” that fulfills the new covenant (*Jer. 31:31ff.; Heb. 8:13*) and lives according to the spirit, while the vast majority lives according to the flesh.

The descent “into hell”. –

Christ, considering the future, is seriously concerned about this situation: having died on the cross and being filled with the Spirit immediately after His death (*1 Peter 3:18*), He descends “to hell” (the underworld realms where 'life' knows only darkness and eternal fire) to proclaim the good news “to those who at the time of Noah had refused to believe.” Let us add the Sodomites , who at that time had also refused to believe. They too are to hear the good news. One of the reasons—besides the concern for the salvation of souls in the underworld—is that people on earth who exhibit similar behavior also come under the influence of the underworld. It is not without reason that Jesus speaks of “the gates of hell” in *Matthew 16:18*, where He says that these gates (understand: presence and power) of Hades (the Greek term for 'hell'), despite their constant threat, will not stand against the church.

Judgment of God. –

S. *Jude* (6; *the Flood*); 7 (*the destruction of Sodom*) and even more clearly Peter (*2 Peter 2*) reiterate what Jesus emphasized: first the pairing “days of Noah / days of Lot”, then the judgment as a sifting. –

2 Peter 2:4ff .. - God establishes that the world prior to the flood was a world of sinners - the level of the flesh - among which Noah and his family lived - level of the spirit - , has not spared the sinners and preserved Noah and his family. One sees the segregation and its energetic basis (flesh / spirit). –

2 Peter 2:6ff .. - God sees the Sodomites as prey to an aggressive form of sodomy, and condemns the one to total destruction (flesh) and saves the others (spirit). One sees the sifting and the reason.

This reminds us of *Galatians 6:7ff* .: “whatever you sow, that is what you shall reap: whoever sows in the flesh will reap destruction, but whoever sows in the spirit will reap the spirit and eternal life.”

Life is a process dominated by the type of life force, according to the fundamental law of “sowing/reaping.” “For man there is life and death: according to their discretion, the one or the other is given to them” (*Ecclesiasticus (Sirach) 15:17*).

18.2.3. The new covenant.

All religions have their mediators of the sacred. In the Bible, they are the priests, prophets, wise men (*note*: thinkers) (*Jer. 18:18*) or “prophets, wise men, scribes” (*Matt. 23:34*). These mediators claim to possess knowledge of God and speak “in the name of God” to the people they lead in an authoritarian manner. That is the Old Covenant.

The new covenant. –

Moses already cried out: “May all the people of Yahweh be prophets, by causing His life-giving power to descend upon them!” (*Numbers 11:29*). But since Jeremiah, and especially Ezekiel, the idea of a new covenant found its way.

Jeremiah 31:32ff . says that the old covenant has become obsolete because it was based too much on the mutual dependence of believers. He clarifies: “The fathers have eaten green—unripe—grapes, and the teeth of the children taste bitter.”

Ezekiel 18:1 repeats the same thought as characteristic of the old covenant. Jeremiah quotes the voice (note: the inspired word) of God: everyone will die by his or her own fault; whoever commits errors will themselves get “rough teeth” (experience the adverse consequences thereof). The essence of the new covenant is expressed by Yahweh as: “I will situate my law (*note*: the way of life that I desire) in the depths of their being and I will write my law on their hearts. Then I will be their God and they will be my people. -- Then each one among them will no longer have to teach his neighbor—each his 'brother'—while saying: “Get to know Yahweh”. For all they will know me;—from the smallest to the greatest—oracle of Yahweh—because I will forgive their transgression and will no longer think of their sin.”

Note - The term 'to know God' in the biblical sense means “to have an intimate relationship with Him”

The Greek meaning “intellectual knowledge” is at most one aspect of the typically Biblical ‘knowing’. In *Ezekiel 36:26ff* ., Yahweh specifies: “ I will give you a new heart and pour out a new spirit upon you; (...). I will ensure that you obey my laws and strictly observe my precepts.” It is the language of Moses.

The spirit of Pentecost. –

Joel 3:1 describes the radical universality of the divine project: “After this I will cause my Spirit to descend upon all flesh (*note*: all people as they actually are): your sons and your daughters will prophesy, your elders will dream, your young men will see visions. Even upon the servants and the handmaids, men and women, I will then pour out my Spirit.” This is literally adopted in *Acts 2:17/ 18 in the interpretation of the descent of the Holy Spirit upon Mary, the apostles, and the disciples*. A descent that continues here and there to this day.

The Epistle to the *Hebrews 8:6ff* . quotes *Jer. 31:31ff* . and immediately adds: “Speaking of ‘the new covenant’ makes the earlier covenant old. Thus, what is old and worn out will disappear.” This changes the position of an ecclesiastical mediator: he is in the service of the new covenant to bring the believers into direct and intimate individual contact with the Holy Trinity. Christ is the epitome of this: he tells the world what he has heard from the Father who sent Him (*John 8:26, 8:28*), that is, thanks to His intimate contact with the Father. By saying: “all will be taught by God” (*John 6:45*), He clearly confirms the direct contact with God: He actualizes the message of *Joel 3:1* in its generality.

Psalm 51 (50)

Psalm 51 (50) sets us - already in the context of the Old Testament - on the path of the new covenant, and its twofold effect: the forgiveness of sins and the giving of the Holy Spirit to everyone.

1. *Forgiveness of sins* . - “Be merciful to me, God who are love; You, boundless mercy, wipe out what I have done wrong. Wash me clean of guilt, cleanse me from my sin. I confess: I have misbehaved, my sin continually accuses me. Against You alone have I sinned, I have done what is evil in Your sight.”

2. *The gift of the Holy Spirit*. - “God, create in me a pure heart, renew my spirit, make it steadfast. Do not cast me away, away from your countenance (*note*: from your intimacy), do not take your Holy Spirit away from me. LORD , give me the joy of your redemption, strengthen me with your generous spirit.

This prayer—the mercy—although dating from the Old Testament—is still the prayer of the new covenant. Let us note that the verb 'to create' (“create in me a pure heart”) is characteristic of God: the thorough transformation of man, who was merely 'flesh', is the same as bringing him to life. Which means

that the change from 'flesh' to 'spirit' entails a new creation. Only God can accomplish such a thing.

18.2.4. Individual responsibility according to Ezekiel.

Ezekiel 18:1/32 . - This chapter can be summarized as follows: “He who is unrighteous (*note*: conscienceless) will 'die'”. We quote and emphasize the most important points.

The essence is the Decalogue.

The righteous, understand: he who behaves ethically, does not attend pagan sacrificial meals (e.g., in the mountains), does not dishonor his neighbor's wife, does not approach a woman in her hours, oppresses no one, returns the collateral to the debtor, and does not appropriate another's property; shares his food with the hungry and provides the naked; does not lend at interest, does not take usurious profit, refrains from injustice, and pronounces a fair judgment between two parties; lives according to my precepts and scrupulously observes my commandments: such a person shall 'live' (remain in contact with God).

The mistake is personal. –

“But if he in turn has a son, who sees all the evil that his father does but nevertheless does not follow that bad example; (...), then that son will not die because of the iniquity of his father, he will certainly remain alive. But his father, who was a usurer who appropriated the property of others and did among his relatives what is not good, he will die because of his iniquity and his 'blood' (note: the ethical responsibility for his life) will come down upon himself” (*18:10/13*). Thus says the sacred text itself. It is evident that 'life' and 'death' are used here in the occult sense.

Conversion is personal.

- “If a wrongdoer repents of the sins he has committed and keeps all my commandments and acts according to justice and law, then he shall 'live'; he shall not die. (...). Would I perhaps take pleasure in the death of the sinner—oracle of Yahweh—and not much rather see him mend his ways and remain provided with divine life? (*18:21ff*).

The fall is personal.

“But if a righteous person turns aside from the path of righteousness and does evil (...), he shall die. (...). It is because of the evil that he has committed that he dies” (note: loses the divine 'life'). (*18:24ff*).

The “death / life” couple. –

It is clear: the terms 'death' and 'life' in their typical Biblical meaning refer to the result caused by the other pair “flesh/spirit”. Death here stands for 'spiritual' death, and 'life' for spiritual life. A wicked person who does not repent is a 'dead person'. An ethically minded person is a person who 'lives'.

The couple “ sheol / in God’s countenance”. –

Because, Biblically speaking, a spiritually dead person belongs to the depths of the underworld, he is the visible and tangible representation of these underworld realms on our earth, whereas a person who lives in accordance with God’s will already lives here “in God’s countenance,” that is, in intimate contact with God, as Psalm 16 (15): 8ff. clearly states: “I keep the Lord before my eyes without ceasing, (...). For You do not abandon my life to the realm of the dead, You cannot leave my soul to its fate in Sheol , You cannot let Your friend see the grave (*note*: the underworld realms).” If one contacts a person who is friends with God, one is, through him, in daily life in direct and tangible contact with God Himself.

Decision. –

“Therefore I will judge each of you according to his deeds (...). Repent, turn away from all your wicked deeds; otherwise they will be fatal to you. Get rid of all the wicked deeds you have committed; and renew your heart (*note*: your deeper soul) and your spirit, for why should you die (...)? I take no pleasure in the death of anyone—oracle of Yahweh. Repent therefore and live!” (18:30ff.).

Behold the impressive message of the prophet Ezekiel, who shows us the true God of the Old Testament, whom one so often contrasts with the God of the New Testament—not without having demonized the one of the Old Covenant and exalted the one of the New Covenant.

Remark. –

If man is not overwhelmed by the mistakes of his ancestors and his own past, then we notice that the prophet speaks only of guilt, but not of possible other consequences that his ancestors or his own past entail.

Rom. 5:12ff. in this light : “Therefore, just as sin entered the world through one man, and death with sin, and so death spread to all men because all sinned...” With this original sin, too, we are forced to view it from the perspective of 'guilt' as a personal sin with its consequences.

