

PART 1: TWO FORCES IN COLLISION, 1:1-8. #1. "The beginning of the gospel of Jesus Christ, the Son of God", 1:1. That precise moment in human history ushered into time an extreme priority (salvation) & as well, an elevated perception. "The beginning" refers to the opening phase of the "gospel" in time. #2. After the "beginning" there are two forces in a state of perpetual collision. First there is the "gospel" that carries with it the force of contraction. Its saving power is the causal agency to contract (eliminate) the separation between God & man, between eternity & time. #3. The opposing force is that of human "sin". And sin carries the force of creating a dilation (expansion) of distance between the Almighty & every individual man/woman in time. The site of this forever collision in time is the human heart, soul & mind. #4. There can never be any agreement nor any coordination between those two antagonistic forces. We are in for a fight. The collision will be navigated according to revealed terms, not local terms. #5. From ages past Isaiah recorded an exchange between the eternal Father & the one identified as "You". "...Behold, I send My Messenger ahead of You" to "prepare your way" & "to make His paths straight", Isaiah (40:3), v.2, 3. #6. Therefore, the Lord had always intended to deal with sin & by the gospel, contract together time & eternity. In the "beginning" the "gospel" came directly out of the mind of God & into time & the world of forms. Isomorphism (same form) characterizes the relation between the word of God & gospel forms. #7. This means that revealed language determines the gospel forms & not the other way around. "John" ...preached... "a baptism of repentance for the forgiveness of sins", v.4. #8. Those who were "...baptized by him in the Jordan River..." (v.5) were convinced of the problem of sin & consequently made the admission of personal sin, they accepted the symbols of belief as prelude to forgiveness. #9. Baptism puts the believer into the collision between the gospel & sin. History is struggle; but not between economic classes (Marxism). The struggle is between redemption & sin. Then, enters the work of the "Holy Spirit" (v.8); the arbiter of contraction.

PART 2: THE HOLY SPIRIT: AGENT OF CONTRACTION, 1:9-14. #1. "In those days...", a prescribed moment in time, determined by Providence, "Jesus came from Nazareth...", v.9. Jesus the Son of God was about to impose Himself upon human affairs. #2. The Lord composed His state of being before He publicly took hold of the gospel. He "...was baptized by John in the Jordan", v.9. Jesus, being without sin, still presented Himself for baptism. The act of baptism is an expression of commitment to the powers of contraction. The Lord, as a matter of record, put Himself at the full & complete disposal of God, His Father. #3. "Immediately coming up (resurrection) out of the water (burial), He saw the heavens opening, and the Spirit like a dove descending upon Him", v.10. Jesus was clearly determined to obey the teaching of John, "My Messenger". His baptism was a moment, an act of obedience & a practice demonstrating contraction. In all of this Jesus was exemplary. #4. There were two dimensions of reality: the visible & invisible. The invisible Speaker voiced His approval

of the Son; "...You are My beloved Son, in You I am well-pleased", v.11. Though the Father spoke from heaven & the Son was on earth & in time, the differential between the two, that is time & eternity, did not, could not impede the contraction between the two of them! They were one piece. The Holy Spirit was & is the Agent of contraction ("descending"). #5. "Immediately", without temporal delay, the Holy Spirit "impelled" the Lord to "go out into the wilderness", v.12. Those verbs ("Immediately", "impelled", "go out") imply that the Spirit has overtaken time, nature & circumstances. The Holy Spirit compels all situations, circumstances & personal will to contract back upon the will of God! #6. This fact, among other things, gives all of us stranded in time, circumstances & historical conditions, the leverage of hope. #7. There "...in the wilderness...", (v.13) for "forty days" the Lord was "tempted by Satan", as are we all. Still, the oneness, the unity, the contracted relation between Father & Son remained undisturbed by sin. The will of the Father & Son were identical. His flesh had been compelled by Jesus to contract back upon the Spirit. #8. As a benediction on the Lord's determined fight with temptation "...the angels were ministering to Him", v.13--another contraction between God & circumstance!

