

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

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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!