18.2.5. “Do not trust every spirit, but examine the spirits”.

(1 John 4:1) Let us listen to *1 Kings 22*. – The land is divided into two kingdoms, that of Israel and that of Judah. Ahab (-874/-853) rules over the north of Israel and Jehoshaphat (-870/-848) rules over the south of Judah. It is the time of the wars against the Arameans (Aram). One day Jehoshaphat visits Ahab with a view to a covenant. –

Naturally, Yahweh is consulted through prophets: Jehoshaphat —a God-fearing man—says to Ahab : “First consult the word of God.” He gathers his prophets “numbering about four hundred” (*1 Kings 22:6*). These were not friends of God but served the king. They must answer the question: “Should we launch the attack, yes or no?” They answer: “Attack! The Lord will deliver them into the king’s hands.”

But Jehoshaphat, knowing that these prophets were not faithful , asked: “Is there no prophet of Yahweh here, through whom we can consult Him?” To which Ahab answered: “There is still one man through whom we can consult Yahweh, but I hate him because he never predicts anything good for me (...). It is Mikajehu (...). But Jehoshaphat said: “The king must not speak like that.” Ahab summons Mikajehu .

The message of Mikajehoe . –

The two kings sat each on their throne, in full regalia. The prophets of Ahab all prophesied before the kings. They all foretold to Ahab : “Your campaign will succeed (...). -

The messenger who was to fetch Mikajehu said to him: “The prophets have unanimously given the king a favorable prediction; let your word correspond with theirs and foretell something good.” But Mikajehu answered: “As surely as Yahweh lives, I will only say what Yahweh commands me.” When he came to the king, he repeated somewhat mockingly: “Attack; your campaign will succeed; Yahweh will deliver them into the king.” But the king lashed out at him: “How often must I implore you to tell me nothing but the truth in the name of Yahweh?” Then Mikajehu said : “I saw all Israel scattered over the mountains like sheep without a shepherd. And Yahweh spoke: ‘They have no master; let everyone return home in peace.’”

Note: –

The prophetic gift (“I saw”) accompanies the word of God (“Yahweh spoke to me”). Ahab expected it. Mikajehoe replied: “Listen rather to the word of Yahweh! I saw: Yahweh seated on his throne. All the host of heaven (*note :*

the spirits that make up God's council (cf. *Job 1:6; 2:1; Ps. 58 (57); Ps. 82 (81)*) on his left and right. Yahweh asked: "Who will deceive Ahab (...). The spirits answered; one like this; the other like that. Then "the spirit" (*note*: collective name for all that is prophetic spirit of Yahweh—neutral, meliorative and, as here shortly, pejorative) stepped forward: "I! I will deceive him!" Yahweh asked: "How?" He: "I will go and make myself a lying spirit in the mouth of his prophets (*note*: the four hundred). Yahweh: "You will deceive Ahab . It will succeed! Go! Execute!

Mikajehu immediately added: "Look then: Yahweh has sent a lying spirit into the mouth of all that is present here as your prophets! But as for Yahweh himself: he has foretold disaster for you." Thereupon Sedecias went up to Mikajehu and struck him on his cheek: "How could the spirit of Yahweh have left me to speak to you?" Mikajehu : "That of all days you shall see the day that you flee into a secluded place to hide yourselves!" Ahab commanded: "Arrest him! Place him under the supervision of Amon. (...). You shall say to them: 'Thus says the prince: imprison this man, with only bread and water until I return safe and sound.' –

Mikajehoe said: "If you return safe and sound, then Yahweh has not spoken through my mouth." The two kings go to war. Ahab believes he can escape Yahweh's judgment by disguising himself as an ordinary soldier. However, at a certain moment, an adversary draws his bow without knowing who he is aiming at. Ahab is fatally wounded and dies that very same evening. So much for the story. Let us pause here for a moment for clarification.

1. Thus the prophetic spirit of Elisha (*2 Kings 2:13*) is like a two-edged sword: if one recognizes his divine calling, then he saves; if one does not recognize it (e.g., by mocking him), then he destroys. - What Micah describes as a scene of the afterlife presupposes a spirit of Yahweh that is itself also two-edged: if he is confronted with false prophets who pretend to be inspired by Yahweh, then he leads them to ruin by penetrating their souls: "I will become a lying spirit in the mouths of their prophets."

2. Saint Paul reasons in a similar manner in *2 Thessalonians (2:9/12)* where he speaks of the Antichrist who deceives people by means of miracles. All this is then "intended for those who are perishing, because they have shut themselves off from the love of the truth, which could have saved them. And therefore God sends them a power that seduces them to believe the lie (...)" . - If one is merely 'flesh', and flees from the truth, lying spirits are given the opportunity to predict whatever one wishes, but then they are lies. If, however,

one devotes oneself to the divine 'spirit', one escapes this mechanism and attains what one truly desires: genuine inspiration.

18.3. God and Man

18.3.1. The secret and its revelation.

Every person is confronted with secrets. When St. Paul is shipwrecked on Malta, he throws some dry wood into the fire, and a snake sticks to his hand. The Maltese interpret: "This man is a murderer: he has just escaped the sea and divine vengeance has not spared his life" (*Acts 28:3ff.*). They reason from the consequence to a 'divine' cause. In times of need, people resorted to public fasting and prayer to expose a fault (*Judges 20:26; 1 Kings 21:9; Joel 1:14, 2:15*).

Note:

Biblically speaking, the causal link rests on *Genesis 6:3* : the flesh (wrong) provokes the withdrawal of His spirit from God. Which, among the people—given a mysterious mutual solidarity—manifests itself in a vulnerability resulting from the mistake committed.

The problem of the hidden and its revelation is also central in the book of Daniel: amidst a large number of 'wise men' (diviners, sorcerers, magicians) (*Dan. 2:2*) who specialized in the "interpretation of mysteries" within a non-Biblical framework, Daniel places "the Exalted God" (*2:45*) or even "the God of gods" (*2:47*) first as "the revealer of mysteries" (*2:47*), who reveals deep-seated things and secrets and knows what is in the darkness (*2:22*).

Hidden error . -

1 Kings 17:17ff. - The prophet Elijah (Elijah) lives with a widow in Sarepta . The woman's son fell ill and died. Whereupon she says to Elijah: "What is it between me and you, man of God? You have come to me to remind me of my faults and to cause my son to die !" Elijah says nothing but heals the child . - This incident shows us a characteristic of a "sent by God": simply by their presence, unconscious errors surface, are exposed, and God's judgment is accelerated in the form of unexpected miscalculations.

On a public scale, it is observed that in difficult times people proclaim a fast and public prayer services (*Judges 20:26; Joel 1:14/15 (the day of Yahweh comes as a destruction); 1 Kings 21:9*) to reveal some fault that manifests itself in its painful consequences.

Who sinned?

- *John 9:1ff* .. - Jesus notices a man born blind. The disciples ask: “Rabbi, who sinned—he or his parents—so that he was born blind?” That his parents qualify is a case of the globally widespread genealogical thinking.

This brings us to the Old Covenant. Indeed, *Jeremiah 31:29* says : “The fathers have eaten green—unripe—grapes, and the teeth of the children taste bitter.” This means, for example, that an offspring dies because of someone else’s fault. Remarkably, the disciples do not rule out the hypothesis of a personal fault before birth. This leads to the conclusion that there was a fault even before conception—in a previous life. In that case, the blind person is personally responsible for the fact that he was born blind.

Reincarnists conclude from this that they possess reincarnation . With the fault of the parents, the hypothesis of a fault prior to conception is considered possible. But Jesus states that neither he nor his parents sinned: the one born blind does indeed show the works (signs, miracles) of God.

Note:

The text does not necessarily imply reincarnation. The person born blind may have made a mistake in the womb: consider *Luke 1:41, 1:44* , where Elizabeth says that the child “leaped in her womb” upon Mary’s arrival. This might point to awareness in the womb, with the possibility of sin. A personal error, specific to the person born blind, makes reincarnation logically non-necessary.

At the presentation of Jesus in the temple, Simeon indicates: “This child will bring about the fall and the rising (understand: sifting of judgment) of many in Israel (note : the sifting of judgment of God) (...) so that the secret thoughts of many hearts may be laid bare” (*Luke 2:34ff.*). After all, Jesus is one sent by God. There he reveals himself to be the great God of the prophet Daniel, who clearly sees 'flesh' and 'spirit' at work in people.

Biblical examination of conscience . -

1 Cor. 4:3ff. . - “I do not judge myself. Although my conscience does not reproach me, I am not thereby justified (understand: in order with God). The Lord is my judge. – Consequently: do not judge prematurely. Let the Lord come (understand: at his second coming): he will shed light on the secrets of darkness and expose the intentions of the hearts. Then everyone will receive from God the praise that is due to him.” The 'then' stands for the final judgment at the end of time. Thus St. Paul, who examines his conscience for

unconscious errors as if the glorified Jesus had already returned for the final judgment. This eschatological (focused on the end times) way of thinking is typical of the entire Old and New Testament . –

Note: –

If moderns claim to have discovered the unconscious, then in St. Paul they have a forerunner of considerable stature who harbored no illusions regarding our consciousness as the unveiler of the truth. *Matt. 11:25* . - “Jesus said: Father, Lord of heaven and earth, I bless you because you (understand: the mysteries of his actions) have hidden from the wise and the intelligent and have revealed them to the very little ones .” - Jesus speaks as *Ps. 72 (71)* already says: the little ones, the children of the poor, do not receive their rights from the powerful on earth. Jesus, the All-Ruler as the righteous judge, initiates “the little ones” into the mysteries of God’s justice.

18.3.2. God speaks to man.

In essence, the Bible is a kind of library containing a diversity of all kinds of texts. Some have only historical significance, so they are no longer so important to us. The Bible also contains quite a few repetitions. But some texts, notwithstanding their great age and the cultural distance that separates them from us, still have contemporary value. We find an example of this in *Job 33:14ff* . It concerns lived experiences. – “God speaks repeatedly, but no one pays attention, in dreams, night visions, when man falls into deep sleep, or lies dozing in bed.” It seems as if the sacred author determined that contemporaries did not realize the divine value of some such experiences.