PART 3: REVELATION IS CONTRACTED LANGUAGE, 1:14, 15. #1. "Now after John had been taken into custody, Jesus came into Galilee, preaching the gospel of God", v.14. #2. John had been arrested because of what he preached; his message being offensive to the men in power. Logically to overcome an objectionable string of words one detains & liquidates its bearer. Useless! Human control of the gospel kept slipping from their grasp. John would be killed, but then came Jesus into Galilee to fill the void. #2. Both Jesus & John were men whose lives & destinies contracted back upon the will & purpose of God. And that is a sufficient definition of a Christian, a believer, a disciple of God. #3. The Lord was "preaching the gospel of God", v.15. The gospel is a particular language manifold wherein human everyday language was forced by the Holy Spirit to contract back upon the mind of God! Revelation, therefore, is contracted language. #4. In contrast, there is a use of language that dilates (expands) the separation between the mind of God & the mind of a man. Those two very disparate grammars for language are in a sustained collision. This is why some governments move, by force, to punish believers in the Lord & to attempt control of the contracted language of scripture. #5. Here, the world is in full engagement with other oppressors. The world, the culture, the society in which we live are allied against the contracted language of the Bible. Those people fear the convicting powers of revealed truth! #6. Jesus said, "...The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand; repent and believe in the gospel", v.15. Contracted language (revelation) is an absolute set of representations (words) about the nature of time & things in it. #7. The gospel brings revealed language to bear upon time, the realm of human experience. One's understanding of experience, therefore, must contract back upon the word of God! The frame of reference of human experience cannot hold, contain nor constrain revelation. #8. Indeed revealed contracted & preached language drives an ever dilating wedge between the word of God & dependence upon human lived experience. Driving that wedge is called faith!

PART 4: JESUS CONTRACTS CIRCUMSTANCES, 1:16-28. #1. Four times in this text there appears the translated term "immediately". It is peculiarly obvious. #2. Jesus took a walk by the "Sea of Galilee" (v.16) with the intention of structuring/contracting events. There He encountered "Simon" & "Andrew" (v.16); inviting them to be part of a circumstance that He alone would create. "...Follow Me, and I will make you become fishers of men", (v.17). Those men must have believed Him because, "Immediately they left their nets and followed Him", (v.18). #3. "He saw James...and John...", (v.19). "Immediately He called them..." & they "went away to follow Him", (v.20). The Lord's call had changed their perception of the future. In front of their eyes the Lord was contracting their lives back upon the will of God. Nothing could ever be the same! #4. At "Capernaum" (v.21), "immediately on the sabbath" Jesus "began to teach". His hearers "were amazed at His teaching", v.22. By means of His preaching the Savior was contracting their thinking back upon the word of God. #5. The power of contraction registered with the members of "the synagogue" as "authority". By that authority Jesus was closing the distance between their minds & the mind of God. The wisdom of "the scribes" could not accomplish that end. #6. A man, "...with an unclean spirit" (v.23) became disruptive at the meeting. The unclean spirit speaking for the dark world was quite concerned about Jesus' appearance in time. The demons knew who He was, if the people did not; "the Holy One of God", v.24. #7. Jesus was the perfect contraction. In Him the eternal & temporal, the spiritual & material, heaven & earth were contracted together. The demons were afraid of Him. #8. The Lord commanded the unclean spirit to "be quiet and come out of him", v.25. This, publicly done, "They were all amazed", v.27. It was "debated among themselves". #9. Those people recognized another contraction: that was the contraction between "A new teaching" & "authority" (they meant power). "He commands even the unclean spirits, and they obey Him". #10. "Immediately the news...spread everywhere...", v.28. Why? Because such powers of contraction have to be explained.

PART 5: MATERIAL REALITY IS SUSPENDED IN THE WILL OF GOD, 1:29-45. #1. Recorded in this text is a revealed truth. It is a truth calculated to displace a confidence in what is called the self-evident (not needing demonstration nor explanation)! #2. From Genesis 3 forward throughout the Bible, there are many examples of those who relied upon self-evidence above the language of revelation. #3. That which is considered the self-evident is always a challenge to the word of God; especially in times of distress. The self-evident & the revealed language manifold are more often than not mutually contradictory. #4. It is not self-evident that material reality is suspended in the will of God. But the Lord insisted, in this text, that it is. #5. "...Simon's mother-in-law was lying sick with a fever...", v.30. Before the appearance of Jesus it was self-evident that there was no immediate resolution of such illnesses. Things must take their course. "And He came to her and raised her up, taking her by the hand, and the fever left her, and she waited on them", v.31. #6. Jesus proves that materiality is not independent of the Absolute, but that all materiality is suspended in the will of God & therefore, suspended in the power of God. #7. Many, at that time came to Simon's door bringing their "...ill and

those who were demon-possessed", v.32. Multitudes came because they grasped that in Jesus the self-evident had been eclipsed. #8. Consequently, the Lord was in great demand, v.35-37. Inherent in the Lord's preaching & miracles was that the self-evident has a limited significance. The word of God cannot be understood in the light of the regime of self-evidence, v.38, 39. #9. A leper figured it out. Coming to Jesus in desperation, the leper made an admission of faith in the Lord: "If You are willing, You make me clean", v.40. Implied in his words is the idea that there was no doubt about the power of God. The real issue was the will of God! #10. That man, gripped by the horrifying effects of leprosy, had by faith, transcended understanding bordered by the self-evident. The Lord was "Moved with compassion...stretched out His hand and touched him" & then uttered the terms of contraction, "I am willing; be cleansed", v.41. "Immediately the leprosy left him and he was cleansed", v.42. #11. Generalization: The universe of materiality is & always has been suspended in the will of God!