Nocturnal phenomena . –

When the human mind has settled somewhat in nocturnal sleep, God 'speaks' through dreams and night visions, or startles them with apparitions. According to the author, the divine significance of such phenomena is so that “man may reflect on his works and put an end to his pride”: “God thus keeps the soul from the abyss (*note*: death), from its life right before the swamp of death”.

An example. –

Wisdom 17:1ff . reflects on the Exodus, when the Israelites left Egypt. “For the Egyptians thought (...) to remain hidden in their secret sins, (note: their religious practices) (...) but they were scattered, in great fear and bewildered by illusions. For even the hiding place that concealed them did not protect

them from fear, and thundering sounds echoed around them, and sad specters with gruesome faces appeared.”

The author describes the plague of darkness that fell upon the Egyptians (*Exodus 10:21ff* .) and brought them into contact with the depths of the underworld (the subterranean realms) (*Wisdom 17:14*). In *Wisdom 18:17* , the author says that these appearances and dreams “made known to them why they were dying. For this had been revealed to them earlier by the dreams that had bewildered them, so that they would not perish without knowing why they were so severely afflicted.” Bible interpreters believe that this is an eschatological form of description (it refers at the same time to the events of the end times). Let us not forget that the New Testament is thoroughly eschatological, which continues the tradition of the Old Testament.

The suffering.

God also speaks through the sickness. - *Job 33:19ff* . - “Sickness, bedriddenness, and deep-seated fever in his bones also rebuke him (note: the sick person). - He can no longer look at food; even his favorite meal repels him; his body wastes away visibly; whereas you could not see his ribs before, now you can count them.”

Then God speaks: “Then the abyss draws near and he stands right before the swamp of death. But if an angel then assists him, one of the countless rises up for him and shows him the right path, then God is gracious to him and says (note: the angel to God): “Stop, he does not have to go into the abyss, I will find the ransom for his life.” Then his body becomes young and fresh again (...). He may pray again, for God loves him, He grants him His favor, His joy, and new righteousness. (...). “I sinned, went astray, but God did not treat me according to my fault. He saved me from the abyss and I enjoy the light again.”

An example. –

Wisdom 18:21ff .. - The sacred writer cites the intervention of Aaron: “An irreproachable man hastily stepped into the breach for them, equipped with the weapons of his own service, prayer, and atoning incense offering. He withstood the wrath and put an end to the calamity; thereby he showed that he was God’s servant. (...). When the dead were already lying in heaps upon one another, he stood in the midst, halted the anger, and cut off the way to the living. (...) Before that the destroyer (note: the angel who carries out God’s judgment) yielded; before that he was afraid: merely a sign of the wrath was enough.”

All this is typical of the “Old Testament”. Moreover! The God of the Old Testament—whom one so often contrasts with that of the New—shows Himself not indifferent to the intervention of 'mediators' who have a say through their interventions.

The word of God. –

It will have been established that the expression “God speaks” conceals a special meaning. To “speak” on the part of God means to “address” what “presents itself in one way or another” (*Job 33:14*). God places us, so to speak, in situations of everyday life. He does not “speak,” He does not “preach.” He “situates,” and thus inspires our deeper soul with His counsel—whether or not aided by intermediaries. But even in the time of the sacred writer, “people paid little attention to it.”

18.3.3. A good shepherd makes contradictory choices.

The parable of the good shepherd – *John 10* – is sufficiently well known, but if we place it within the entire biblical context, it reveals to us the guiding ideas of the Bible itself.

The “knowledge/voice” couple. –

In the parable, the shepherd enters through the door or is the door itself, and calls his sheep one by one (*Jeremiah 31:34*: “*All will know me*”). “He calls his sheep each by his name” (*John 10:3*). “And when he has brought all his sheep out, he goes before them, and the sheep follow him because they know his voice. But they will never follow a stranger; on the contrary, they flee from him, because they do not know the voice of strangers.” - Jesus limits himself for the time being to the Jewish people, but he already reveals himself as a universal shepherd: “I have other sheep that are not of this fold (note: the Jewish people).” These also will listen to my voice” (*10:16*). - Jesus repeats in *John 10:27*: “My sheep listen to my voice; I know them and they follow me. I give them eternal life.” Knowing—the intimate contact—and listening to His voice go hand in hand.

Two votes. –

Moses and the book of *Numbers 11:29* mention it: the prophet, through a special spirit, hears and listens to the voice of his father. In *John 8:47*, Jesus is in full discussion with a number of hostile Jews who wish him dead. Jesus says to them: “Whoever is from God hears the words of God; if therefore you hear nothing, it is because you are not from God.” And *John 8:38ff* ... “I, I

“speak as I have seen it with my Father. You, you act as you have heard from your father.” In short: To understand Jesus as the “Son of God” inspired by the Father (hermeneutics), one ought to be inspired by God oneself (manticism) when listening to Jesus’ message.

The works are in accordance with the giver, with whom they give. In 8:40 Jesus specifies: “You are out to kill me, while I have proclaimed to you the truth that I have heard from God. (...). You carry out the works of your father. (...). The reason: you are not able to hear my word. You spring from the devil, your father. The desires of your father—that is what you want to carry out.” Thereupon Jesus characterizes the devil: “The devil, from the beginning, was a killer of men. He was also not at home in the truth. Because there is no truth in him. So when he lies, he speaks as he really is, because he is a 'liar' and the father of lies.”

Fatherhood. –

It is clear: the word 'father' has two meanings: “he who gives life” and “he who is the source of inspiration in the depths of the soul.” The height—or depth—of his ethical nature reveals itself in his works. Here: the will to kill an emissary of God—a prophet—and the lie, the refusal to engage with the truth. The difference with the ethical nature of Christ is crystal clear: “I am the good shepherd; I know my sheep and the sheep know me, just as the Father knows me and I know the Father. And I lay down my life for my sheep.” (*John 10:14ff*). Instead of killing the sheep as the robbers or the hired hands and the blinded Pharisees do. There are, therefore, criteria for judging the “inner word” according to its ethical value. These are summarized in the Decalogue or Ten Commandments. The distinction between inspired words and their respective 'father' is thus indeed possible.

Faith and blindness.

In *John 9:39* Jesus says: “I came into this world for the purpose of separation, so that those who do not see may see, and those who see may become blind.” Jesus is speaking first and foremost of those who have a true contact with God. These are those who, like the one born blind, are acutely aware that they are confronted with a mystery and confess that it is opaque. They “do not know.”

Next, Jesus speaks of those who have no real contact with God, but who, by their own account, see clearly in the true nature of Christ. The Pharisees hear his words and ask him: “Do we also belong to those 'blind ones'?” Jesus: “If you were 'blind' (*note*: not seeing clearly in an honest way), then you would

be without sin. But you claim ‘we see.’ So your sin remains.” The signs of the glory of Christ make no difference here: whoever does not see, does not see. *John* (12:39) quotes the prophet *Isaiah* (6:9): “God has blinded their eyes, hardened their hearts, so that they do not see with their eyes and do not come to understanding with their hearts; so that they do not repent.”

The most striking example of this blindness is Judas. The mechanism is clear:

“The devil had meanwhile prompted Judas to betray Jesus” (*John* 13:2). Jesus, as a seer, knows it. He is concerned and says: “He who eats my bread lifts up his heel against me” (*Ps.* 41(40):10 ; which means: “Even the one whom I trusted acts against me”). Now I already say it before it happens. So that, when it happens, you believe that “I am”; (*John* 13:18/20).

“When Jesus had said this, he was moved in spirit: “Truly, truly. I say it to you: someone among you will betray me.” (...). “Lord, who is it?” Jesus: “He is the one to whom I will give a piece of bread.” Jesus dips the bread in the wine and hands it to Judas. At that moment Satan entered into him. Jesus then: “What you are doing, do not delay it.” No one, however, of the table companions understood why he spoke thus to Judas. (...). Immediately after having accepted the mouthful of bread, Judas went outside. It was night. (*John* 13:26). Judas thought only of the money and did not believe, as *John* 6:64 says: “But there are some among you who do not believe.” For Jesus knew from the very first moment who it was that did not believe and who it was that would betray Him.” Jesus, as judge, even accelerates the mechanism of that downfall.

18.3.4. Prayer as intimate contact with God.

In *Matthew* 26:41, Jesus says: “Watch and pray lest you fall into temptation. The spirit is strong, but the flesh is weak.” When one prays, one establishes direct and individual contact—which is the goal of Christianity—with the Holy Trinity, which at that moment pours out its spirit upon the one praying, upon his situation, and upon the problem presented. The one who prays thus transcends his weakness and becomes 'strong'.

Weakness . –

All this does not prevent *St. Paul* in *Rom.* 8:26 from highlighting our weakness: “We do not even know how we ought to pray.” And almost everyone, including Christians, will not contradict this.

Causes: -

They are manifold, individual and collective. With the exception of a few individuals, we do not even stop to reflect on them. The Pentecost event in Jerusalem is already centuries ago, and the coming of the Son of Man at the end of time seems to barely touch us in our daily lives. The entire Scripture and the entire Christian tradition have always emphasized that the time between Pentecost and the coming of the Son of Man is far from simple. And the Lord's Prayer—the prayer that Christ left us—expresses this clearly. The name (the important role) of the Father is sanctified by only a minority of people. His will is done only to a very limited extent on earth and in heaven. The reason: His kingdom is barely beginning; indeed, it has yet to come. “Thy kingdom come,” we say with Christ. For the kingdom is not yet here. The earthly atmosphere somewhat stifles intimate contact with the Holy Trinity, and makes it difficult, sometimes even to a great extent, to realize the new covenant, the goal of Christianity.

Causes: -

Scripture and tradition are formal: the days of the Antichrist are approaching. “Certainly, the mystery of alienation from God is already at work. But someone is holding it back. Only when this one is eliminated will the one alienated from God—the evil Antichrist—push through. But the Lord—Jesus—will destroy him by the power of his coming.”—(*2 Thessal . 2:7ff.*). Current religious apostasy insinuates that this time is approaching. In any case, it explains the suffocating atmosphere that Christianity is undergoing in our days, at least as a new covenant. Which makes Christ's prayer, “Thy Kingdom Come,” particularly relevant now than ever.

Prayer in the spirit. -

Saint Jude 20v . asks the faithful to pray “in the power of the Holy Spirit” and *St. Paul in Rom. 8:15* says: “The Spirit whom you have received (...) who makes us cry out: Abba , Father”. And *Rom. 8:26* clarifies: Likewise the Spirit helps us in our weakness. For we do not even know how we ought to pray. But the Spirit himself intercedes for us with groanings that cannot be expressed.” –

Conclusion: Not only do we turn to the Holy Trinity, but while we pray, we come into intimate contact with the Holy Trinity.

Gratitude. -

The Christian of the new covenant never forgets to give thanks: “Do not be anxious, but in all your requests let yourselves be made known to God by

praying and supplicating and giving thanks” (*Philippians 4:6*).

The Christian of the new covenant remembers the words of Jesus to Pilate (*John 19:8*). - Pilate learns that Jesus presents himself as “Son of God.” When Pilate heard that, he became even more troubled: “He went back into the praetorium and asked Jesus the question: ‘Where do You come from?’ But Jesus gave no answer. ‘You do not speak to Me?’ said Pilate. ‘You know, do not you, that I have the power to release You, but also the power to crucify You?’ Jesus answered: ‘You would have no power over Me unless you had been granted this by heaven. (...)’”

The Christian can turn to the Holy Trinity “in need,” but must always ask himself the question: “Is what I want given from above?” For the plans of the Holy Trinity sometimes include, and rightly so, things that are beyond our reach. In any case, a great deal is given to us from above by the love of the Holy Trinity.

Let us not forget that the Heavenly Father “makes the sun rise on the unrighteous and on the righteous” (*Matt. 5:45*). If even the wicked are treated with goodness, how much more so a Christian who strives to live in accordance with the wishes of the Holy Trinity? For according to *Gal. 4:6*, “God has sent the Spirit of His Son into our hearts, who cries out: Abba , Father.” 'Father' expresses the intimacy of a child toward his 'father'. This 'closeness'—let us not forget—remains accessible to the Christian, even though we are far from perfect.

18.3.5. The meaning of baptism.

1 *Peter 3:18* tells us: “Jesus was put to death, at least insofar as he was 'flesh' (wretched man). He was made alive insofar as he was 'spirit' (divine life).” It is the content of the liturgical Easter celebration that contrasts the earthly life of Jesus (who, from the perspective of divine life (from the 'spirit'), is a 'dead' one) with his glorification (his eternal 'life' from the spirit). Let us clarify this through a number of other Bible texts.

John 3 - Nicodemus , a Pharisee, came to Jesus at night to confess his faith to Him: “For no one can perform the signs that You do unless God is with him.” (*3:2*). To which Jesus clarifies that no one can see the kingdom of God (*note*: lead a truly divine life) unless he is born “from above.” Nicodemus understands this expression from a biological standpoint, which obliges Jesus to clarify: “I assure you: only those born of water and spirit are able to enter

the kingdom of God. What is born of flesh (*note*: biological life without the Divine Spirit) is flesh; and what is born of the Spirit (*note*: of the baptism that presupposes John the Baptist) is spirit (3:4ff.) –

Note:

This interpretation of baptism is manifested in the custom of baptizing within the framework of the Easter liturgy, for baptism is essentially a transition from the flesh to the spirit, a transition that constitutes the essence of the Easter liturgy.

Rom. 6. - Paul speaks of the fact that we, as the baptized , have become one with Jesus' cross-past and resurrection -past , for with him we die and rise again in and through the sacrament of baptism. “If we have become of the same nature thanks to the likeness of Jesus' death, then we shall also be (thanks to the likeness) of his resurrection”.

Paul mixes various things together: the transition from flesh to the spirit of Christ at Easter, the ancient custom of immersing the person being baptized in water, and the mysterious solidarity (the 'mystical bond') of the baptized with the crucified and glorified Christ, for baptism shares in the transition from flesh to spirit, thanks to the Paschal mystery. The 'life' that preceded the coming of Christ seemed more like a form of being 'dead'. With Christ came the true and divine life. The mixing of all these factors complicates a proper understanding of Paul's text. But after all the explanation and situated within the total biblical context, it becomes transparent.

Let us continue *Rom. 6* : “If we have died with Christ, we believe that we will also live with Him. For we know that Christ, once raised from the dead, dies no more: death no longer has power over Him” (6:8ff.). The expression “death” has multiple meanings. It signifies biological death, but it also signifies the flesh as a 'life' which, compared to divine life, is rather a 'being dead' than a being alive. To be 'dead' means to have died both biologically and spiritually.

Ethics are emphasized. *Rom. 6:10ff.*: “By the death He died, He dealt with sin once and for all; the life He lives is a life with God. So you also must regard yourselves: dead to sin and alive to God in Christ Jesus.”

“Death to sin” means the inevitable death of every unethical life. “Life for God” is our focus on God in our daily lives, as expressed in the Decalogue (the Ten Commandments). The flesh/spirit pairing goes hand in hand with a lack

of ethics and a life that bears witness to conscience. This is already clear in *Genesis 6:3ff.*

Yahweh saw how much the wickedness of the people on the earth had increased, and how the desire of their hearts went out toward evil all day long. Yahweh regretted that he had made man (...).” (*Gen. 6:5ff.*).

Yahweh phrases it as follows: “That my Spirit may no longer be responsible for man, for he is flesh.” Consequence: 'weakness'. Understand: vulnerability; from then on, man is exposed to the dangers of creation (the Flood, for example). This, too, is encompassed in the term 'death', as Paul viewed it.

Rom. 5:12 clarifies the concept of “first sin”: “(...) Through one man ('Adam') sin entered into the world, and through sin death, and so death spread to all men, because all have sinned”.

Human nature itself has 'died' as a result, and is therefore vulnerable due to a lack of divine spirit.

18.4. Life and death

18.4.1. The Mystery of Christ.

Let us begin with the decisive sentence of St. Peter, which follows: “Jesus was put to death, at least insofar as he was 'flesh' (wretched man). He was made alive insofar as he was 'spirit' (divine life).” (*1 Pet . 3:18ff.*).

Let us examine more closely our solidarity with this transition through baptism, as Paul describes it in *Rom. 6:3ff.*: “Baptism has made us one with Christ; it is in his death that we are all baptized. Through baptism into his death we are buried with Him, so that we too, just as Christ was raised from the dead by the power of his Father, might walk in newness of life. For if we are, as it were, united with his death, we must also follow Him in his resurrection.” The ancient Christian conception of baptism implies that through the cleansing agent, water, we acquire divine, Trinitarian life, and are immediately purified of original sin and other impurities.

Let us note that the term “joined with” expresses a deep solidarity. We are joined with Christ and undergo a 'similar' process: like Christ and with Christ, we re-enact the transition from 'death' to 'life,' as St. Paul says in *Col. 2:12* (“In baptism you were buried with Him, but also risen with Him”). This being 'buried' is clarified in *Eph . 4:7ff.*

***The gifts.* –**

Eph . 4:7ff. - “But to each of us individually grace has been granted according to the measure of Christ’s gift. Therefore it says: by ascending on high He led captives away and distributed gifts to people. He ascended: what does this mean other than that He first descended into the depths to the earth? He who descended is the same who also ascended, high above all the heavens, to fill everything.”

Paul refers here to Christ's descent into hell (*Num. 16:33*), where sinners reside, and to his ascension as the culmination of his glorification. Indeed, after his ascension, Jesus, together with the Father, sends us the Holy Spirit with his charismatic gifts to all whom he has freed from the underworld realms. –

Just as Pentecost is the completion of Easter, so baptism is the sacrament of confirmation. Regarding the gifts in detail, we refer to *1 Cor. 12:4ff., 12:18ff.* - Christ fills, together with the Father and the Holy Spirit, all that exists through his creative presence, as *Wisdom 12:1* puts it: “Your imperishable Spirit is in all things.” (cf. *Wisdom 1:7* “The Spirit of the Lord fills the whole earth”). By creating a new person in every Christian (*2 Cor. 5:7, Eph . 2:10*), He accomplishes on a higher level His creative presence which already fills the entire universe on a lower level: He thus becomes “the completion” in a new and strengthened sense (*Eph . 1:23, 3:19, 4:12, Col. 2:9ff., Rom. 8:19ff.*).

“Even you, who were dead in your sins (...) God has made alive again with Christ. (*Col. 2:13*). – Paul concludes: no return to former beliefs and practices “according to the elements of the world (*note*: which controlled you). Annual feasts, new moon, Sabbath, – food and drink (to be avoided or taken): done with all this. Do not touch, do not taste, do not grasp.” Behold the precepts. From the moment the Christian no longer takes “the elements of the world” into account, why should he still bow to their precepts? “If you have now been raised to life with Christ, seek also what is above, where Christ sits at the right hand of God” (*Col. 3:1*).

Solidarity with Christ is seen not only in the transition from flesh to spirit, but also—and especially—in daily life. This solidarity presupposes, among other things, a participation in the suffering of Christ (*Col. 1:14*: “I fulfill in my flesh (says St. Paul) what is lacking in the trials of Christ”), for the world is and remains to a certain extent hostile.

The mystery of Christ.