PART 6: CONTRACTION IS A WAY OF REASONING, 2:1-13. #1. This extraordinary event became the setting in which one of the implications of the powers of contraction was forced into evidence. #2. The revealed facts about the powers of contraction change all of the rules of reasoning. Conventional laws of logic are overruled by the contracting power of God. #3. Some men "...came..." to Capernaum "...bringing to Him a paralytic, carried by four men", v.3. Presupposed in these words is the fact that those men (5 of them) had thought about the demonstrated power of Jesus over material conditions. And found that conventional, time bound, earth bound, experience bound thinking was no longer relevant. #4. So, they "came". "Being unable to get to Him...they removed the roof...dug an opening...they let down the pallet on which the paralytic was lying", v.4. #5. "And Jesus seeing their faith..." (v.5) refers to their behavior. All 5 of these men were insistent, resolute, convicted & determined. Entry by roof proved their faith, which turns out to be a distinct form of reasoning founded upon the revealed powers of contraction. #6. Jesus responded to the paralytic with unexpected terms; "Son, your sins are forgiven", v.5. Such language was provocative & inflammatory. The "scribes" were uniformly offended. The line of "reasoning in their hearts" (v.6) could not cope with the power contraction that Jesus commanded. #7. This necessarily means that human reasoning must catch up to, adjust to the reality of God. Not the other way around. "...He is blaspheming; who can forgive sins but God alone", v.7. Their routine way of reasoning had been made irrelevant. #8. It does not matter how He says it; "Your sins are forgiven" or "Get up, and pick up your pallet and walk" (v.9); the issue is irresistible unmitigated power! That power was beyond their reasoning & beyond their language. #9. Jesus ordered the paralytic to walk (v.11) & he did. "they were all amazed". Why was the Bible written but to allow for the contraction of the minds of men back upon the word of God & the power of God?

PART 7: THE WORD OF GOD & ITS GIFTS OF CONTRACTION. #1. The purpose of the word of God has always been a subject of debate. As Jesus preached & performed miracles, an inarguable impression was made upon those then present. The power of God contracted back upon the word of God & the material realm of things was forced to

contract back upon that supernatural complex. #2. "They were all amazed, so that they debated among themselves, saying, 'What is this? A new teaching with authority! He commands even the unclean spirits, and they obey'", 1:27. #3. On another occasion; "And he got up and immediately picked up the pallet and went out in the sight of everyone, so that they were all amazed and were glorifying God saying, 'We have never seen anything like this'", 2:12. #4. This means that the revelation had broken into their personal experience. Their responses to situations was an admission that human experience cannot cope with the absolute powers of contraction. Human experience had been decisively displaced. #5. Of course the divine powers of contraction appear everywhere in the Bible, both Old & New Testaments. "Immediately" as the Book of Mark opens Jesus breaks into all of the contours of the temporal realm; physical, material, historical, sociological, psychological, experiential, linguistic & spiritual. The Lord's teaching & power put into question all temporal rooted assumptions. The Master puts into evidence the relation of God to time. #6. Most certainly, the word of God, revelation, the Bible partake of this same purpose. Because the Bible is ancient it is generally approached as history. It being history is a fact; it is not an argument. #7. The Bible is a supernatural intrusion into all the contours of temporal reality. This wonderful gift alerts the human mind to the fact of & potential of supernatural contraction.

PART 8: THE PRESENCE OF JESUS, HIS TEACHING & HIS POWERS OF CONTRACTION DEFINE APPROVED REASONING, 2:14-22. #1. With the appearance of Jesus, His words & the powers that He possessed over material reality, circumstances had overtaken the reasoning of some of the Jews. He found their reasoning defective. #2. It turned out that their thinking explained nothing, failed to capture the meaning of the moment & was irrelevant, even counterproductive to the then present situation. #3. The Lord & His disciples dined in Levi's house (newly called) with many other "tax collectors and sinners", v.14, 15. #4. So, the Lord's antagonists generated a false character assessment. "...Why is He eating and drinking with tax collectors and sinners?", v.16. The defect in reasoning was the utter disregard of everything Jesus preached & did. "His response: "...It is not those who are healthy who need a physician, but those who are sick; I did not come to call the righteous, but sinners", v.17. #5. The primary defect in their reasoning: The Lord's powers of contraction over materiality & circumstance had no place in their thought, speech & behavior. It meant nothing! Their defective reasoning denied proven contraction, a supposed impossibility. #6. Their insistence upon fasting (v.18) as proof of righteousness was defective in view of the arrival of the Lord of supernatural contraction. "...While the bridegroom is with them the attendants of the bridegroom cannot fast, can they?...", v.19. #7. Approved reasoning rejoices in the presence of such a One & is saddened by His absence. "But the days will come when the bridegroom is taken away from, and then they will fast in that day", v.20. #8. Approved reasoning & defective reasoning are mutually exclusive. Defective reason is like sewing "...a patch of unshrunk cloth on an old garment..." & "a worse tear results", v.21. It only makes things worse. Applying that to circumstance is frightening. #9. Approved reasoning is like putting "...new wine into fresh wine skins", v.22. It resolves problems & is redemptive.