'Mystery' means 'secret' - "impenetrable secret doctrine" (Plato), "magical formula or rite", "secret rite of initiates leading to salvation" (usually plural), secret divine revelation (in the Gnostic sense). - In *Col. 4:3* (" *the mystery of Christ* "), 'mystery' means "divine secret, known only through divine revelation". In the language of St. Paul, the term is central and coincides with the Gospel. Indeed, the Father and the Holy Spirit act in and with Christ, the only begotten Son, in a mysterious but decisive manner for salvation. But this saving action differs radically from non-Christian mysteries in its rites and morality.

18.4.2. The Eucharist.

Let us begin with the text of *St. Luke (22:19ff.)*. - "Jesus took the bread, gave thanks, broke it into pieces and gave it to the apostles and said: 'This is my body, which is given to you. Do this in remembrance of me.' After the meal, He also said of the cup: 'This cup is the new covenant through my blood, which is shed for you.'"

Let us start by noting two things. -

First, the context, the Passover meal of the Old Covenant, which commemorates the Exodus from Egypt to the Promised Land. Christ emphasizes his transition from this earth ("put to death according to the flesh" (*1 Peter 3:18*)) to paradise or heaven where he sits "at God's right hand" ("raised to life according to the Spirit" (*1 Peter 3:18*)), - and through which he makes our transition possible (beginning with baptism and the confession of faith). -

Every celebration of Mass is indeed the present thesis of this Supper, in which this is repeated. Let us then note that St. Luke says that the bread and the wine stand for the new covenant, a term that Paul takes up again in *1 Corinthians 11:25*. Which connects us with *Jeremiah 31:31ff. .* The meaning of the Eucharist lies in the fact that everyone can live in direct and individual contact with the Holy Trinity.

The sacrifice. -

The gates of hell (*Matthew 16:18*), in the person of Satan (*Luke 4:13; 22:3* (Satan enters Jude); *22:53* (the power of the underworld)), required the exclusion of Jesus. He is incarnated ("became flesh") and is therefore vulnerable in his body and blood. As a result of his condemnation, he sacrifices his body and blood on the cross. In the form of the Last Supper, his

body is 'given' and his blood 'shed', but his body and blood are those of the glorified Christ and are therefore bread and wine, i.e., that which gives eternal life. The ritual eating of the remains of a sacrifice in the Old Covenant signified participation in this sacrifice. In the New Covenant, this ritual participation remains: we eat the bread and drink the wine after the consecration (the transition from 'flesh' to 'spirit').

The liturgical year. –

The Last Supper is situated in sacred history: it signifies the end of the old covenant and the beginning of the new. This lies between Advent and the Parousia (the return in glory) of Christ. The liturgical year unfolds this period—not only to situate the celebration of Holy Mass, but to indicate that the Mass represents the summary of this important event of salvation. Thus, the liturgical year unfolds the content of the Last Supper.

Meaning. –

“But by his judgments the Lord shows us the way and keeps us from being condemned with the world.” – The word 'world' – in Biblical language – has multiple meanings: “the totality of creation” (neutral meaning), “the new world after the present one” (meliorative meaning), but mostly: “the present world, stripped of its Divine spirit” (pejorative meaning): this world is condemned without hope. –

The divine judgments are situated in this world for the sake of our 'improvement': they are, first of all, the announcement of the Last Judgment, which already provides a sample of what it will be; secondly, they are a divine invitation to repentance “while there is still time”. The Holy Trinity is and remains the great educator.

18.4.3. Sheol : mighty but also exhausting.

Hell reveals itself in one way or another; otherwise, one would not speak of it. In the New Testament, it is the possessed who are exorcised by Jesus who show how their souls and their behavior suffer under the influence of Sheol . But let us pause for a moment at a few texts from the Old Testament that show us the layered nature of Sheol . The stay in the underworld refers to a previous stage in human evolution, or to a degeneration resulting from low moral standards. In both cases, man in Sheol lacks divine energy or 'spirit,' and 'flesh' is decisive.

In accordance with *Genesis 6:3* , *Psalms 104 (103):29ff.* says : “When You (Yahweh) hide Your face, they (Your creatures) perish from terror; when You

take away their breath, they gasp for air (...). But when You give Your breath, they are recreated (...)" . It is the typical divine spirit that is decisive in what follows.

Agreement. –

Isaiah 28:15ff .. - Out of fear of the encroaching Assyria, the rulers made a covenant with hell: "We made a covenant with death (understand: the powers of hell); with Sheol we made a pact. The threatening scourge will pass us by without striking us (...)" . -

If hell were no source of energy and therefore did not increase the chances of success, then the rulers would not have decided to enter into an agreement with it. Let us compare this with *Acts of the Apostles 19:16* , where a man possessed by an evil spirit throws himself upon some Jewish exorcists, overpowers them, and assaults them so severely that they escape naked and covered in wounds.

When Jesus is arrested, he says to the Jewish rulers: "This is your hour and the power of darkness" (*Luke 22:53*). Meant is legal power, because it was indeed there . Wir nennen dies die upper Schicht der Unterweltreiche.

The bottom layer. –

Let's take *Psalms 88(87): 11ff.* : Do You (Yahweh) perform miracles for the dead? Do the shades in the underworld rise up to praise You? Is Your love spoken of in the grave? Of Your truth in the place of destruction (*note* : Abaddon)? Do they know Your wondrous works in the darkness? Do they know anything of Your fullness of conscience in the place of lostness? – There is no divine energy left available there. Existence there is somber and powerless.

Behold a 'psychological' depiction of the deathly life in the underworld! The gates of hell, apparently, penetrate not only political systems: they penetrate the spiritual life of people who evidently live in God's friendship and cooperation, as with the psalmist who composed this psalm. Not to engage in poetry, but to characterize an inner life embittered by the powers of hell.

Cynical wealth . -

Ps. 49 (48):11 ff. - It concerns a man devoted to cynical Mammon. "Man in his luxury does not realize it (...). Such people live self-assuredly and die in full satisfaction with their lot (...). In fact, they are a herd put to graze in the underworld: death puts them to graze. While people with a conscience take it from them. The underworld, behold the residence of the self-assured . The

conscientious will rule over such.” - This last sentence clearly expresses the powerlessness of hell.” But look: “ In the morning their 'image' (*note*: visual impression, imago) is no longer there. Sheol : behold their 'dwelling'.” But You, Holy Trinity, redeem our soul from the grasping arms of the underworld and take us to You, Holy Trinity.” The image that some 'see' is not that of power. It is the bottom layer, radically exhausted. And what's more: exhausting.

Let us resume Psalm 88. –

Failure on earth is a sign of the emergence in this world of the somber life of hell. The writer is confronted with illness and laments: “My life finds itself on the edge of hell. Having already experienced myself as someone who is buried, I have been there, (...), resembling the dead who lie in the graves, those of whom you, God, no longer think. (...). You have placed me in the deepest part of the grave, in the darkness, in the abysses (...)”. The sacred writer uses poetic language to render a truly sacred experience: being ill is hell rising from the depths on earth and revealing itself perceptibly. Behold what the writer senses. There is no agreement to be made with this hell. He is exhausted and stripped of divine life force. Time and again *Genesis 6:3* : God no longer invests—temporarily or permanently—life force in such people: “That my spirit (*note*: God’s own, supernatural life force) may not be endlessly responsible for man (*note*: taken collectively) since he is 'flesh' (*note*: cosmic life without God’s 'spirit').

Do we not think that such texts are merely poetry? It may well be worded poetically, but the experience is typically sacred, religious. And this in accordance with the degree of clairvoyance. The writer sees the earth permeated with hell. *Psalm 86 (85):7* says:

“On the day of fear (understand: the earthly experience of the underworld) I call to You. (...). Among deities there is none like You, Yahweh. Nothing resembles what You perform. Exalted are You and You perform miracles, You alone. (...). I am grateful to You (...) for You have saved my soul from the depths of hell.” In other words: One should above all not think that sacred writers are “selling poetry” when they describe the power and especially the powerlessness of hell in figurative language.

In *Mark 2:3ff*, Jesus is confronted by a paralytic: Jesus sees the faith and says to the paralytic: “My child, your sins are forgiven.” To respond to the disbelief regarding the forgiveness of sins, Jesus says: “So that you may know that the Son of Man (Jesus) can forgive sins on earth, I command you—he says to the paralytic—take your stretcher and go home.”

Unscrupulousness—here presumed as the cause of the lameness—is the entry, already on this earth, into the underworld, which manifests itself on our earth precisely because of this, in the face of the consequences of the absence of God's inherent life force. The latter alone ultimately protects against the challenges contained in creation, insofar as it is surrendered to flesh and the underworld (such as sickness, natural disasters, etc.).

18.4.4. Pride, illuminated from wisdom.

Let us take the pride of the great men of the earth, as described in *Daniel* 4:1/34 (the madness of Nebuchadnezzar) and 5:1/30 (the feast of Balthazar). - *Ezekiel* 25:1/32:32 (prophecy against the nations) gives us the key:

1. First of all, there is earthly wealth (economic wealth, political power), but based on 'flesh' (whereby God is forgotten and immoral means are not shunned);

2. Ultimately, God no longer invests his life force, and the sinners will “descend into the underworld, where those who descended before you will abide forever.” (*Ezekiel* 26:20). As you can see, it is a direct application of *Genesis* 6:3. It is necessary to read these Biblical texts as a description of the underworld realms as they present themselves to our world. What Daniel describes is the political power of Nebuchadnezzar, when God withdraws his spirit, accompanied by a choice to repent, and the fall of Balthazar as a political leader when God simply withdraws his spirit. Behold, two types of 'judgment of God'.

***Nabuchodonosor* . –**

Daniel, revealer of secrets, is called to interpret a dream of the king about a tree that grows large and fruitful. But 'a watchman' (note: an angel who constantly keeps watch), and who has descended from heaven, calls

“Cut down the tree and chop off its branches (...) But leave its stump in the earth. Bound in chains of iron and bronze, he must dwell in the green of the field, (...). His human heart is changed into that of an animal. Thus seven times shall pass over him.” (...). Daniel explains the meaning of the dream to the king. “The tree is the king himself; the watchman’s message foretells that the king will be cast out from the community of men and will live for a time as an animal, driven out from among others. Thus seven times will pass over you, until you acknowledge that the Most High disposes of human kingship and

can give it to whomever He wills. (4:22). But the fact that orders were given to leave the root stump of the tree in place means that you will regain the kingship as soon as you acknowledge the power of heaven. Therefore, O king, follow my counsel: Atoned for your sins with alms and your transgressions with mercy for the poor. Then your happiness will be lasting.”

One perceives Biblical ethics as the basis of the life force that determines success on earth. (...). A year later, he was walking in the royal palace in Babylon and then cried out: 'Is this not the great Babylon, which I have built by the power of my wealth and to the glory of my majesty (...). No sooner had the king spoken those words than a voice from heaven resounded: “King Nebuchadnezzar , it is hereby communicated to you that the kingship has been taken away from you. (...). That sentence was immediately carried out upon Nebuchadnezzar (...). But when the time had passed, I, Nebuchadnezzar , lifted my eyes to heaven and I regained my sanity. I praised the Most High and honored Him who lives forever. (...). I regained my sanity and at the same time with the glory of my kingship, my splendor and majesty.”

So much for this wisdom text . The wisdom consists in the description of the rise and fall of power: “If one behaves immorally, one can expect, even at the height of one’s political power, a fall that God has then foreseen.” By this is understood: “Because the divine life force is no longer there.” The dynamic aspect is not explicitly mentioned in this story, yet it is clearly present.

Balthazar . –

We find a similar structure here: during the feast “with his nobles, his wives and concubines,” he had the gold and silver vessels removed from the temple of Jerusalem. While drinking the wine, they worshipped the gods of gold and silver, of bronze, iron, wood, and stone. Suddenly, a hand began to write on the wall of the palace. The sorcerers, Chaldeans (*note*: magicians), and exorcists could find no explanation for it. Daniel, however, succeeded: unlike Nebuchadnezzar , Baltahsar turned against Yahweh and desecrated vessels from the temple.

Therefore the Lord of heaven sent this hand, which wrote these words all alone: “ Mene , tekem , parsin ”. Mene : God has weighed your years of reign, counted them, and brought them to an end; tekem : you have been weighed on the scales and found wanting; parsin : your kingdom has been divided and given to the Medes and Persians.

This wisdom text has the structure of a ballad: in the middle of the feast, fate strikes: that same night, Balthasar, the king of the Chaldeans, was killed. His kingdom fell into the hands of Darius.

In both cases, it is pride that is fatal, specifically pride against God and his law. In this pride, for those who have the (wisdom) eye for it, the attitude of the underworld realms in their powerful layer is revealed.

18.4.5. A death caller .

The belief in an afterlife is the source of seeking contact with the deceased, such that *Leviticus* 19:31, 20:6 , and especially 20:27 forbid it: “The man or woman among you who calls up the dead or who practices divination shall be put to death. (...). Cf. Isaiah 8:19 , 19:3. – A caller of the dead is someone who controls the spirit of the deceased (by calling them up, for example).”

1 Samuel 28:3ff. –

King Saul (-1030/-1010) had driven the callers to the dead and diviners out of the land, but behold: he waged war against the Philistines : - “When Saul looked at the Philistine camp, fear seized him: his heart trembled. He consulted Yahweh. But Yahweh did not answer: neither in dreams nor through Urim - Thummim (*note*: Urim / Thummim is a mantic practice; a system of casting lots from the ephod (garment), cf. *1 Sam.* 14:41) nor through prophets. Then Saul said to his courtiers: “Find me a woman who calls up the dead , so that I may visit them to seek counsel.” (*Note*: Saul had forbidden all kinds of magical and mantic practices, in the spirit of *Deut.* 18:9/12 . Now that he himself is “in extreme distress,” he is exceeding his own measure.

The courtiers: “In En-Dor there is such a woman who calls to the dead .” Saul disguised himself and set out with two men. In the night they arrived at the woman. “I beg you: foretell my future fate to me through the ghost of a deceased person. Call up for me the one whom I shall name to you.” But the woman: “But surely you know for yourself what Saul has done—how he has cleansed the land of those who call to the dead and of diviners . Why do you attempt to lure my life into an ambush to cause me to die?” Thereupon Saul swore this oath by Yahweh: “As surely as Yahweh is a living being, so surely shall you suffer no punishment for this deed .” The woman: “Whom shall I call up for you?” Saul : “Call up Samuel for me.”

Note: The prophet Samuel had died and all Israel had mourned over him. He was buried in Ramah , his city. (*1 Sam.* 25:1). “Then the woman indeed

saw Samuel, cried out, and said to Saul : ‘For what reason have you deceived me? You are Saul !’ The prince: ‘Do not be afraid! What do you see?’ She: ‘I see an ‘*elohim*’ (*Elohim* here means a superhuman, ‘divine’ being - *Gen.* 3:5; *Ps.* 8:6) rising out of the earth (*Numbers* 16:33 , sheol or underworld). ’ Saul : ‘What is the sight?’ The woman: ‘An old man. He is coming up, dressed in a robe.’ (*Note:* as a sign of a prophet). Saul knew immediately with certainty that it was Samuel. With his face bowed to the ground, Saul threw himself on the ground.

Samuel said to Saul : “Why disturb my rest by calling me?” (*Note:* Apparently, the dead do not like to be constantly involved in solving earthly problems and wish to be left in peace .) “ Saul : “Great fear is within me: the Philistines are waging war against me and God has turned away from me. He answers no more: neither through prophets nor in a dream. That is the reason why I have called upon you: tell me, please, what I must do!” Samuel: “Why consult me if God has turned away from you and has become your adversary? Yahweh has dealt with you as he said through my mediation: He snatched the kingship from your hand and gave it to your neighbor, David. Because you did not obey Yahweh and you did not follow his ‘burning wrath’ against Amalek . That is the reason why Yahweh is treating you this way now.

However, there is more: along with you, Yahweh will deliver your people Israel into the hands of the Philistines. Tomorrow—you and your sons—you will be with me—in Sheol (*note:* the underworld realms, cf. *Num.* 16:33). Yahweh will also deliver the camp into the hands of the Philistines.”

Saul was so startled by Samuel’s words that he fell flat on his face. He was also at the end of his strength, for he had eaten nothing all day and all night. The woman came to Saul and saw that he was completely distraught. She said to him: “Come, your servant has listened to you; I have risked my life and done what you told me. Now listen to your servant yourself. Let me set some food before you. Eat it; then you will be able to continue on your way.” Saul initially refused. Only when the courtiers and the woman also urged him did he eat something and depart that very same night.

- **Note:** The summoner of the dead belongs to a particularly gifted type; she is even capable of subjecting a deceased prophet to her summoning power: she is an ‘*elohim*’. A being with great spiritual power.

- **Note:** That God is invoked in political matters was far from unusual in the time of Samuel. It was the time of the Old Covenant, in which the Jewish

people were led amidst many other peoples. Up to the New and Universal Covenant.

18.5. The Resurrection and further

18.5.1. The Resurrection, before and after Jesus.

Let us begin with the Theophany (appearance of God) in *Exodus 3:6*. Moses saw a burning bush that was not consumed by the fire. He heard a voice saying: “I am the God of your fathers, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob.”

In a discussion with the Sadducees (who believed in the first book of Moses (the first five books of the Bible)) but denied the resurrection, Jesus shows them that contradiction (*Mark 12:23*): “As for the question of whether the dead are raised: have you not read in the book of Moses, in the story of the burning bush, how God said to him: ‘I am the God of Abraham and the God of Isaac and the God of Jacob’? So He is not a God of the dead but of the living. You are on the wrong track.” Jesus thus clearly assumes that Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob are 'living' and therefore 'resurrected'. In the Old Testament, too, the 'resurrection', a rising from the dead, is a fact. And the three patriarchs were not the only living in the other world: Sheol (the underworld realms) was full of 'living'.

Survive, but not in Sheol . –

Psalms 16 (15):9 is clear: Our soul rejoices; our deeper soul shouts for joy. And our flesh (note: body) will rest safely, (...) for You cannot abandon our soul to the underworld. You cannot cause whoever is friends with You to live in the depths of the underworld.” “Whoever is friends with You” conceals a condition: “If I am friends with You”, then let me not perish in this form of 'being dead' which entails only a somber survival in the depths of Sheol .

The sacred writer is 'friended' because he says that he keeps the Lord before his eyes without ceasing. (*16 (15): 8*). He desires the exact opposite of a stay in Sheol : “You shall teach us the conduct that leads to life with You. (*16 (15): 11*). Which means: “in Your friendship”, a friendship that is precisely absent in Sheol . There there is “abundance of joy” and there are “eternal joys”. - Thus, there were believers at that time who prioritized the pairing of “ Sheol / life in God’s countenance”.

The Spirit of Christ. –

A life in friendship with God is the result of a typically divine spirit. Thus, Jesus states: "I am the resurrection. Whoever believes in me will live, even though he has died" (*John 11:25*). Jesus clearly introduces a new form of resurrection for he says: " If anyone is thirsty, let him come to me and drink , namely, the one who believes in me." This is according to the Scripture : "Out of his depths streams of living water shall spring forth." (*Exodus 17:1/7*). He was speaking of the Spirit that those who had believed in him were to receive.

Incidentally: 'spirit' was not yet there since Jesus had not yet been glorified' (*John 7:37ff.*)

His glorification begins in particular with his death on the cross. And from that moment the new resurrection is realized as *Matthew 27:52* says: "the tombs were opened and the bodies of many saints who had fallen asleep were brought to life. (...). They came out of the tombs and went to the holy city (note: heaven). They also appeared to many." - It is the dream of *Psalms 16 (15)* but in an intensified degree because Christ had risen.