#10. Personal reasoning must contract back upon revelation if one is to believe in Christ!

PART 9: WARNING: ONLY THE FORCE OF SUPERNATURAL CONTRACTION GENERATES MEANING, 2:23-3:12. #1. Authentic revealed meaning can come from only one source; the supernatural power of contraction. The meaning of the "Sabbath" had been distorted by the Jews. #2. "Jesus said to them, 'The Sabbath was made for man, and not man for the Sabbath'", 2:27. That purpose & meaning of the Sabbath are derived from the contraction of the practice back upon the revealed truth. The Lord cited 1 Samuel 21, (2:25, 26) as an example of His point. The purpose & meaning of the Sabbath was to bless man; it was not given as a cudgel to coerce a formalism. #3. That is why David was not condemned for his taking the consecrated bread. And why the disciples stood sinless for their "picking the heads of grain", 2:23. Neither of those episodes violated the intent of the law; that is to say the spirit of the law. #4. The Pharisees were only compelled by the letter of the law. "...Look, why are they doing what is not lawful on the Sabbath?", v.24. Over time the meaning of the Sabbath had been increasingly removed (a dilation) from the letter of the law. #5. "They were watching Him to see if He would heal him (man with a withered hand) on the Sabbath, so that they might accuse Him", 3:2. Again the Lord appealed to the intent/spirit of the Sabbath; "...Is it lawful to do good...or harm on the Sabbath, to save a life or to kill?", 3:4. The only thing left of the holy day was the letter. "But they kept silent". #6. It was they who had violated the meaning of the Sabbath! "The Pharisees went out and immediately began conspiring with the Herodians against Him, as to how they might destroy Him", 3:6. #7. To abandon the principle of contraction is to forsake the pursuit of revealed meaning. The difference between eternal meaning & the letter of the word was never to be dilated, but it was. The result was a meaningless commandment! #8. This text explains how & why much contemporary usage of scripture can be cited to favor the precise opposite of its meaning! #9. "So the Son of man is Lord even of the Sabbath" (2:28) had to mean to the Pharisees that Jesus is the Lord of the revelation. Contract back upon it or meet it in the judgment! Ritual without meaning is useless!

PART 10: CONTRACTION SETS THE COURSE!, 3:13-30. #1. The powers of supernatural contraction set the course of life, situation, circumstance, events & states of being, according to the Book of Mark. #2. An example: The Lord contracted the lives of twelve men back upon the will of God. "And He went up on the mountain and summoned (historical presents) those who He Himself wanted, and they came to Him. And He appointed twelve, so that they would be with Him and that He could send them out to preach", 3:13, 14. Their lives would never be the same, whatever happened. #3. These men & the church after them were called to live the life of Christ. This is the Christian life, the life in full contraction upon the will of God & the power of God! #4. The life of contraction & its belief inspires the phenomenon of hyper criticism. This reaction is not demanded by contraction & is a kind of default response. There are three kinds of hyper criticism addressed in this text. #5. First: Hyper criticism as smoke screen. "The scribes who came down from Jerusalem were saying, 'He is possessed by Beelzebul,

and He casts out the demons by the ruler of the demons", 3:22. Irrational, self-contradictory & absurd, it is used to obscure all that Jesus had taught & done. Vacuous & devoid of content, the Lord destroyed their argument; "If a kingdom is divided against itself, that kingdom cannot stand", 3:24. The devil is smarter than that. #6. Second: Hyper criticism as blasphemy of the Holy Spirit. "...whoever blasphemes against the Holy Spirit never has forgiveness, but is guilty of an eternal sin--because they were saying, 'He has an unclean spirit'", 3:29, 30. This is a standing sin! The scribes attributed (sin of attribution) the work of the Holy Spirit to Satan! The Almighty will not forgive that. Conveyance of this sin is language. #7. Third: Hyper criticism as rationalization. "When His own people (family) heard of this, they went out to take custody of Him; for they were saying, 'He has lost His senses", 3:21. They thought Him insane. His family sought to get Jesus out of circulation. Seclusion was not what the Lord had in mind. The powers of contraction have nothing in common with rationalized solutions. The Lord sets the course!