As we read in *1 Corinthians 15:44ff.* : "A natural body is sown, a spiritual body arises." The resurrection before Christ was merely 'psychic' (supported by the immortal soul); the resurrection that Christ provides us is 'spiritual' (supported by the spirit after his resurrection). Concisely expressed: the first is 'flesh', the second 'spirit' (cf. *Epistle of Jude 19* : These are the people who cause division, who are absorbed in the world and do not possess the Spirit).

"If there is a psychic body, there is also a spiritual body. Thus it is written: the first man, Adam, was made with a living soul; the last Adam (*Christ; Rom 5:15ff.*) with a living spirit. But it is not the spirit that appears first, but rather the psychic, and only then the spirit. The first man, sprung from the earth, is of the earth; the second comes from heaven (*Daniel 7:13*: the Son of Man who comes from heaven)." This is clarified by *John 5:29ff.* : "There is coming an hour when all who lie in the grave will hear his voice and come out; those who have done good will rise to live, those who have done evil will rise to be condemned." Compare *Daniel 12:2*: "And many of those who sleep in the land of dust will awaken, some to eternal life, others to the humiliation of eternal shame." –

There are therefore two kinds of pre-existence in the other world: those who are devoted to the 'flesh', and those who are full of 'spirit'. The expression "eternal life" thus has a neutral meaning, "a life that lasts forever", a

meliorative meaning, “an eternal life in the spirit”, and a pejorative meaning: “an eternal pre-existence in the flesh”.

Behold the most important aspect regarding the concept of resurrection, situated within the guiding ideas of the Bible. All this demonstrates the logical coherence of Biblical thought. Its coherence and strength reveal themselves especially when one attempts to read the Bible from a logical standpoint.

18.5.2. The sacred, viewed subtly.

Let us begin with a text from *Isaiah 65:1ff*. ... - God speaks. - (...) “Here I am,” I say to a people that does not call upon My name. (...) A people that provokes Me right to My face. They continually offer sacrifices in gardens, burn incense on tiles. They sit in graves and spend the night in hidden places (*note*: to contact other beings). They eat the flesh of pigs, and from their dishes they eat sauce made from unclean meat (*note*: they ignore taboos). They say: “Stay where You are, do not touch Me, for I would sanctify You.” -

Jesse describes pagan rites performed by the Israelites. Let us draw attention to two important terms:

1. 'unclean', the opposite of 'clean', a rather difficult pair to define precisely due to the fact that these words are not used unambiguously and, for example, their meaning already differs from place to place.

2. “Do not touch me, for I would sanctify you.” This is a figure of speech characteristic of people who have participated in rites through which they have received something 'holy' or 'sacred': a kind of subtle matter and energy that is transitive, for example through physical contact. This holiness is, however, double-edged; it can overload or 'sanctify' the participants in the rite with this fine substance or energy and have a beneficial effect, yet it can cause harm to others—the outsiders. And with this, we find ourselves right in the midst of religious dynamics.

Ezekiel 22:23ff. -

The word of Yahweh is addressed to the prophet. Yahweh complains about the rulers and also, and especially, the priests who neglect their work : “The priests have violated my law (understand: the Decalogue and its Old Testament expansions) and defiled my sanctuaries. They made no distinction between the holy and the profane, and they did not teach the difference between the unclean and the clean (...)”. Cf. *Ezekiel 44:23*).

Note: All this brings us to *Leviticus 17:1ff* . (the law of holiness). The consecrated reality, through its two-pronged effect, must continue to be respected. God is essentially 'holy'. 'Holiness' is divine by its very nature or by the rite. Thus, places (temples, appearances), times (the Sabbath), persons (priests), or objects (garments) can be holy or sacred by virtue of their participation (connection or metonymy) in such a rite. From the moment it concerns such a holy rite, it must be performed purely and without defilement. Before God's countenance, the holy and the pure are subject to moral requirements (Biblical moralism), something that extra-biblical religions usually only partially possess.

Model. –

Ezekiel 4:15ff .. – The priests enter the sanctuary of Yahweh and approach the altar. To respect the holy character of the rite and the place, they put on their service garments, linen clothes, etc. “ When they go out (...), toward the people, they shall take off the garments in which they performed sacred acts and immediately put on other clothes so as not to sanctify the people (note: who do not possess the same level of holiness) through their clothing.” The people as profane, i.e., of a lower spiritual level , cannot withstand the sublime energy that priests and their clothes radiate.” It is noticeable: the people are 'profane', i.e., they do not possess the required subtle matter and energy to come into contact with the 'holy' without thereby being sanctified themselves (which can harm them in a subtle way). –

Note: – *Ezekiel 44:25* – “The priests must not defile themselves by coming near a dead person. However, in a number of cases and under conditions that may greatly surprise us, modern and postmodern people, this is permitted. The underlying conviction is that a corpse emits an ethereal matter and energy, invisible to the ordinary person, which permeates the priests and 'sanctifies' them, but here in the negative sense. Their life force suffers damage, corrupts, and makes them unfit for the rites that Yahweh asks of them –

This shows us that these beliefs are based on a dynamic religious conception: everything is seen and experienced in conjunction with subtle energy and life force. In a universe that takes this into account, lies what *Colossians 2:20* says: From the moment you have overcome the elements of the world (note: the visible and invisible beings that control the world), why then still bow to their commandments as if you were still living in their world? “ Do not touch, do not taste, do not grasp!”

In other words: a Christian, if he reaches the subtle level that St. Paul refers to here, transcends this stage. We do indeed say: “if he reaches the subtle level that St. Paul refers to here,” for it is not that simple. The experiences of many Christians, even very convinced ones, prove it: they undergo subtle influences for better or for worse, whether they want to or not.

The Holy Spirit as subtle matter and energy. –

Luke 8:43ff.. - The woman who had suffered from a flow of blood for twelve years touched the hem of Christ's garment. Immediately her flow stopped. “Whereupon Jesus: “Who is the one who touched me?” All denied it. Peter said: “Master, it is the crowd pressing in and pressing upon you.” Jesus: “Someone has indeed touched me, for I felt a power (*dunamis* ') flow out of me.” It is the new spirit that also manifests itself as subtle matter and energy. The cloths and linen that Peter had touched also had healing and exorcizing power (cf. *Acts of the Apostles 19:11ff.*).

The Bible, too, is apparently familiar with solving life's problems of all kinds, albeit in a subtle way.

18.5.3. The subtle and the spiritual body.

Let us read *1 Samuel 28:13ff..* –

The caller of the dead sees an Elohim , a powerful being, ascending from the earth, that is, from Sheol . The Greeks spoke of 'Hades'. “It is an elder ascending; he is clothed in a prophet's mantle,” says the caller of the dead . The prophet Samuel clearly has a body, and this is even clothed. The fact that he ascends from the earth through 'solid' matter shows that he is also material, but different from the matter of our biological body. Let us call this type of body by its traditional name: “the subtle body”. This subtle body is material but is not subject to a number of limitations like the physical or biological body as we know it. What is more, this subtle body can assume various modes of appearance. In the case described above, it is clothed as a prophet. Let us conclude that the Old Testament recognizes a subtle body alongside the biological body.

Luke 9:28ff. –

Jesus takes Peter, John, and James with him and goes up a mountain to pray. “While he was praying, he changed in appearance and his clothes became dazzling white. Suddenly two men were talking with him. They were Moses and Elijah, who appeared in glory and spoke of his passing (note: his

death), the completion of his life in Jerusalem. Peter and the others (...) saw his glory and the two men who stood with him.” (9:32).

2 Peter 1:16ff. says:

“When we proclaimed to you the power and the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, we did not rely on ingeniously devised myths (*note*: like the creators of pagan stories), but we spoke as eyewitnesses of his glory.” – This shows us that the body of Christ can change form (with his clothes) and that this glorified body is usually hidden by the biological body. Although not physically or biologically perceptible under ordinary circumstances, such a glorified body is nevertheless just as real. –

Let us note the appearance of two men: these do not ascend from the earth but are there 'in glory'. This refers to *Psalms 16 (15): 10ff.* (“life before the face of Yahweh”) or *Psalms 56 (55): 14*. They are there physically but in a body appeared 'in glory'. –

Decision. –

situated in Sheol but elsewhere, in glory.

The glorified subtle body of Jesus. - *John 20:19ff.* . – “On the evening of that first day of the week, the disciples were together. Although the door was locked for fear of the Jews, Jesus came. Suddenly He stood in their midst.” He showed the wounds in his hands and his side.

John 20:26 .

- “Although the door was locked, Jesus came into their midst” and said to Thomas: “Here are my hands; come now with your finger. And come with your hand to feel the opening in my side.” - So there is first of all the subtle body of Jesus that passes through material objects (door, walls); after which He materializes this subtle body so that it becomes visible and tangible, for Thomas. When Jesus disappears again, his body becomes subtle once more.

The subtle body of Jesus. –

Usually this is hidden. But sometimes it reveals itself. *Luke 8:43ff.* - A woman who had suffered from a flow of blood for twelve years (...) came up behind Jesus and touched the hem of his garment. Immediately her flow stopped.” But she did not realize that Jesus was sensitive. Jesus asks: “Who touched me?” All denied it. Peter said: “Master, it is the crowd pressing in and pressing on you.” Jesus: “Someone certainly touched me, for I felt that a power

(*dunamis* ') flowed out of me.” (*Note*: usually translated as 'I felt it', but in Greek one speaks of 'I knew it')

The woman realized that she had been discovered; came trembling closer and threw herself before Jesus and told (...) why she had touched him and how she had been healed instantly.” *Mark* 6:56 states: “Wherever He went, to villages or towns or farms, they laid the sick in the marketplace, and they asked Him if they could at least touch the hem of His garment. And whoever touched Him was saved.”

Paul, *1 Cor.* 15:42ff., says of the new resurrection since the resurrection of Christ: “A natural body is sown, but a spiritual body arises.” It is clearly the spiritual body of Christ, hidden in his 'natural' (fleshly) body, that responds when one touches him in faith as a source of typically divine energy.

Dynamic aspect. –

1 Corinthians 11:27ff. places the emphasis on the energetic aspect. Paul observes that among his listeners, “there are so many among you sick and weak.” Also, a number have already died prematurely. One might ask how that comes about. Paul says regarding this: “Everyone must examine himself before eating of the bread and drinking of the cup. For whoever eats and drinks in an unworthy manner eats and drinks his own judgment (...) and sins against the body and blood of the Lord.”

The sick, the disabled, and the dead have been struck in their 'spirit', which inclined too much, far too much towards the 'flesh'. Hence their 'weakness' in the face of the challenges of earthly life; understand: hence their vulnerability.

Paul further specifies: “If we examine ourselves before we eat of the bread and drink of the cup, we are not condemned.” These illnesses and premature deaths are the sign of a judgment by God, an intervention by God in the course of events, caused precisely by the weaknesses and unethical behavior of these people. *The *Bible de Jerusalem**, in its preface to the Book of Esther, expresses this slumbering divine judgment as follows : “God does not show his power outwardly, and yet he guides the events.” The Spirit (the typically divine energy) within man depends on the level of his own morality. If specific boundaries are crossed in this regard, and actions become particularly immoral, then “God is no longer responsible for this spirit, for the person in question is then merely 'flesh,' as expressed in *Genesis* 6:3: ‘That my spirit (*note*: life force) may not be endlessly responsible for man since he is 'flesh' (

note: animated life but without God's life force)'."

18.5.4. The rock of incomprehension.

The refusal to believe. –

In *Mark 6:1ff.*, Jesus goes with his followers: "Is he not the carpenter (...)?" What angered many listeners was "the wisdom given to him, and the miracles he performs." As a result, Jesus could not perform a single miracle there except laying hands on a few sick people. Jesus marveled at their unbelief. (*6:5ff.*) – One sees the mechanism: people stick to 'the flesh' (the carpenter), they understand nothing of 'the spirit' (wisdom, miracles). Notwithstanding the rock of divine power that Jesus possesses, he remains powerless – out of deep respect for the freedom of choice of his creatures.

The false belief. –

John 2:23ff. – Upon seeing the miraculous signs Jesus performed, many believed in Him (*note: and in His life-giving power*). "But Jesus, for His part, had no faith in them, because He knew them all; no one needed to teach Him anything about man, He Himself knew well what a man could expect." – There is, therefore, a form of false faith: one believes, for example, for the sake of a tangible benefit (a healing, an expulsion of a demon) (the flesh) without, however, understanding the true message of Christ.

The end of times. –

2 Tim 3:1ff. – Understand that difficult times will come in the last days. For people will be selfish and greedy for money, arrogant and proud, slanderers, disobedient to their parents, ungrateful, godless, loveless, unforgiving, malicious, unrestrained, cruel, enemies of good, treacherous, reckless, conceited, more pleasure-seeking than godly; they will maintain the outward appearance of godliness, but deny its essence (...).

Refusal of the sacred doctrine. –

"For the time is coming when people will not endure sound doctrine, but will gather around themselves teachers according to their own tastes, who flatter their ears. And they will close their ears to the truth, to listen to all kinds of myths." (*2 Tim. 4:3*).

The rock of refusal. –

From Hades (Sheol), the rich man addresses Abraham, who lives in the presence of God (heaven), so that God might send Lazarus, who also lives in

the presence of God, to his five brothers on earth “to warn them” that the realm of the dead will torment them if they do not behave godly. But Abraham said: “They have Moses and the Prophets; they ought to listen to them.” But the rich man answered: “(...) If someone from the dead comes to them, then they will repent.” But Abraham answered: “If they do not listen to Moses and the Prophets, then they will not be convinced even if someone rises from the dead.”

Depending on the circumstances, this rock of unbelief takes the form of persecution, as *2 Tim 3:12* says: “All who desire to live devoutly in Christ Jesus will be persecuted.” This refusal is therefore not so innocent. This unbelief has led , among other things, to the crucifixion of Christ , notwithstanding his wisdom and his miraculous deeds.

Decision. –

There are other Bible texts that confirm or suggest it (without explicitly stating so): it is undeniable that the Old and New Testaments speak as if humanity is moving more and more towards an end time, towards a final judgment of God—towards a turbulent time, viewed from the standpoint of nature (cosmic aspect) and from the perspective of man (cultural aspect). Towards an unprecedented reversal. At the same time, it will seem as if worldly misunderstanding will increase and harden, and provoke these events.

This has always prompted Christians to think, but in our day this theme seems to be asserting itself more strongly. That part of the Bible and of theology that deals with the end times is called 'eschatology'. It has always been an integral part of the tradition, but in our day Christians are asking themselves questions about its possible relevance.

This misunderstanding takes the form, in particular, of a Biblical hermeneutics (theory of interpretation) that actualizes it, not from the presuppositions of the Bible but from the presuppositions of our modern and postmodern world, in order to make the message of the Bible understandable. This modernization of the Bible takes the form of a rejection of the true core of the faith. A core that is neither modern nor postmodern. A rejection that, moreover, is spreading on a large scale and thus perpetuates the massive rejection of faith. Is this the great apostasy in full development?

18.5.5. The individualization of religion.

Jeremiah 18:18 tells us that among the believers there are priests, prophets, and wise men who act as mediators to explain the law and the commandments. And Jesus in *Matthew 23:34* calls them “prophets, wise men, scribes.” It is they who bear witness to a religious experience, and they are an instrument in the hand of God to help and guide other believers. Behold, religion based on intermediaries.

Jeremiah's criticism. –

In *Jeremiah 31:29ff* ., the prophet clearly proposes a religion based on direct contact with God, thus without intermediaries in the traditional sense. He states it clearly: “I, God, will forgive their sin. No one need to say to another anymore: ‘Get to know God (note: have an intimate relationship with)’ . All, great and small, will know God. He will put the law in their innermost being.”

A text establishes genealogical solidarity (*Jer. 31:27/34*): “In those days,” that is, when God’s glory is particularly strong in ‘works’ (‘miracles’), people will no longer say: ‘The fathers ate green—unripe—grapes, and the teeth of the children taste bitter.’ But everyone will die because of their own mistake. Every person who has eaten ‘green grapes,’ his/her own teeth will taste bitter.”

One sees that the prophet quotes a proverb: “green grapes” stands for ‘wrong (sin)’ and “tasting bitter” stands for ‘death’. A kind of inherited guilt—of which original sin is an example—passes from parents (and ancestors) to descendants. That is the manistic or ancestor religion, regarding inherited debts of all kinds. Yahweh introduces a new covenant, in other words : the judgment of God undergoes a structural change: “Behold the days coming—oracle of Yahweh—in which I—Yahweh—will make a new covenant (...). I will situate My law in the depths of their being and I will write My law on their hearts. (...). Then each one among them will no longer have to teach his neighbor—each his ‘brother’ while saying: “Know Yahweh ”. For all will know Me; from the smallest to the greatest (...) because I will forgive their transgression and will no longer think of their sin.

Note: - the term ‘to know’ in the Bible means: “to have intimate contact with God”.

Let's summarize. –

The core is the forgiveness of sins.

1. On this basis, God renews the inner contact with man. This fulfills a wish of Moses (*Numbers 11:29*): “ May all the people of Yahweh be prophets,

by He causing His life-giving power to descend upon them.” – This means that Moses grants every person individually the right to be a 'prophet', God's confidant and inspired one, so that every person also hears the voice of God in his deeper soul (*Numbers 14:22; John 8:47*).

2. God also introduces individualization: intermediaries lose their predominant role. For God addresses the individual directly. For most, mediators do not yet become superfluous: they endeavor to bring others into intimate contact with God , provided they themselves possess direct contact with God and can lead the way regarding homo religiosus .

Ezekiel. - In *Ezekiel 18:1* the prophet says: “How dare you (...) use this proverb: ‘The fathers have eaten sour grapes and the children’s teeth are hardened by them?’ As surely as I live (*note*: the typically divine life), no one shall ever again be allowed to use this proverb. (...). All human lives are equal to Me; the life of the father and the life of the son, both are of equal value to Me. Therefore, only the one who sins will die. - In *Ezekiel 36:26ff* . Yahweh says: “I will give you a new heart and pour out a new spirit into you (...). I will pour out My spirit into you and I will ensure that you obey My laws and carefully observe My precepts.” Behold what Jeremiah predicted, emphasizing the internalization (“a new heart”) and the gift of “the new spirit” (life force) from God.

Joel . –

The universality of direct contact with God is expressed in *Joel 3:1* After this it will happen: I will pour out my Spirit on all people (understand: all people as they are); your sons and your daughters will prophesy, (*note*: they will act like prophets), your elders will have dreams, your young men will see visions. Even on the servants and the handmaids I pour out my Spirit in those days. The *Acts of the Apostles 2:17ff* . repeats this Pentecost text.

This religion of intimate communion with God is eminently characteristic of Christianity as a “new covenant”. *The Epistle to the Hebrews 8:6ff* . clearly repeats the text of *Jeremiah 31:31ff.* The letter immediately adds: “speaking of the new covenant, he makes the first covenant obsolete. Thus, what is obsolete and worn out will disappear”.

It is clear: by saying of himself that he “tells the world what he has heard from the Father who sent him” (*John 8:26; 8:28*), Christ shows us direct contact with God. And by saying: “All will be taught by God” (*John 6:45*),

Jesus will certainly not exclude people from intimate contact with his Father: on the contrary, he makes the message of Joel very relevant.

The Yahweh religion is becoming more individual than before (from “God of our fathers” it becomes “my God”); it is becoming more inward (“in the depths of the soul: “on the heart”) and God forgives sin, the source of death. Behold, three new characteristics of the Yahweh religion on the horizon. Our time seems to be creating the climate par excellence in which this religion is required.

